Politics of electronic music purism: Social space and label authenticity in the Netherlands

Master Thesis

Student Name: Marko Polovina

Student Number: 465938

Supervisor: Erik Hitters

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Abstract

Since electronic music's emergence in the mid-1980s, the genre has gained considerable recognition as an unusual and an interesting case study for cultural production dynamics and socio-cultural values in regards to what is considered authentic. The scene in the Netherlands has seen large-scale consumption of more mainstream/accessible off-shoots of electronic music genres such as trance, techno, and house for over two decades. The most significant case studies on electronic music are presented by Thornton (1995) and Hesmondhalgh (1998), generally taking a more broad approach in understanding these definitions within the electronic music dance industry; both share key ideas of technology innovation and convergence of these practices within identity. This thesis attempts to look at the label perspective of the Dutch scene because of its independent and historical connotations associated with the music genre, similarly done by Grote (2014) and Strachan (2007) in other locations and genres in the label perspective. The fact that these labels are independent, but aesthetically appear small-scale, despite at times being the large-scale producer of certain genres, creates a dissonance in the way that cultural capital can be clearly created in this world. Bourdieu's (1993/1996) cultural capital, specifically the social space aspect, along with Bruno Latour's (1996) actor network theory is used to understand how music labels in the Dutch electronic music industry in Amsterdam and Rotterdam construct their identities in this network of influences and social space, what they distinctly value as authentic, and ultimately how they perceive authenticity in the current electronic music scene. The results from ten interviews confirm certain narratives provided by recent contributions in dance music, but is divergent from traditional understandings of authenticity in other genres and illustrates how a network of influences, along with transparent intention, correlates with authenticity. Also, recommendations for future electronic music research based on the ramifications of the findings and adaptations to Bourdieu's cultural production to fit this music field are presented for further exploration.

Keywords: electronic music; authenticity; cultural production; independent music label; actor network theory; Dutch music industry

Acknowledgements

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"We are the music makers, and we are the dreamer of dreams."

–Arthur O'Shaughnessy

"As the hours pass, it feels like some kind of psychological barrier has been breached and all repressed fantasties are pouring out and everyone has somehow dissolved into the mass, into the music itself…"

–Matthew Collin, *Rave On*, p. 51

1. Introduction

The lines between major and independent labels have become blurred within the music industry. This constant lack of stability is brought by innovative technology, often colliding with what were traditional roles of the major labels (Hughes, Evans, Morrow & Keith, 2016; Tschmuck, 2016). As consequence, the processes of distribution, collaboration, aesthetic, performativity and label relationships have been ceremoniously unsettled by these changes as well (Albrecht, 2008; Eiriz & Leite, 2017; Hracs, Jakob, & Hauge, 2012; Hughes et al., 2016; Tschmuck, 2016). These changes, along an examination of artistic production in the music industry (Klein, Meier & Powers, 2017; Schroeder, 2016), shows how these alterations have impacted these processes, mirroring this shift. As a result of these multiple disruptions, the way independent music labels are defined has changed, as they are now are either affiliates or subsidiaries of major labels.

For electronic music and its more accessible sub-genres in the dance music realm, it has been in a precarious position since the start–the amalgamation of sounds, evolving musical landscape, and creative process of producers. Dance music correlates with these recent forms of disruption, but is distinctly separate from it (Collin, 2018; Velden & Hitters, 2016). The music that is produced is usually meant for public performance, not consistent consumption and as a result, the structure of this market is inherently different from traditional labels that relied on consistent consumption from consumers. For labels within dance music, the preconceived notion of what independent or major labels' functions are still discussed in regards to production and autonomy (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Negus, 1999; Grote, 2014;Velden & Hitters, 2016) as they have yet to capitulate to the demands of what has become a digital music market (Galuszka, 2015). Since electronic music has moved from the fringes to the mainstream, the way labels functioned without commercial success only a decade earlier was unique when compared to other independents in in the 1980s and 1990s. Labels in other genres positioned similarly at the fringes to mainstream consciousness eventually failed to maintain autonomy once popularized (Hesmondhalgh, 1997, 1998). This was an eventual consequence from faltering financially or an eventual compromised ethos when finding commercial success (Lee, 1995; Hesmondhalgh, 1999). These results are not comparable to independent labels within electronic music, the major difference is traditional independent labels in other genres such as alternative music are generally not run by producers or artists. The aforementioned period of transition is of equal importance with the emergence of dance music, as their reluctance to integrate with majors since its rise in popularity is noted in Florian Grote's case study of several

labels residing in Berlin and Manchester. According to Grote's case studies, these label's stability do not depend on artist success nor failure of investment, but a vast network of relationships that are interconnected (Grote, 2014). It is not until recently, with the success of electronic dance music (EDM) globally, that they find this unique position crouched upon by more mainstream-oriented DJs and consumption, where the line between authenticity and performance has blurred for traditionalist listeners. This in effect shifts the dynamic of how these labels wrangle this issue internally. This has shown to be effecting the quality of how electronic music is consumed and presented. "'You can book anyone now–if the price is right,'" suggested Detroit techno icon Derrick May, and how "this madness in any direction" has become a worldwide, commercially advanced product for all involved (Collin, 2018, p. 6). The division between what has been deemed mainstream and not has become less noticeable within electronic music, and is an underlying premise that forms the basis of the research questions presented later in this chapter, one which organically manifests through disruption of how business' and creative management practices have ultimately changed the electronic music industry (Hughes et al., 2016).

The antithesis of Grote's deep case study on how label's function in a network is the traditional understanding of how music labels interact and create cultural production through these structures. Often times, the reliance of one major successful album to prop the majority of future production for several unsuccessful releases from other artists was needed. This system was obviously for major labels, not those living in the space of the fringe i.e. smaller labels in exclusive scenes (Kusek, Leonhard, & Lindsay, 2005; Grote, 2014: pp. 76). This wasn't an issue for dance labels from the beginning of its emergence during the rise of rave culture because of their low barriers and promotional costs according to Hesmondhalgh's study on independent cultural production in the late 90s:

> The low costs of recording made possible by the rise of the 'bedroom studio' have been the object of much comment, but the minimal promotional costs allowed by the massive press coverage of the early rave scene represent an even more significant factor in decentralization. (1998, pp. 237-238)

Hesmondhalgh goes on to credit the distinct ways electronic music culture emphasizes shifts in musical style, not particular physical performance. This is an entirely different mindset of other markets as mentioned previously with authenticity and authorship; in turn, it changes the dynamics of how these labels function and how they manufacture economic capital through cultural capital. This dynamic is proposed to merge with Bourdieu's (1993) aesthetic feature with

economic capital that seemingly is backed by Sarah Thornton's (1996) chapter on British rave culture and their value with dance that audiences demand underground over the mainstream in the book *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music and Youth Culture* (pp. 176-192). When they are perceived to go commercial they lose credibility (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Kuppens & van der Pol, 2014; van Poecke, 2017). This creates a paradox for these music labels ingrained in electronic music and more specifically dance culture. How do they finance their endeavors if they can't 'sell' consistently? This question remains even more important for those labels in the music industry that try to maintain authenticity by resisting commercial sound or product. For the Dutch scene that had seen an increase in dance music festivals of 67,8%, but a decrease in recorded music at 68,6% between the years of 2002-2012, it is becoming increasingly clear that underground labels use different methods to maintain credibility (EVAR, 2012). For one, the more perceived niche and hardcore styles have moved into more obscure and inaccessible territory, something which Bourdieu and Hesmondhalgh would view as value in production, while maintaining credibility. The reality is that sales through physical or digital aren't enough for a consistent model of success for these labels (EVAR, 2012; Grote, 2014). This major factor is compounded by the influx of new organizers, labels, agencies and the like with the rise of popularity that EDM has experienced (EVAR, 2012).

In accordance, some of these labels have become or perhaps been forced to specialize. These specialized labels focus on particular styles, format, or aesthetic (Grote, 2014: pp. 125-126). Since some of these labels are not entirely specialized, it is presumed from previous accounts that they lose a sense of value from their audience in dance music, as those within the social space stress this. Some realities are discovered from this like how small-scale production isn't truly sustainable in today's market for independents now that the genre has increased in popularity, so there must be another form of cultural production that is supplying some economic capital for these firms to survive. Second, there is a clear dichotomy between how these particular underground labels work to remain afloat, one that needs to be investigated; the leverage of trust between those involved in the production, creation, and space is something that remains ambiguous and difficult to measure considering the complexity of this type of capital, but it remains important within the question of authenticity as how various relationships in this dance culture network.

Given lower barriers of entry, cost of promotion, and less investment of economic capital (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Grote, 2014; Hracs et al., 2012; Hughes et al., 2016) in what is a more mainstream accepted, competitive genre, how have dance labels attempt to establish or

maintain an identity as authentic? The focus of the industries' disruption and its effects on the business model as well as the artist self-sufficiency is of course vital, but these are tangible aspects within an industry based within cultural connections and ideology that leaves something to be desired when discussing more covertly, less aware aspects of this link.

The concept of authenticity is rooted in ideology or cultural norms based of a particular movement or socio-cultural scene, in this instance the electronic music scene (Albrecht, 2008; Elafros, 2013; Gunders, 2012; Williams, 2006). This cultural product offers "affirmation, cultural identity in the face of accelerating social change" (Moore, 2002, p. 219). This refers to social collectives in forms of musical ideology. While most genres of music are rooted in commentary, electronic music in regards to "political content and social comment are negligible, and records are deliberately repetitive, lengthy, and fairly indistinct from one another" (Langlois, 1992, p. 229). This is an impasse to traditional understandings of what it means to be authentic, as lyricism or dogmatic stances are moot compared to those of like-minded rebellion such as punk music[1].

Several disciplines are examined to understand the construction of authenticity. The first is Bourdieu's cultural production model, widely recognized as the basis of social and cultural capital dynamics in cultural fields. Due to its limitations it will be adapted, building on criticisms brought forth by Hesmondhalgh (1998) and Prior (2008) which are substantial in Bourdieu's production distinction. The second is how intangible and tangible relationships assemble to form mutual connections and influence, which is known as actor-network theory or simply known as ANT (Law, 2009). It proposes, in this case a media firm such as a music label, have an interconnected relationship with everything it comes in contact with, physically and abstract. It suggests that these actors in a network have just as much influence and control as the media firm in question. This is not unlike Foucault's (1979) body of work on discourse in human and non-human relation. Prior (2008) suggests this partnership based on some of the limitations of Bourdieu's lack of technological embrace within cultural production: "despite some conceptual incommensurability, rubbing these two traditions against each other sheds light on the complex human/non-human entanglements and field trajectories of contemporary style" (pg. 304). There are several reasons to use this theory, despite its broad usage. The way to understand authenticity can be related to non-human devices such as the relationship between experiential sound, simple atmospherics, branding or even how a particular piece of music is constructed.

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[1] Punk's own subculture and off-shoot of genres are often examples of teenage angst and anti-commercialism, but rely on direct political messages for social community relation, but also its do-it-yourself (DIY) ethic. (Moran, 2010)

These elements can live in physical productions, live performances, and other connections between these actors. An important concept to authenticity in present music is branding. It is sometimes seen as a natural evolution of common practices such as a music scene that have their own collectives (Fournier & Avery, 2004; Närvänen & Goulding, 2016). The importance of branding in music is discussed by Hesmondhalgh (1998) for independent labels compared to their corporate cousins, as their connection with community and cultural collateral are seemingly essential when compared. In his example of dance music, he states how the industry does not rely on traditional "performer status" (Albrecht, 2008; Gunders, 2012; Williams, 2006), but how audiences focus on "shifts of style" (Hesmondhalgh, 1998, p. 238). The problem with this assessment is that electronic music was still not a mainstream-consumed product in the late 1990s as it is now. Eventually this leads us to discuss how present-day authenticity is understood within performance, brandings, style and the like using ANT and social space. This dynamic has always been relevant for music and its cultural implications once it has been accepted; decades after electronic music's emergence from in the 1980s and early 1990s, the scope and acceptability of electronic music is more obvious than ever before, and the shifts of ideological acceptability for a scene that was once protected from commercialism has now become part of it (Gunders, 2012; Hietanen & Rokka, 2015; Schroeder, 2005). It wasn't until rave culture took hold in the early to mid-1990s the obviousness of electronic music's cultural significance became apparent (Collin, 2010). Labels in the Netherlands, specifically Clone Records, Rush Hour, Delsin, and the like emerged during this time period to represent current and future sounds of the rapidly changing styles taking hold in Europe.

With electronic music being inherently digital and embracing technological advances, the limitations of Bourdieu's production theory, in respect to its dismissal of technological influence, is an important aspect to adapt. Using ANT bridges the interconnectedness of a music scene and breaks down the effects of all those involved without disregarding something as technology as an influence within cultural production or authenticity. This effort to analyze how Dutch labels foresee their place in the continuum of electronic music, especially labels that are so closely associated with social space based on their inaccessibility and status, is something that can be closely evaluated using ANT and Bourdieu's production model. Many music labels in electronic music, not just the Dutch scene, do not delve into the entire umbrella of electronic music, but mainly focus on a particular extensive subgenre branches of either house or techno. These relate to the more accessible and recognizable such as disco house to the more inaccessible and abstract like minimal techno. Many deal with organizing or event planning as well as being a label and these new roles are often discussed with artists in the new age of intermediaries, not

so much labels themselves (Hughes et al. 2016). This labels often work outside of artist management, acting as promoters, event management, distributors, or producers themselves. By focusing on the topics and methods of investigation, the following research questions are proposed to investigate Dutch labels:

In the wake of dance music's popularization, how do Dutch dance music labels understand authenticity in the scene?

> *These sub-questions are proposed in relation to the main research question:*

- *What aspects in their network contribute to this understanding of authenticity?*
- *What elements are distinctly valued in the formation of being authentic (e.g. performativity, audience, collaboration, etc.)?*
- *How are these Dutch labels' identities constructed through 'social space'?*

This thesis attempts to understand these research questions by looking toward music label managers and owners. First, an overview of relevant theory is presented with key concepts of cultural production within the space of music as an art form, actor-network theory and its relation to social space and cultural production, and lastly authenticity through the view of performance, brand, and identity. This interconnected approach should give clout to understanding the findings presented in this thesis. Next, methodology is presented to inform the reader of the way data was revealed, collected, and analyzed with a presentation of whom was interviewed and the way these concepts were discussed with these participants. Lastly, the results of this collection are presented through interpretation of data and eventual conclusion. The last section of this paper presents a discussion of these themes, their implications, limitations, and future research.

2. Theorizing the Dynamic of Authenticity within Electronic Music Cultural Production

In this section, an explanation for an adapted model of cultural production proposed by Bourdieu based on the critiques and suggestions of Hesmondhalgh and Prior. Also, an explanation of how actor-network theory supplements the investigation of cultural production and authenticity in electronic music. Additionally, a deeper examination of social space and authenticity. Furthermore, a more in-depth look at how performance and brand work in accordance to authenticity, its relation with social space and cultural production understanding.

2.1 Dividing capital and music's place in cultural production

The distinctions between human, social, and cultural capital are debated between academics. Gould (2001) thinks of cultural capital as a form of social capital–individuals form rituals or celebrations and enhance their relationships through these acts in a network. Putman (2000) has a somewhat similar understanding of this, but with an important difference: human capital refers to individuals and social capital refers to connections among these individuals. With respect to the music industry, social capital is often used to describe common threads of cultural interest within festivals, events, and other music-related endeavors (Grote, 2014; John, 2009; Langlois, 1992; Wilks, 2011; Wilks & Quinn, 2016).

Criticisms are abound with the capital terminology, as key aspects such as trust, norms, and relationships are often associated with networks and social capital is often berated for its slippery slope argument that these features are forms of productivity, which can mean many different features are forms of capital (Haynes, 2009). A key issue is also the reductionist nature of the concept, where accumulation of cultural capital accrues from an individualistic point of social capital as opposed to an organic assemblage and interconnectedness of networks. Michael Woolcock (1998) suggests that social capital demands too much and remains too broad, while Coleman (1988) sees a more appropriate execution by looking only toward social ties rather than a full-fledged theory. For these reasons actor-network theory will provide a solution for this because of its vast ability to oversee many different aspects of tangible and intangible processes as keys within cultural production. When researching something like a particular music scene, where different behaviors, norms, and practices are often associated with local history and historical preface (Elafros, 2013; Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Hibbett, 2005; Thornton, 1995), how these practices remain interconnected is vital to seeing how labels work in

this world. In the case of dance music, a good example is within the German club Berghain[2], which has particular entry policies that can only be assumed to be subjective to the key individuals working security. This in turn, offers a sense of exclusivity and one can infer 'sizing-up' of entrants by employees that work at the club (Biehl & Lehn, 2016). This fostering of exclusivity is featured within new and underground scenes such as punk or electronic music, but is often used as a brand marketing tool in the present day (Schroeder, 2005). This is not unlike one of the more common ways of perceiving authenticity in the first-person–a means of understanding authenticity through its opposition to being commercial by perceiving the 'material' and attitude that is exhibited and shared by a cultural movement (Moore, 2002). In regards to how music labels identify these aspects within this construction is important, and by doing so can it be applied to a more permeable model that resembles Bourdieu's work.

As Hesmondhalgh (2006) indicates in his analysis, Bourdieu's main works *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) and *The Rules of Art* (1996/1992) focus primarily on cultural production and emphasizes on the "[…] the expressive-aesthetic activities such as art, literature, and music." (p. 212). His main focus is that of art and literature, but this is where the criticisms of his model take hold when placing his understandings of production in a creative industry as unique as music. But more importantly is the context of which he expresses these cultural connections in a social space and can understand the autonomy between them (Thompson, 1991; Hesmondhalgh, 2006). This makes his model ideal for use with this type of research, but the characteristics in which he applies forms of production does not work in the context of today's music industry based on his lack of discussion on the technological relation to art or production. As noted by Hesmondhalgh (2006) and Prior (2008), even before full-scale disruption in the music market by technological effects, dance music already blurred the lines between non-professional creatives and small-scale production. Below, Figure 1 is a diagram that explains Bourdieu's cultural production theory:

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[2] Berghain is a German night club based in Berlin. It is considered one of the best representations of electronic music dynamics and exclusivity. In many ways it is a physical mecca for techno music, but also houses other varieties of electronic music (Biehl and Lehn, 2016; Biehl-Missal, 2016).

FIGURE 1
The field of cultural production in the field of power and in social space
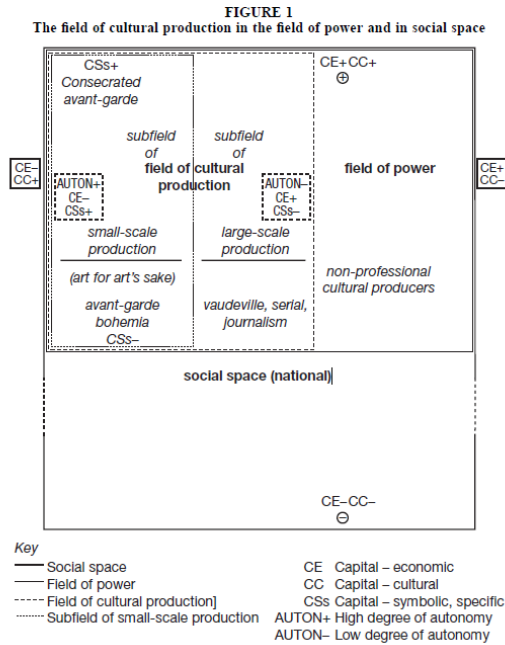
Figure 1 Bourdieu's cultural production model taken from his work The Rules of Art (1996/1992)

It is reasonable to see why Hesmondhalgh argues this point when looking at a mass produced product such as dance music in the past or today. Its field of power are producers that hold all of the creative process, but when looked closely they are in fact more involved in the large-scale production via labels. Inaccessible electronic music labels are examples of this, as some forms of electronic music are very niche, yet principle labels can become mass producers. The same can be argued for Clone Records, whom hold a distinct focus on experimental dance music since 1993. The ongoing issue with separating dance and non-dance electronic music and associating them distinctly with accessibility or inaccessibility is troublesome. The lines between the two aren't as black and white as Bourdieu claims, and this in turn means electronic labels should be looked at more closely to understand the interactions between these players. Particularly the interactions between creatives and those that are deemed cultural producers. The four-to-floor rhythm of techno, house, or dance lends itself to become more able to move with bodily discourse, whereas the more experimental and less consistent musicality with its barren sparseness to indulgent irregularities make it difficult to present and naturalize to a crowd of people. Both are part of its cultural production, but the former is often times a more kinetic representation of a socio-cultural scene in connection with music. This way of what Jane Desmond (1993) calls "socialized dance and ritualized movement" (p. 34), offers a more in-depth look at how to understand such subculture distinctly placed with social interaction within a particular space. This is often times not in a discussion of how physical movement correlates to

music culture, or in this case, authenticity. There have been recent studies on the techno discourse by Biehl-Missal (2012, 2016) or contextual meanings of how these actors work in this style of music with the early work of Langlois (1992) or Thornton (1995). While Thornton looks at how technology merges with the idea of understanding a subculture, Langlois' emphasizes the 'live' performance of this world and the way it is interpersonal relationships of producers, labels, and musicians work to form this musical authenticity in forms of collaboration. The problem with assessing these fields is that as labels and artists can be merged or interchangeable, working as producers, managers, and being spectators. Often these are distinctly described and expressed in a closer examination of a particular perspective in cultural case studies (Grote, 2014; Langlois, 1992; Thornton, 1995). This is why this particular examination needs to be taken. Unfortunately, there is a lack of understanding of how these labels that are part of what is considered a 'mass produced product', yet remain independent aesthetically. Furthermore, the forms of collaboration are more apparent in the dance music realm, as these actors appear in what can be determined to be an 'organizational space' and according to Biehl-Missal (2016) can be considered as a manufacture of "atmospheres that are experiences aesthetically" and other academics in the realms of space and architecture such as Murtola (2010). While these atmospheres and 'live' performances can be established by both sects of electronic music, dance lends itself to be more open-ended and physically expressive compared to non-dance.

Non-dance electronic music, while not nearly as represented in this music scene, has had its heavy influence on the genre since its beginnings, most notably from auteurs such as Richard D. James' work with *Selected Ambient Works 85-92*, Autechre's *Amber*, or Boards of Canada's *Music Has the Right to Children*. Among these and many more was Warp's Artificial Intelligence series[3], an influential compilation of artists. The series showcased how innovative electronic music could be, and in doing so prompted other more established dance genres like techno to push boundaries (Cardew, 2017). These releases were considered to be of the intelligent dance music or IDM[4] variety. These artists dipped into the obscurity and untried ways of using electronic instrumentation–much like Kraftwerk[5], whom were instrumental in shaping

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[3] The Artificial Intelligence Series were a series of albums released from 1992-1994 by British label Warp. The series is meant for "long journeys, quiet nights and club drowsy dawns" (Cardew, 2017).

[4] IDM or Intelligent Dance Music is a style of music that emerged in the early 1990s. Its ambient experimental style broke from traditional house, techno, and ambient characteristics, often considered to be electronic music for home listening only, as opposed to actually danceable electronic music (Butler, 2006).

[5] German band Kraftwerk are considered innovators for popularizing digital instrumentation usage and acceptability in music. Their influence and sound is credited to be a precursor for the origins of techno (Gunders, 2010; Biehl-Missal, 2016).

techno music's emergence in Detroit. This too was the case for IDM's place in establishing new forms of musical atmosphere within production. These two categorical understandings are a reasonable way of discerning the large canvas that electronic music holds then and now.

Both dance and non-dance labels do not play by Bourdieu's cultural production rules, they both have small-scale characteristic, yet at times can be considered mass producers of certain types of electronic music. Equally important is his criteria that 'small-scale production' carries the "art for art's sake" as well as an 'honor' characteristic compared to 'large-scale', but as described earlier, the two are not as easily distinguishable in this scene. This contradiction is something that the model doesn't take in account with such a unique scenario in the case of this genre. Bourdieu's 'small-scale' associated traits are is the antithesis of commercialized, inauthentic output for economic benefit, but in reality these labels are major producers while simultaneously holding 'small-scale' status. Are there clear distinctions between these three fields for these electronic music labels based on this criteria? These aspects may be explored when looking at electronic music labels and how they are tangibly and intangibly constructed within this network by using ANT to understand how this cultural capital is produced.

2.2 Actor-Network Theory (ANT)

Actor-network theory relates to cultural capital because of its predication that all actors, both intangible and tangible properties, are part of a network and assume forms of influence (Law, 2009). ANT is often used to investigate brands (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004; Arvidsson, 2005; Schroeder, 2005; Lury, 2009; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Närvänen & Goulding, 2016). This process of investigation often describes how brands are created by self-identity and what Arvidsson calls 'ethical surplus,' which can be translated to cultural capital–the creation of social bonds, experiences, and identity help create and form brand. This is similar to Bourdieu's social and cultural capital that these experiences from these individuals through a social space create a means of production. Also, how these individuals in varying degree of relationships involve trust, authenticity, and social norms among people (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Putman's (2000) distinction of how he views social capital looks toward how varied elements within a network cooperate for shared interest. Prior argues what is lacking with Bourdieu's own model to understand cultural production is that "the problem of technology does not feature highly enough. At worst its inclusion stretches his arguments to the limits of credibility" (Prior, 2008, pp. 303-304). Electronic music is borne of this digitization and tech-renaissance to define their own ideas of authenticity as recounted by Hesmondhalgh (1999) and Thornton (1995). Actor-network theory allows us to deconstruct forms of these relationships to better create a revised production

model to suit labels in this genre.It allows us to showcase obvious or ambiguous social capital that accumulate cultural capital. Jonathan Yu's chapter within *DJ Culture in the Mix: Power, Technology, and Social Change in Electronic Dance Music* reflects and argues how ANT supplements his take on electronic-emphasized cultural capital or what he refers to as *technocultural capital*[6]. This idea of reputation building with a technology-based interaction with human and non-human is something that would not be considered in regards to how Bourdieu looks toward cultural production. In the frame of electronic music, it is key to understanding how capital is collected for musicians, and for the purposes of this research label managers whom hold both distinctions as producers/artists and commercial functions. Yu's point is that by using ANT, can we see how particular attitudes toward credibility with technological interaction and ease of use has changed the perceptions and ideas of what is considered a *real* representation of scene attitude and thus ways of creating capital. The usage of ANT does not hold particular biases of "essential qualities of an actor or object," in reference to Yu's idea of technocultural capital, it does not assume that either an actor human or non-human to be the determinant, but rather a co-existence of the two (Attias, Gavanas, & Rietveld, 2013 p. 165).

Närvänen and Goulding (2016) bridge a key concept within the umbrella of ANT with how they discuss a brand–that the practices, meanings, networks, and culture are interconnected and can be called what Fournier and Avery (2004) deem a "social collective" (p.195). This same discrepancy is made by Biehl and Lehn (2016) when discussing dance music in a social setting, albeit in a more narrow view. That social practices are actually collective means of bringing about culture. In an even more broad view of how culture is assembled within ANT, we should look toward brands as an 'assemblage' and that the assemblage of culture is based on its 'distinctiveness' (Lury, 2009). Essentially what makes it unique to the previous assemblage at a particular place and time determines its value. This is paramount in using ANT and what we can presume to be one of the possible reasons for the survivability of more independent, less accessible labels manage to remain successful since the 'distinctiveness' of dance music isn't as rare as it once was. But this brings about another possible examination of how value on distinctiveness is related to other properties using ANT in electronic music culture; that is to say, those within the social space i.e. the audience, the performer are not distinctly separated from those that are producers (labels). The association, distribution, marketing or collaboration of material with a specific performer often inadvertently has these labels becoming part of this

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[6] "'Technocultural capital' relates to one's skill with a particular piece of technology and the credibility and reputation one earns based on how the community perceives that ability" (Attias, Gavanas, & Rietveld, 2013).

space instead remaining separated. This feature is also mentioned within cultural capital, the idea of value by difference, but it remains difficult to measure due to its ambiguity of how one can determine something distinct. Bruno Latour (1996) describes how ANT's notion of network does not distinguish from macro to micro, small to large scale, as it works as a collective agency and how it quells issues with those distinctions made in social theory. This idea of collective in terms of how art is judged, created, and exchanged is nothing new (Becker, 1982), but ANT allows intangible aspects to be involved (Prior, 2008). By doing so, it strengthens the understanding of cultural production of the Dutch electronic scene and its varying influences of instability and whether they still remain relevant: DJ production tools, proposed immateriality of performance of electronic music by Hesmondhalgh (1998), or other possible factors. By using ANT, specifically how culture is derived from these devices, objects, or relationships, human or non-human actors with these labels, the development of how this mean-making connects to authenticity and how it connects to these labels in this network. This is what makes ANT understandably useful in this process as it does not denote any one aspect of how a particular network is constructed. These examinations, as Prior (2008) points out, is not to discount "musicians, critics, or labels themselves, but to examine human and non-human materials as producers of the field, as heterogeneous assemblages on-goingly exchanging their properties in a relatively structured setting" (p. 316).

2.3 Social space

The disruption of the market structure is nothing new in the world of music with its cultural instability or technological innovations. Punk, with its anti-capitalist, non-commercial identity eventually was commodified, but before its rise it was deemed unmarketable for a mass audience. For musicians and labels in the scene before this newfound glory–audience and key figures either embraced this success or demonized it. In the beginning, punk's identity lay in its Marxist lyricism, lewd, often times shock performances, not its marketability (Hesmondhalgh, 1999). In the same vein, dance music has taken this stance as early as the origination of house music, with key ideals on sensuality, immediacy, and more importantly obscurity of samples (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Straw, 1991). These were foreign concepts to an industry that felt such work is sacred and should be authored and credited. For those that connect to these ideals, their interactions are placed within a space and this subsequently shifts the means of consumption and production of a given art form, often described as social space (Bourdieu, 1993; Grote, 2014). This idea refers to multiple actors interacting with each other such as audience members, critics, music performativity, producers, and samples, so on and so forth to create a sense of identity, eventually these interactions create subcultural definitions. While

dance music remains heavily subjective, it is the live performance that offers something to those in this social space in defining characteristics of a scene (Albrecht, 2008; John, 2009). Understanding the process of social surrounding of art is of great interest, in that this value of cultural practice can be translated to financial gain and how the spaces between different players interact, gives us insight into a particular music culture. This importance is illustrated by the way practice occurs as non-discursive manner in dance, yet creates "collective, cultural memory" (Biehl & Lehn, 2016, p. 1-2). This is something that should be taken in account when investigating a particular scene as vibrant as electronic music; economic processes are not sufficient when understanding the wide array of influencers within this creative industry, let alone dance music. The distinctive position that electronic music holds is its connection of individual expressivity with its almost impassive state of musicianship, supreme subjectivity that rarely holds the same undeviating philosophies of other genres of music (Goffman & Joy, 2004). Without such historical dogma, the electronic music scene has always rooted itself in self-expression within the music, individual, and space itself. Hillegonda Rietveld (2011) paints this depiction of interactivity by saying that by "enhancing sonic dominance in the dance space, a dynamic immersive interaction on the dance floor is achieved that enables the dancer to let go of the everyday structures of reality" (p. 9). This, according to Rietveld, suggests the dance club offers a "third space" or alternative from the real world. This dynamic and permeable aesthetic of understanding is not as concrete as other genres, where social identity is rooted within music authenticity through performance or appearance–dance is not so much rooted in the ideology of punk's lyrical instruction or suggestion, rock's physical showiness, or hip-hop conveyed inner-city experience (Gunders, 2012; Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Kerr, 2015). Eschewed are traditional constructs of authenticity within the respect of locality in dance music, specifically how material and immaterial objects coordinate to make such definitions in scene identity since the interplay of these particular aspects have been rooted in electronic music since the beginning of its cultural rise (Biehl-Missal, 2016; Prior, 2008; Rietveld, 2011; Thornton, 1995). Böhme (1993) applies this idea of material spaces and describes the impact they have emotional connectivity and how architecture itself generates an extension toward something larger than the soundscape itself to determine identity.

These descriptions of social space within the dance scene leads to its relevance of looking into these independent music labels. According to Baumann (2001/2007), there are three features that provides cultural acceptance of an art form: *changing opportunity*, *institutionalization of resources and practices*, and *legitimized ideology*. *Changing opportunity* refers to competitors or substitutes. For electronic music labels, its rise in competition has

increased exponentially and its acceptance within the mainstream music offers in turn acts as "a foil against which cultural genre's artistic status is enhanced" (p. 405). These labels face what now can be considered a commercialized musical landscape with far more competitors and mainstream accessibility than ever before (Hietanen & Rokka, 2015; Simmert, 2015). This also brings forward notions of branding and the tag of 'selling out' by those around an art form (Hibbett, 2005; Klein et al., 2017; Schroeder, 2005). The second feature, *Institutionalization of resources and practices,* refers to the collective action of a particular cultural art. This is brought by Becker's (1982) interpretation of art forms and that it is the participation of many different collaborators is essential for art to maintain as art. Underground music movements all have their own subculture adhere to this interpretation, and the distributors and collaborators such as music labels in the dance scene maintain it as social collectives (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Langlois, 1992). Lastly, *legitimized ideology*, this looks toward the art as a form of cultural production, such as Bourdieu's (1993) concept of how producers, autonomy and capital relate to each other. This has already been discussed by academics such as Sarah Thornton (1994, 1995), Hesmondhalgh (1997, 1998) and Baumann (2007) of how dance music and other music scenes fit in this model and its artistic legitimacy. As pointed out by Gunders (2012), the work to describe EDM and its links to authenticity is lacking as he puts forward Sarah Thorton's 1995 study *Clubcultures* as one of the few pure constructions of attempting to find this connection. He goes on to note that "the construction of authenticity is closely related to the community and its tendency to incorporate new forms and technologies" (p. 150). The disruption in electronic music community, its inherently digital nature, and the temporal definition of authenticity in subculture are significant reasons to inspect this narrative within the perspective of electronic music labels. Additionally, these particular spaces cause temporal effects on human behavior and music, but also mentioned by Biehl-Missal (2016) is how these spaces are effected by the on-site performances, material, and the immaterial objects in relation to individuals and the collective. How these parts fit to assemble an understanding of authenticity is wide and varied, and like authenticity itself, is seen to be a subjective and collective experience.

2.4 Authenticity

When talking about authenticity, the term trust is often used to express the same relationship between two agents in establishing an acceptance of validity. Trust or authenticity is a concept often used in brand communication, forms of capital, and sociology (Arvisdsson, 2005; Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Moore, 2002). Additionally, both of these terms are often cited as a determining factor of subculture approval (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Thornton, 1995). With this rise of mainstream consumption in the electronic music scene, the question of authentic

representation of this culture is brought forward. The Dutch scene has coincided with this popularity as clubs and labels have significantly increased in the country (Den Butter & Joustra, 2014). The discussion between mass producers and small producers, of authenticity, of 'selling-out' is present regardless of genre (Klein et al., 2017; Lee, 1995; Velden & Hitters, 2016); now that EDM has stepped outside of its marginalized position into a mainstream entity, determining what factors define as Bourdieu would say "art for art's sake" from those that are inauthentic according to Dutch labels is key. Just as important, independent labels in dance were the gatekeepers for an underground genre, now they find themselves in a more complex environment of more competition and less reliance on subcultural exclusivity. The word exclusivity refers to the isolation of music movements for all those within a given subculture before they become mainstream and thus plays a major role in its development regardless of era or circumstance (Gilbert & Pearson, 1999; Hracs et al., 2013; Thornton, 1995). Now with dance culture out in the open, this dependence seems unattainable with EDM's relevance today. Sarah Thornton (1995) refers to elitism and exclusivity within underground music as means for its cultural production and within the setting that dance music finds itself today, exclusivity does not widely apply as it once did. For Simon Frith (2017) and Thomas Cushman (1995), the links between identities within music culture is only understood through looking at *both* subjective and collective identity. Cushman extends this by stating that these formations are not defined, and new forms sprout from this subjective and collective identity. J. Patrick Williams (2006) sees first that these relationships between music and identity intertwine; "wherein music is seen as consequential in the creation of subcultures as well as a consequence of them" (p. 174). Second, and most importantly, is the mention of experience. Both the production and listening aspects help locate individuals in these subcultural formations. His article peers into straightedge punk subculture identity and the claims of authenticity within the online world. This approach has been neglected when understanding the context of perspectives of cultural production. Label managers remain part of the social space of cultural production as well as this online world and are not immune to such proclamations from this community.

Despite some that initially proclaimed that intermediaries have meant to enable artists and erode the major label power structure for a more democratized process (Negus, 1999; Leyshon, 2001), the integration of similar monetization and payout systems closely resembling those of traditionalist corporate major label structure within digitized platforms shows otherwise (Marshall, 2015). In the same way that major labels resisted digital distribution initially, they now embrace it (Eriz & Leite, 2017). This development hasn't necessarily shifted the power dynamic

as many believed would for independent artists or labels (Marshall, 2015). Major players have retooled themselves to integrate back into a slightly differentiated music industry. In effect, this is not an advantage for independents as they lack the resources of their commercialized contemporaries, eventually manifesting into more of a barrier for these smaller labels. This issue segues well in its application to the electronic music scene in regards to autonomy, ethos, and authenticity. As noted before, these definitions shift based on circumstance, but one can speculate because of the more producer-owned label mentality, this has not harmed their credibility in a flooded market of new faces and cash-grabs. Importantly so, is the recognition that dance music within the artistic and creative process has been the focused narrative and subsumes that dance culture is one of resistance much like punk in its beginnings (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Grote, 2014; John, 2009). The assumption of resistance isn't necessarily the case now that it has moved from the fringes of the industry, but it should be noted that the resource imbalance (in this case studios) controlled by labels was never applicable to dance like in other subculture movements (Hesmondhalgh, 1998). Florian Grote expresses this same sentiment about resistance and practice that the "artistic practice, on the other hand, is often surrounded by narratives of freedom and independence" (Grote, 2014, p. 26). Perhaps this sense of freedom has allowed these labels to continually thrive in a growing and more commercialized industry. There is no need for these music labels to find sound engineers, studio time, songwriters and other more traditional contingencies, in part because electronic music has been argued to be natively digital (Velden & Hitters, 2016) and many DJs produce their own material in private studio setups, untouched by their labels (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Grote, 2014; Hugh et al., 2016).

Strictly looking at the lens of what is anti-commercial or the denial of such does not necessarily give us a construction of authenticity itself (Redhead, 1990). This, according to Fornas (1995), is because to construct this definition is not to oppose artificiality within authenticity itself, as "we place upon what we perceive" (p. 275). Allan Moore sees this circle of thought as "illusory, since all mass mediated music is subject to commercial imperatives, but what matters to listeners is whether such subjection appears to be accepted, resisted, or negotiated with, by those to whom they are listening" (p. 218). This constant negotiation is placed within social space in relation to how individual and collective identity are perceived. These distinctions leads to ask what factors are complicit in creating a sense of being authentic and as Moore (2002) describes 'how these groups create distinctions of authenticity…' in respect to such influencers such as internet zines like *Resident Advisor* or *DJ Mag*, elitist critics, consumers, and lastly the DJ. The influences are abound for managers in electronic music

because they occupy not only one field, but blur the lines between all of them. If taking recent developments of how the authentic discourse relates to electronic music, then it one of specificity and technocultural capital involvement (Attias et al., 2013). As previously mentioned in the way that ANT builds upon the understanding of the *real* within electronic music, Jonathan Yu's own research discussed how "heterogeneous materials came together" to assess particular dance scenes and musicianship levels–the latter often referred to as a key indicator of a person's true level of skill or knowledge within a particular music sect in regards to authenticity (Attias et al., 2013, p. 167).

2.4.1 Performativity

Performance within authenticity is seen to be projection of either individual or collective audience (Gunders, 2012; Kupens & van der Pol, 2014; Moore, 2002), contextualization of event space and performer (Albrecht, 2008), and/or a concept that is often used in "absolutist terms" (Pickering, 1986). For Rietveld (2011), DJs curate these spaces as soundscapes for performance, using her example of House legend Larry Heard sequencing classics such as "Energy Flash" by Joey Beltram and Detroit techno "Strings of Life" by Derrick May within his 2006 Rotterdam set. Her understanding of this set was predicated on both her willingness to except the unknown and her prior knowledge of the track selections. The "seductive mysticism" behind the anonymity of this set and its benign peculiarities gave, in her mind, a history lesson of both musical journeys by the DJ and the track itself (p. 14-15). This extended outside of the set itself and where these selected tracks came from. More importantly, how they related to this spirituality behind the unknown when searching for record and artist information. This definition is isolated from more typical forms of performativity in the musical context. Particular 'hardcore' subgenres of rock music, such as black metal, live in the audience perspective to determine authentic performance based on commercial accessibility or 'selling out', band origin, or technical prowess (Kuppens & van der Pol, 2014). This, in Kuppens and van der Pol's view, is an ironic take of how audiences perceive authenticity by focusing on difference and non-conformism, despite the fact they themselves are conforming to typical attitudes toward anti-commercialism, appearance, and "extremeness" (p. 164). These mirror the same understanding of performance honesty through production methods as well. The argument that more 'pure' methods of instrumentation or even 'honest' performance by the likes of indie or rock bands is predicated on certain production, physical, or representative qualities (Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Hibbett, 2005; Kuppens & van der Pol, 2014). This is, in some ways, a direct contradiction of electronic music's embrace of technological absorption within its own identity, where performance has nothing to do with the person behind the tables, his usage of old dated

technology, or his actual physical performance (Biehl-Missal, 2016; Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Langlois, 1992). Instead, it is often a reproduction through a "transient but powerful experience of shared sensual over-stimulation," (Langlois, p. 237-238) where these formations are drawn "without regard for these singers as creators or individual statements" (Hesmondhalgh, 1998, p. 238).

Inexorably linked are how these perceptions are shaped by locality of scenes in the performance context. For electronic music, the varying sub-genres are generally re-mediated in a contextual environment (Rietveld, 2011; Simmert, 2015). A clear example of this is how Detroit's techno scene mirrored its own ruination and decay–hard hitting, cold and calculating, techno's emergence was not necessarily the antithesis or anti-house aesthetic as opposed to its own variation soundscape identity. To move back to the DJ, their place in the performance context is not necessarily understanding their own place in the performance-authenticity relation, but how they share an experience through moderation, engagement, and dissemination of the conditions in which they are placed in the same world as their audience (Attias et al., 2013). While not always the case, the "authorial anonymity through lesser known" DJs in particular environments offers an individualistic and subjective performativity (Biehl-Missal, 2016, p.10). Where rock concerts conjure up participation through more direct means, the DJ avoids this by using the world and his connection with the audience around him because of the subjectivity and indirectness of the music itself (Goffman & Joy, 2004; Langlois, 1992). Biehl-Missal's interviews with Berghain DJs revealed that these artists did not see themselves counterparts to the audience, but friends–"enabling a party and dependent on participant reactions for their feelings of satisfaction" (p.10). This is an obvious link with the social space of electronic music interaction. There is a fleeting nature between the audience, space, and performer in the world of electronic music, often times challenging the meaning based on sound being produced. As mentioned beforehand, it does not parallel sensible performance discourse. Electronic music traditionally is not an "explicit linear series, the site-specific performance is not fully visible, but embodied, and is also renegotiated constantly" (Biehl-Missal, 2016, p. 13). In turn, performance aspects of electronic music are wholly unstable and offer no blueprint of how to act–it is predicated on how these connections are made to remain an authentic performance.

There are distinctions between DJ sets; one is *live,* as in produced in front of the audience without the usage of records, but actual physical or digital equipment. The other is that of the more common mix set, using physical records or digital format of other producer's material. The latter is a form of a reproduced performance. Albrecht (2008) does not see either

as more appropriate for authenticity in the music realm: "all subjectivities are mobile, and those mobile subjectivities become manifest through specific, contextualized performance practices. This mobility is highly dependent upon the audience of the performance" (p. 384). While he does not directly mention dance music in this aspect, he would most likely distinguish the latter as a representation of how the reproduction can remain authentic as well as artificial in the same performance. The key is how audiences perceive or contextualize this process in the world they are in. This is more a make-up of the previous discussions of social space, ANT, and authenticity. All of these audiences have different expectations and "elicit different effects" (Albrecht, 2008, p. 393). For Alan Moore (2002) his assumption of how authenticity in part is determined by the "act of listening" (p. 210). This would be a more isolated perspective of performativity as well as outside of it compared to Albrecht, but the parallels naturally adhere to the same conceptual idea of performance within authenticity. Additionally, Rietveld (2011) states that "the practice of DJ draws on archived banked of pre-recorded music to create a relevant mix that continuously re-contextualizes these recordings" (p. 5). Moreover, this re-mediation is essentially always becoming and never static, in an effort to remain fluid to both the dance floor and the historical processes of the records being played. This 'becoming' can be seen as an active collective cultural memory produced by individuals in this world (Rietveld, 2011). Florian Grote's (2014) own experiences within Berghain suggested that this form of communication isn't as direct between DJ and audience, as a myriad of factors were included as disrupters and architects for communal and isolated experience based on expectation and evaluation of individuals. The balance of understanding a room based on expectation and selection is not necessarily anything new, as Langlois (1992) discussed how particular DJs mention how they segue into more 'wilder' pieces as the night progresses, but the scope for experimentation is common. Additionally, this experimentation garners varied audience reaction, often times becoming a regular occurrence in dance-oriented electronic music. The aspects of performativity are enhanced in part because of how they are "unmediated […], where the distance between its (mental) origin and its (physical) manifestation is willfully compressed to nil by those with a motive for so perceiving it" (Moore, 2002, p. 213). In relation to electronic music, this "unmediated" link has always been the case, which is why perhaps these direct connections with physical performance in this music scene have never been as important because of how the musical experience has always been perceptibly transferred through a hallowed space and intimacy between those involved on the dance floor.

Lastly, electronic music for many years since digitization of internet media and its emergence of the genre as a viable product has been impacted by outside influence, specifically

critics and media outlets such as *Resident Advisor* or *DJ Mag* (Jaimangal-Jones, 2018). It is important to note that their effects on audience perception is palpable in the same ways as *Rolling Stone* made or broke certain bands in the 1970s (Gunders, 2012). Their critique of live performances is often associated with the artist themselves and the music they play. Much like Rolling Stone and its contemporary music magazines prior, their voice has had considerable and direct influence on how DJ performance is perceived without actual attendance, effectively creating images of authenticity through their own perspective of performance (Jaimangal-Jones, 2018; Montano, 2009). This is effectively a link to how commercialism has effected performance authenticity in the realm of electronic music, blurring the line of 'authentic identity' in a scene that once abhorred such ideals. Discussion of individual technique and audience reaction with particular moments in events are often embellished or formed to create a sense of 'god-like' stature compared to other performers at the same event (Jaimangal-Jones, 2018). This comparative context in how DJs manifest into heroic figures, often times overtaking what initially was thought to be the purpose of electronic music–the music itself.

2.4.2 Commodifying music identity and brand

With the acceptance of a music identity within mainstream culture, the commodification of the brand and social identity is put forward. Like the authenticity construct, brand too is another form of identification in a social setting to produce some sort of meaning (Schroeder, 2005). Now that electronic music, specifically its more accessible kin have shown to be marketable, independent music labels in this sect must offer a brand that communicates to a distinct portion of this base. Additionally, this brand forming based on name recognition, style, or design can be inferred as a form of dishonesty in the space of authenticity within traditional music genres (Hibbett, 2005; Klein et al., 2016; Kuppens and van der Pol, 2014). The arguments about brand and commodification rest well with how commercialism can still be a form of authentication since it works in the very space to understand authenticity as discussed previously by Fornas (1995) and Redhead (1990). Marketing in itself informs creative production, as the end product offers a sense of exclusivity–something that Thornton (1995) and many others use to identify particular attributes of social identity within a cultural phenomenon. Concisely illustrated by Schroder are the parallels of art forms and commodification: "art remains deeply entrenched in power. Museums celebrate wealth, images create wealth, and the art market remains a monetary machine" (p. 1301). The inevitably of the end result becoming a commercial product is essentially brought into the fold once this particular cultural scene has developed and gained the acceptance of the mainstream to be commodified. It could be assumed that in the case of electronic music, its purity lies within sound itself. Performativity,

how varying actors effect selection, and the spaces it lives in. This selection, like any live music performance, cannot be branded in that moment, but for electronic music its origins lie in the status of anonymity and reproduction. The issue is with how much can the sway of "mainstream tear-up" from "watered-down" representation effect the longevity of the Dutch scene and independent labels in this umbrella genre–in particular sub-genres that have risen to prominence (Hietanen & Rokka, 2015, p. 1578)?

Furthermore, accusations of selling out is ultimately associated with artists that cross this supposed imaginary line, where previous "political and aesthetic commitments" are thrown to the side for monetary gain (Hesmondhalgh, 1999, p. 36). The transformations of selling out have changed exponentially with the advent of the digital music market (Carah, 2011; Klein et al., 2016). Where alternative rock hitting the mainstream was scattered against the backdrop of glam rock, the pop emergence of boy bands and ambivalence with such association was brought about from worries of traditional revenue streams disappearing from the rise of digital competitors and DIY aspects (Klein et al., 2016; Strachan, 2007). This internal struggle is an autonomous cultural battle between art, commercialism, and social influence–this is not unlike how Cushman (1995), Frith (2017), or Albrecht (2008) see this intrinsic flexibility in music or cultural scene dynamics.

There is an apparent disparity of income between artists (Eiriz & Leite, 2017; Marshall, 2015), and it is increasingly unlikely that this same problem has not affected the electronic music industry, where festivals have become synonymous with dance music (Carah, 2011; Hietanen & Rokka, 2015). Ironically, it would seem to go hand in hand with how the electronic music scene have embraced these forms of technology if we were to take Thornton's (1995) study on the scene identity at face value. As more 'inclusion, more opportunity, have evidently revealed more artistic and commercial viability due to digitalization,' the end game for electronic independent music labels may be to innovate around these developments (Klein et al., 2016). With less money coming from record sales (arguably a non-factor for the electronic scene), live touring has become the solution for artists to make actual money. In accordance to these developments, musicians have had to "actively strategize, the development of coherent, relatable brand identities that will traverse permeable media boundaries" (Klein et al., 2016, p. 7). This is an interesting point by Klein et al. when juxtaposing it in the electronic music industry. As discussed earlier, the media influence on performance and audience opinion is increasingly becoming a dominant factor in the world of understanding electronic music authenticity, carrying the same weight that their predecessors had accrued to make or break bands overnight. With

this in mind, how far have Dutch music labels attempted to strategize these steps with their rosters and business relationships? These steps are important to note as they can, just as magazines, make or break an artist or label reputation. The way they license and offer their own creative productions in commercial space matters to some that make-up the understanding of authenticity. Interestingly enough, the days of seeing 80's and 90's definitions of selling out are of the past with major artists whom once disdained majors, now embrace their efficiency of branding (Klein et al., 2016). While electronic music has only entered the space of major label competition recently, they are still majority independent music scene but with perhaps one caveat–their status as independents is predicated at constantly convincing of their own authentic identity to those around them. What is increasingly evident is the digitalization of the music industry has warranted that not one single act can be associated with selling out for an artist or even in the case of independent labels themselves (Klein, et al., 2016; Strachan, 2007).

3. Methodology

This chapter discusses the various portions of the methodology. The sections are as follows research design, expert interviews, data collection, operationalization, the chosen data analysis and lastly reliability and validity concerns.

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative research was used to understand the relationships that these labels have with the social space, creatives, and producers in electronic music culture. This form of research is often used in similar case studies (Elafros, 2013; Grote, 2014; Lee, 1995; Thornton, 1994, 1995; Wilks & Quinn, 2016). The way independent and major music labels and how they work in this dynamic have been discussed in regards to cultural values such in the context of their subculture, authenticity, or aesthetics (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Thornton, 1995; Williams, 2006). The dynamic nature of authenticity exhibits the usefulness of qualitative methods based on the flexibility and intangible research questions at hand. The research uses expert interviews to understand the many possible actors within what it means to be authentic. These experts are not merely in one perspective as creatives, spectators, or managers, but in some cases occupy all of these spaces. In turn, this allows a more diverse and in-depth viewpoint of this network in the Dutch scenes. The values they regard as important give us an idea of how it is determined and patterns may form to show significance. This will show where dance labels belong in Bourdieu's cultural production model and how authenticity is realized from their perspective can we further expand on this model in the present day dance scene that seems to be less concrete than proposed.

A semi-structured interview style allows the interviews to evolve based on discussion with the interviewees in real-time. This approach can often times lead to more promising information from these sources on what they think about the scene, their collaborations and philosophy of the label. This is very important to understand certain details of authenticity and how ANT showcases their perspective through the data gathered. The ability to move into other sections of discussion can showcase unseen connections from these interviewees, giving us insight in their interpretation of their place in this world (Bryman, 2012). This aforementioned reasoning is important in understanding actor-network theory, especially with the consideration of the many intangible, technologically innovative, inherently digital format that electronic music occupies (Velden & Hitters, 2016). A face-to-face discourse with these individuals is important because of the diverse background and historical roots that each interviewee possess vary in the Netherlands music scene.

The fleeting impermanence of authenticity within any cultural movement is constant and these momentary definitions can only be extracted by looking at the perspective of those currently involved in this phenomena. More importantly, examining a specific social or cultural setting such as the electronic music scene through the perspectives of multiple viewpoints can we begin to construct identities (Neuman, 2013), which is this research's aim–to understand in the context of how this construction of authentic identity is made and how they maintain cultural production in a more commercialized market.

Lastly, 10 interviews were conducted with either owners of independent dance labels or individuals whom have high standing and gravitas within the Dutch scene because of their connections and relationships within the industry (see Appendix A for label profiles). All of the interviews were done face to face as a means of getting interviewees to feel comfortable, as well as to develop an organic rapport with them to obtain more useful insights (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

3.2 Expert Interviews

There are several reasons why this research was conducted with expert interviews. One, they can be seen as "crystallization points for practical insider knowledge" (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009). This means that these experts can be considered as points of contact for a wider circle of actors within their realm. In this instance, where the focus is upon label perspectives, expert interviews is key to understanding the dichotomy and parallels in this circle. Music scenes lend themselves as socio-cultural movements and by interviewing experts that perform multiple roles as owners, distributors, producers, and audience members allows a full representation of the dance music scene in the Netherlands.

Second, the feasibility of this research is difficult because of the researcher's aim to discuss these topics with top people of these organizations and institutions. Interviewing at least one expert allows access to other similar subjects based on their connections in this social field. Both the direct influence these experts have in obtaining new and relevant results through mutual connections as well as the fact that both parties (interviewer and interviewee) share a common level of motivation to participate will essentially give the final results more weight (Bogner et al., 2009). All of these experts carry a certain knowledge that could be markedly different from other, more confined perspectives because they blur the lines between different perspectives of authenticity in electronic music as opposed to just one.

Lastly, the importance of the semi-structuring style of interviewing, along with the shared motivations of the topic at hand, gives a more dynamic, natural conversation to understand the interviewee's experiences, values, and knowledge. This should eliminate biases of the researcher and possible theory that may not be relevant in this industry as the discussion should evolve organically through the eyes of the interviewee. By remaining flexible in the process of questioning these experts, as well as probing particular interests in the context of this research, can the results be more vibrant, deep, and relevant in this muddled and sometimes imprecise extraction of information (Rubin & Rubin, 1995/2005). The fluidity of these interviews will help our understanding of how authenticity is constructed and how these subjects see their own identity in this cultural field be formulated.

3.2.1 Sampling Criteria and Method

To understand how these labels see electronic music authenticity and the following sub-questions, it was necessary to interview experts that own independent labels, have been involved within the Dutch scene in a significant way in a cultural production standpoint like producers or disc jockeys, or work closely with individuals whom own these organizations such as managers. The insights of these particular individuals should mirror some of the same concerns and values of those they work with and collaborate with on daily basis. For this reason, purposive sampling method was used to ensure representation of the Dutch scene. This method of sampling allows the researcher to look at a particular research question in a strategic way, so that it is relevant to answering the research question(s) posed (Bryman, 2012). Without this sampling method, the question at hand would be impossible to research because of proximity of target population, involvement of experts, and particular, seemingly less accessible labels in this music scene is the target. Interviewees in this particular sample all come from the same national scene within Amsterdam or Rotterdam, but their varied age, backgrounds, experiences, local scene identity and label formations should give a naturally wide-ranging perspective to assess how they all identify the main research question at hand. This allowed the researcher to look at these questions in a strategic way (Bryman, 2012) with knowledgeable and suitable interviewees communicating their perspectives. A point of 'saturation' is reached when no new concepts are found in the research (Neuman, 2013). This was met at nine interviews, but due to thesis guidelines, 10 were conducted to reach the requisite amount. Since the specific question is referring to the Dutch scene, the two cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam were chosen based on a variety of factors: national scene influence, present day relevancy, and both historical and new digitally-born label creation such as mainstays Clone Records, Delsin, Rush Hour Records to new reputable labels like Dekmantel. Some music labels that were born

digitally may give significantly different perspectives to the questions put forth as how authenticity is created or maintained, but with ANT it should give a clearer picture of how these relationships relate to each other (Elafros, 2013; Prior, 2008).

While the purpose of this research is not to compare these labels in the context of creation, it should give a more diverse dataset. By undertaking this approach, I will attempt to bridge commonalities and differences to have a better understanding of how these labels work collaboratively as well as in the social space. In the setting in which this research looks to explore, these experts are considered influential according to the social constructions of the scene present day (Bogner et al., 2009); and since qualitative work is heavily rooted in social practice, their positions as decision makers in this world constitutes their level of knowledge and expertise will help construct and map a network of shared values to provide this research's realization of authenticity. While the minimum interviewees were reached for the requirements for this master thesis, it should be stated that the problems with interviewing experts in this field is often highly difficult–many are artists and producers, while simultaneously touring and running commercial enterprises in the form of an independent music label. This gives more validation for the presented findings, and also gives a more well-rounded perspective coming from these interviewees, helping the understanding authenticity and cultural production.

The following subsection will showcase and list the experts interviewed, their association with the organization(s) as well as their relevant past and current roles within the Netherlands music scene.

3.2.2 Experts' List

Name and Organization	City	Description and Role
Marsel van Wielen (Delsin Records)	Amsterdam	Active since 1996, Marsel van Wielen's Delsin Records has been a cornerstone within the electronic music scene for many years. Not as accessible as his contemporaries, Delsin Records has managed to stick with their experimental and "not for dancing music genres". Marsel's involvement has strictly been with his label's inner-workings: distribution, packaging, artist & repertoire (A&R), record releases, as well as web shop support for various labels in the electronic scene.
Pascal Terstappen (Atomnation)	Amsterdam	Pascal's Atomnation started in 2012 with Guido Hollaers. He works as label owner, manager, and as a producer under the alias Applescal. Bringing new and unknown artists within his label from the start, he's been involved within dance music since 2007 and managed artists such as Weval, Tunnelvisions, and Gidge.
Tim Hoeben (DGTL Records)	Amsterdam	Tim Hoeben is the first label manager of DGTL Records. DGTL is a company that hosts festivals internationally, but their start was within Amsterdam in 2013. Tim has worked within DGTL for three years,

		doing art installation for the company as well as other festivals such as Valhalla. He started DJing at 17, eventually gaining a residency at Club 11 which no longer exists. He now works at the newly created DGTL Records. He is tasked with finding a vision that holds true with their identity. DGTL Records' first releases involved both international and local artists such as KinK, Fort Romeau, and Satori.
Sjoerd Oberman (Nous'Klaer Audio)	Rotterdam	As well as being known for his DJ/producer alias Oberman, Sjoerd started Nous'Klaer Audio in 2013 with friend and fellow producer Matthijs Verschurre, known as Mattheis. Nous'Klaer Audio started a year after Sjoerd began working at Clone Records, which he still presently works. The label started as vinyl only but eventually added a digital format. As a label owner of Nous'Klaer Audio, he oversees all the dynamics of the label.
Paul Hazendonk (Manual Music)	Rotterdam	Paul Hazendonk has been involved in the dance scene since DJing as a teenager. He started working for now defunct Basic Beat Rotterdam label, doing public relations (PR) and A&R for the company until they offered him to lead their first techno sub-label as Manual Music in 2005. He left in 2009 to start Manual Music as an independent label on his own, buying all the rights to operate it, and has released material from artists such as Coyu, Hernan Cattaneo, and Gregor Tresher.
Olf van Elden (Artifical Dance / Rush Hour Records	Amsterdam	Olf van Elden, better known as his DJ/producer name Interstellar Funk, has worked for Rush Hour Records for several years and started his own label Artificial Dance in 2017. Highly regarded in the Dutch dance scene, he formerly held a residency in now defunct Amsterdam club Trouw and has had his own work released on Rush Hour Records, Dekmantel, and Tape Records.
Boye 't Lam (Dekmantel)	Amsterdam	Starting out at Rush Hour Records at 16, Boye eventually working as a label manager for both Rush Hour Records and label Kindred Spirits for eight years until he moved to become programmer at Paradiso for five years. He currently works for Dekmantel as a label affairs manager. Alongside one of the co-owners Thomas Martojo, he helps set up Dekmantel festival programming in the Netherlands.
Steven Pieters (Triphouse Rotterdam)	Rotterdam	Presently Steven Pieters spearheads label Triphouse Rotterdam with a collective of like-minded artists, producers, and event organizers in the area. He's been involved in the local scene since 1995 throwing house parties that eventually evolved to event management. He is also a DJ, producer, and organizer. He recently hosted Motel Mozaïque closing festival party and has been a constant figure in the electronic scene for over two decades.
Thanos Papadopoulos (Tar Hallow)	Rotterdam	Thanos Papadopoulos, better known as producer and DJ Thanos Hana, has been part of the Dutch dance scene for the better part of five years. He moved to Rotterdam from Thessaloniki to pursue his interest in the scene and opened his dark techno label Tar Hallow in 2015. He has produced and released tracks on his current label as well as Planet Rhythm Records and Mord Records.
Ben Buitendijk (Oblique Music)	Rotterdam	Ben Buitendijk founded Oblique Music in 2016. The more hypnotic elements of techno and house music

		converge on this label and it has gained a relatively quick following since the first release. Like other electronic music label owners, Ben Buitendijk founded his label as a means of providing a platform for artists within the Rotterdam scene. Like many on this list, he produces his own material and DJs.

3.3 Data Collection

The ten interviews conducted spanned over a period of ten weeks in a semi-structured fashion. The time range of these interviews varied, averaging at 40 minutes. As aforementioned in regards to the style of the interviews, semi-structured allows more flexibility in the questions as they are not held to a particular range of answers given to the researcher (Given, 2008). This offers particular insights on how they articulate and understand these concepts as opposed to being driven by the interview guide's rigid structure. By probing at particular perspectives on how they understand their core values in respect to the research and topics being discussed, the researcher can dive deeper at why this are important in their view. Several participants were gained through mutual connections of previous interviewees. This was done post-interview by asking the interviewees if they knew particular labels that the researcher was trying to contact and would be willing to reveal a direct connection to speak to the label. The difficulty of obtaining highly respected individuals in their field was immense, but by using mutual contacts through previous interviewees and showcasing the research's critical merits, many agreed as they all found the topic fascinating.

Topics and ideas of how authenticity is formed in the label owner's perspective is discussed in the theoretical framework, but because this is in the perspective of individuals that live in social space, act as creative producers, and influence multiple fields of power, it is difficult strictly lean on the theory to give us a strict guide. This is why the open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews is key, allowing both participants in the interview to discuss concepts and topics related to the research question, but not eliminating any unforeseen themes. The onus is on the researcher to react and follow up on important verbal and nonverbal information as a means of mining deeper for key concepts and connections related to the research at hand (Given, 2008). As Louise Barriball and While (1994) describe, interviews are "well suited for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable for more information and clarification for answer" (p. 330). In consideration of the complexity and vagueness of the concepts, the more dynamic and investigative nature of this style is adequate. A more intimate and comfortable environment for these interviewees benefits the spontaneity and honesty of their answers with a face to face

interview as opposed to other methods, where the answers may be more carefully planned and less genuine.

All of the interviewees agreed to be audio taped and reveal their identities with full consent in this master thesis. This perhaps gave a sense of trust in these interviews, resulting in open and honest discussion of interviewee perspectives. Nearly seven hours of audio was recorded and personally transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

3.4 Operationalization

Due to the nature of this research being derived from the basis of how these participants describe authenticity within the construct of this music scene, the approach of looking toward certain indications of how authenticity and trust are created along the lines of how Bourdieu perceives them, what authenticity means in relation to dance music's past, and how these relationships may form in regards to actor-network theory. Although these will give us some indications of how to apply future post-interview analysis, it should not be a given that these concepts hold true for this thesis because of the evolving nature of these intangible elements in culture are not static (Hesmondhalgh, 1998; Klein et al., 2017; Wiltsher, 2016). The interview guide was split into conceptual categories and topics. They are *dance scene past and present*, *label attributes*, *social space*, and *Web 2.0 effects*. Each category has questions and possible probes. The interview guide was tweaked based on important developments and perspectives from previous interviews as well as ongoing discourse during the interviews that was not previously understood as significant from theory alone. For more information of how the interview guide was constructed by categories, theme, and what questions were used measure these themes refer to Appendix B.

3.5 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

The transcribed interviews went through an inductive thematic analysis as a means of conceptualizing and understanding common threads for the basis of applying it to cultural production and what factors establish authenticity within this particular music scene. These conceptualizations will were done by coding the transcriptions, eventually leading to selective codes to uncover thematic patterns through open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This gives the research "potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social worlds being studied" (Bryman, 2012, p. 568). This style correlates with how these themes work not only within actor-network theory but how to understand authenticity. More importantly, the inductive method allows to build upon these themes through the data gathered (Boyatzis, 2009). Since the research is mapping out the

network these labels live in through coding, how they establish these connections and in effect they identify authenticity based on what they say, do, and perceive is more important than any deductive approach from previous case studies. Electronic music, like any 'ideological art' is always changing norms, behaviors, and authenticity as expressed by Thornton's case study of dance subculture in 1995. By understanding the mean-making through ANT and the "meaning as social" through an inductive thematic analysis can I infer how the social construct of authenticity is produced, additionally how these 'agents' in this network may or may not fit in Bourdieu's vision of cultural production. Inductive thematic analysis means "themes are identified are strongly linked to the data themselves" and strikes a close resemblance to grounded theory (Patton, 2015). Without a coding frame or a researcher's bias preconceptions on the topic, the process goes through a data-driven analysis. Despite this, "… researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). That is to say through past case studies, present theory, and internal bias of the researcher all have some underlying effect on how this data is perceived and interpreted, but not knowingly.

Much like the semi-structure interview style, the strength of thematic analysis is in its flexibility. The freedom granted to analyze such a complex and often rich text with thematic analysis, specifically with "constructionist paradigms," is important for the purposes of this research (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). The approach of interpretation is that of the latent analysis, since a broader scope of structure and meaning is needed to articulate something as imprecise as authenticity. Latent thematic analysis is very close to discourse analysis, where "analysis is not just description, but is already theorized" (p. 84). Essentially, this research aims to look at a constructionist perspective, in an attempt to theorize on sociocultural identity enabled through individual interviews. The following details the step by step process of how this type of analysis was carried out.

First, once transcription was finished, the data set was interpreted and the long process of uncovering divergent themes from within the text itself begins. By probing at their relationships with consumers, collaborators, and other label connections a context of how these varying actors work together to form what can be considered authentic in their view. In turn, it allowed this researcher to understand where these labels stand within cultural production, eventually adapting it based on these findings. Rubin and Rubin (1995/2005) state the excitement behind thematic analysis lie in the discovery of emerging themes within the interviews you perform. This is an important factor to take in account, as the subjectivity of the research question guided

the themes embedded, discovered, and analyzed from the transcriptions. After transcribing the researcher mapped out related ideas, patterns, and discoveries he initially saw when reading before the coding process. Both the familiarizing and typing the transcripts verbatim is considered key in interpretation, sometimes referred to as *interpretative act*, where specific meanings are created through early analysis (Bird, 2005).

After familiarization, the actual coding process started. The coding process was done using the software program Atlas.ti for all the transcriptions. According to Boeije (2010), "a code is a summarizing phrase for a piece of text which expresses the meaning of the fragment" (p. 96). The strength of coding is it "encourages a thematic approach" since the text is broken into sections, compared, reassessed, and grouped into new and existing themes (p. 96). As stated previously, this type of analysis does not rely heavily on pre-existing theory and open codes were labelled *in vivo*, which refers to direct interviewee speech as open codes as well through the researchers own interpretations with the research questions in mind (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). After open coding, the process of relating these different codes within categories was started. This is referred to as axial coding. When starting to disseminate these codes into categories, the process of eliminating redundant open codes and related concepts were done. This progression is done to showcase the dominant and less critical categories in the coding (Boeije, 2010). Categories often take on relational concepts to some theory and properties of their own. Axial coding can be either descriptive or analytical, bringing about a more abstract framework from the initial coding phase (Boeije, 2010). Lastly, selective coding or the actual connections between these categories was discovered in the field. This is done to make sense of the data and eventually come up with logical main and sub themes in relation to these categories. If done correctly, a conceptual framework is created with clear relationships and connections between these themes to make up the "core category" or central theme (Boeije, 2010, p. 115). This was understood through common patterns from the data set, as well as sharp divisions of thought differing from pre-existing theory from the interviewees. For a visual mapping representation of these codes, refer to Appendix B.

The next chapter subsequently breaks down these findings. The analysis and following interpretation to answer the main question of how dance music labels understand authenticity as well as the following sub-questions discussed in the first chapter of this thesis.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is often a concept that is used for evaluating quantitative research, where data set can be replicated with confident results. Though this may be the case, it is also argued to be

used as a way to designate qualitative research in its effective quality (Golafshani, 2003). This term takes different dimensions to understand reliability as the term quality. This definition is understood in three ways: credibility, neutrality, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Despite the claims that reliability has no good measure within qualitative research (Stenbecka, 2001), it is of the opinion of this researcher that to ensure reliability within the qualitative paradigm, transparency is paramount. As mentioned previously, all of the interviews were recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim by this researcher for the purposes of extracting new, existing, and relevant data for the concept relating to the main research question. It should be noted that the replicability of this type of research is very centralized to the identity of the present socio-cultural scene, in this case electronic music in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

In regards to validity, it should be realized that the subjects of this research first acted as label owners, but also play different roles in the social phenomena being investigated, sometimes as disc jockeys, producers as well as audience members within some of these questions. It can be argued that this is a form of triangulation. With this in mind, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest that the aim isn't to obtain truthful readings from these perspectives, but best strategize a way to add rigor, complexity, and depth to what is being investigated. All participants of this study were considered experts in this field based on specific criteria of their involvement within their local scenes either as influential managers, owners, or producers. This effectively establishes a sense of validity with the data collected. The clear and transparent discussion put forward in this section should presumably be sufficient to confirm reliability and validity in this research. Finally, all participants expressed interest in the results of the research after the interview and will be given a concise, reduced report of these results for their own use.

4. Findings

This chapter presents the relevant themes and sub-themes that emerged through the coding process. The identities of all the participants are revealed with their consent, and attempts to paint a vivid representation of these patterns and divisive perceptions to justify the results that have been formed from analyzing the data set. Some of these themes have direct relation to how theoretical framework discusses authenticity in the vacuum of this music scene, thus distinctions of how these labels understand these concepts is elaborated upon. Some of the themes and sub-themes formed organically from the data set and are relevant to the understanding of how these participants see the authenticity music scene. Some quotations have omitted specifics based on the sensitive nature of the comparisons given and the likelihood that these revelations would be detrimental to their future relationships in their field.

Several themes were discovered from the analysis dealing with intangible and tangible aspects to deepen the construction and definition of what is being presented. These vary from the likes of social interactions, external and internal presentation, representation, and motivations to pursue and work in this field. Each sub-chapter of the findings chapter describes a main theme in this research and are as follows: *the old definitions and the reality of authenticity, the role of context and space in performance, shifts from digital volatility and the appreciation of art,* and lastly *social collectives.* Some of these main themes have sub-themes within them, expressed by the sub-heading in the subsequent main theme. The following sections showcase the similarities and clashes that the interviewees expressed. Most notably, the aim of these sections is to understand how authenticity is constructed in relation to each other.

4.1 The old definitions and the reality of authenticity

In most cases, what is described as authentic in the eyes of those not in the creative power field according to Bourdieu and other cultural theorists, is based on a definition of exclusiveness or elitism as discussed in earlier chapters. This was the first theme that was discovered, the grapple between authentic identities in the context of a commercially vibrant industry. The participants in this research representing parts of their respected local scenes and labels discuss how they see themselves and their own enterprises in this world of more accessibility and social acceptance to their craft. What has fundamentally been a commodification of niche music genres that were once considered to be underground to outsiders is now commercially viable and seeping into mainstream consciousness. The

differences of how audiences and consumers see this concept compared to those in positions of a blurred field of cultural production i.e. social space, creative, and commercial production.

Majority of participants discussed the changing definition of what it means to be 'underground'. Initially deemed by its relative size, now it is discussed in terms of its attitude and collective subjectivity of sound. This is a changing definition that Williams (2006) mentions as consequence of music, identity, and experience of these scenes. Underground is inaccurate in the context of exclusivity and this sentiment is expressed by Boye 't Lam of Dekmantel:

> Underground had to do with the size of your audience 15 years ago. […] they were just small basement parties, you know? Now, I think it's linked in terms of spirit. Somebody that's considered underground is an artist that [still] plays for smaller groups of people.

This is also discussed by Paul Hazendonk of Manual Music–that particular genres that were considered underground have become viable commercially and how the audience improperly deems artists commercial based on sound:

> I laugh when I see really die-hard techno fans write about certain techno DJs and say this guy is underground, this guy is commercial, [knowing] as a booker myself their fees… I'm like come on man, this is a big business. They define an artist being commercial [based] on the kind of music they play […] not the actions they do.

Along with this unheralded view, how these labels understand the distinction between what is authentic is not *exactly* based on the particular sound of the music, in terms of its complexity or perceived generic style that the public would hold, but how individuals work within these scenes and how transparent they are with their artistic aim and philosophies. As previously expressed by Moore (2002) that the division between underground v. commercial is a generalized illusion, but more fitting is to examine how these definitions are negotiated. This brings about an interesting point about the politics of purism within any music movement. The majority of the interviewees indicated that distinctions of commercial and underground music is inconsequential within the context of purism or *real* music. In their view, this is based on the perspective of the listener or as Steven Pieters of Triphouse Rotterdam put it, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," and decidedly mention what is most important is how you go about your contributions within the scene itself. Similarly, this same perspective is expressed by Fornas (1995) and Moore (2002); an idea of subjective individual changing realism in collective thought. This is a wholly compressed way of understanding authenticity through social collectives and relationships within the your creative and commercial decisions as label entrepreneur, producer,

or disc jockey. These decisions are presumably in line with the innovative nature of producing music or connecting with mutual like-minded enthusiasts when attending label showcases, festivals, or clubs as opposed to more ulterior motives not expressed from the start, such as bolstering your brand over music, going to events for the social media aspect, or attempting to find ways of reaching an audience before you understand the context of the role you are in. Hesmondhalgh (1999) broaches this line between financial gain, political and aesthetic commitments for artists within music scenes. In accordance to these interviews, there is not an outright definition of this and as Pickering (1986) and others in discussions of selling out mention, there is not one move that paints an artist, or in this case a label, inauthentic (Klein et al., 2016; Strachan, 2007). For all of these interviewees, the context is held within the producer and disc jockey distinction, individual subjectivity, clever branding, and location context which will be elaborated upon in a future themes.

Mindful for all the participants is the fact that the market has changed. The influx of new players from all sides has diluted the way they see the scene as they once did 10 years ago. The majority expressed their cynicism with representation of large-scale events, but understand that this was an inevitable part of any genre of music as influential and expansive as electronic music. They see the positive in this new emergence–lower barriers, more sustainable living environment, and easier to connect within the community. Several of the label managers such as Marsel van Wielen of Delsin, Paul Hazendonk (Manual Music), and Thanos Papadopoulos of Tar Hallow discussed how aware those involved are of the accessibility of electronic music, and the fact that specific genres, as Boye 't Lam (Dekmantel) states, have reached a "tipping point," and are excited to see how the culture evolves in the next three years because of it. As illustrated previously, the idea of commercial and underground bears no actual relevance to authenticity for these people. Thanos (Tar Hallow) unequivocally says this:

> Commercial music and underground music, it's the same shit. It's about how you handle it. How you present yourself and what your attitude is. We have [commercialism] in our mind as a bad thing and we characterize a certain part of every music scene like this, but it's not a bad word. It's because we only focus on the commerce and not in the art […] Art is making the music, so… the moment it becomes vinyl it's a product.

This idea of authenticity through the creative process in producing art is more important to those involved even if they work in a commercialized industry. All of them strictly discuss a feeling or motivation that they perceive as their labels identity through the music. Their goal is not to make money, but to share their vision without sacrificing their own internal ethics. Succinctly, Steven

Pieters (Triphouse Rotterdam) saw it as creating a connection with those around you. It is the all-encompassing "moment in time and space that stops existing; it is kind of a religious experience." The discussion of what qualities can be said to be underground is not the issue for these experts, the evolution of modern electronic music has moved closer to the commercial aesthetic. All experts articulated the fact that there is *real* music living in the commercial space, regardless of genre. This goes against what Moore (2002) sees as first-person authenticity, that collective perceptions of commercial are shared by cultural movements to understand *real*. Pieters' mention of connection involves more than the aesthetic in understanding these old definitions into the new because this type of "religious experience" and reaffirms Prior's (2008) idea of how human and non-human materials produce and assemble structures constantly. Additionally, these connections are momentary and dissipate after these experiences are made, but in that instant, what Biehl & Lehn see as collective cultural memory is experienced by those involved. Goffman and Joy (2004) have elaborated on how electronic music is framed in self-expression subjectively interacting within a space. This immersive and continually changing "third space" as Rietveld (2011) mentioned is predicated on sonic space, the dance floor, performer, and the individual-collective interaction. This is something that these experts elude to–a varied and temporal experience between all things around them.

The idea of commercialism as being inauthentic or fake is a misnomer for these experts. This, as mentioned previously in an earlier chapter is how Moore (2002) sees this argument, that "commercial/authentic polarity is illusory, since all mass-mediated music is subject to commercial imperatives" and what truly is of focus is the subjection of what points "appear to be accepted, resisted, or negotiated" (p. 218). What Moore refers to is of course mass-produced authenticity in rock music, but the parallels still remain with dance performativity and of social collective. With the old argument of authenticity somewhat dispelled, how these experts wrangle the ideas of purism with the awareness of shaping artist brand. Their perception of this topic is an interesting transition from the more conventional idea of authenticity and will be the subject of the next sub-theme discovered in old definitions and reality portion of this chapter. How they identify an artist as authentic is naturally based on the steps of that individual toward recognition or success. As the next sub-section will discuss, a necessary part of electronic music and its more accessible dance music sub-genres have now become artist branding.

4.1.1 Purism, sell outs, and the notion of the artist brand

The mention of purism is inevitably connected to integrity and truthfulness as proposed by many academics that discuss authenticity. Often times citing the way someone performs

genuinely or the end result as a means for profit as opposed to making the art for art's sake (Bourdieu, 1993; Thornton, 1995). What is less discussed or perhaps de-emphasized is that authenticity lies within the 'commercial space.' The majority of experts interviewed understood their identity whether as DJs, producers, or the label itself, despite not necessarily being exclusively commercial in the public's eyes. Many know their audience and understand the fine-line of how the public chastise these artists until they destroy a reputable name forever, based solely on what they perceive to be the current commercial sound. Some experts eluded to this fact, that those that have an 'underground name' or clever marketability tactics toward the public are able to mask or shield themselves from this flurry. In some ways this camouflage is irrelevant to these experts, but most understand that this public acceptance of a brand maintains the success of their name in public. To those in the local scenes, their contemporaries do not see purism within a scene as a spearhead to understand what is real in their world. These perspectives mirror how marketability and brand shift the definitions of selling out expressed by Hibbett (2005) and Klein et al. (2017).

Where most fans or spectators would characterize imitators based on performance or their unique sound (Kuppens & van der Pol, 2014), these experts are indifferent with performativity when assessing this concept. All experts agreeing this notion has nothing to do with physical ability or image in that time and place. Artificial Dance label owner Olf van Elden, known as Interstellar Funk, says performance is not an indicator for what is important when assessing a performance.

> For me it's about good music, bringing about a certain energy. I don't care about the performance or how they stand behind the booth. If it's live and it's good music, [or] a good mix then for me, I'm already in love.

In this perspective, these label owners and managers blur the line between creative, audience, and production. Here, they enter the audience space, and like Olf's point, their emphasis is not on look, perception, or reputation, but on track selection. Ben Buitendijk of Oblique Music agreed with track selection being of importance, but he mentioned a particular artist's Facebook post. Regal, a Spanish techno DJ that discussed what he called "business techno"[7]. A clear declaration of the business side of the dance music industry, specifically techno and the

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[7] In a Facebook post on the February 20, 2018, Regal discusses the mainstream consumption of techno music and its business ramifications. He compares it to the once unmarketable hip-hop industry and his vision to represent legitimate techno in a mainstream realm in advertising and other media. He received some backlash for this from the electronic music community, but many working within the industry have stated that this is indeed a present reality the industry is facing (Middleton, 2018).

ramifications of its commodification and how it has become part of the music scene. Ben hoped that such elements of "business techno" become distinct and recognizable. In an attempt or means to differentiate the branding aspects of this industry, but anguished that such a clear line does not exist at this time and perhaps never will because it has become part of experiencing electronic music already. These issues of purism are significantly muddled, even for label owners whom know the inner-workings of this industry and struggle to differentiate what is representative of electronic music and its countless fragmented niche genres.

The particular shade of music selection and characterization will be discussed within *the role of context and space*. If authenticity does not matter in the perspective of strict performance, how do these experts see something as real when they are in social space? There are numerous times when experience or connection inside the social space is important, often understood as *atmosphere* or *journeys* of a performance–something described by Langlois (1992), Rietveld, (2011), and Biehl-Missal (2016). For the bulk of interviewees, implications and factors that are involved for are rooted within the social and intangible context. In relation to the commercialized aspects of other types of music, electronic music was considered the free-spirited punk class for decades, but now contend with its own mortality of this philosophy. Where Graham St. John's 2009 book *Technonomad* describes the resistance toward such commercial aspects through socio-cultural methods, this culture now finds these practices crouched upon. These shades of *real* live within such a distinction, one which all experts say are inconsequential to the true spirit of the music. This is perhaps because Gunders' (2012) assessment of the John's work as a means of understanding authenticity through these activist movements was too bold of an assumption to apply to strictly understanding authenticity viewpoint in comparison to Thornton's.

4.1.2 Social acceptance within a new scene dynamic

One of the topics discussed was how the socio-cultural aspects of the scene have changed since their label formation for these experts. The majority of experts that were involved in their scenes for nearly a decade have seen major changes in the type of audiences and how this dynamic has shifted in the world of consumption. In their view, this shift is most noticeable between a club-festival distinction, immediacy of technology given to audiences and producers alike, as well as a static representation of the certain genres within the electronic music continuum. Understandably the way that these representative events function has changed in the wake of electronic music's popularization. For the majority of experts it has been noticeable

with how the audience function in the context of festivals and clubs. Pascal Terstappen of Atomnation explains the distinction of festival audiences:

> You have [some] people that go to festivals and events that don't really care much about music. They care about the environment, the people that go to parties. They like the music [being] played, but often don't know what DJ is playing or what artist is [being] [played]. Two completely different markets.

This scene change has had ramifications in the way that artists play their sets at festivals as well as clubs, what Boye 't Lam (Dekmantel) explains as the "lowest common denominator, [music] kind of shifts from complex to just kick-drum," a point that will be focused on the next section. What is clear for many experts in Rotterdam and Amsterdam is that they all stress the point of what got them involved: an organic interest of the music with those people around them. Label creation was started because of their need to share art with those around them, often harkening back to social ties they have developed for many years. This distinguishes the divide between how media and public characterize authenticity and how these experts do–it is both the cultural practice of forming relationships and art, whether that be producing music, giving a platform to local artists and sounds they see as real to their identity, or working together to communicate their passion to the outside world. Stratchan (2007) encountered these same values when looking at what he called "micro-independent labels" within the United Kingdom. The obligation to remain separated from the music industry in the distinction to remain part of a true collective through a mutual network of artists and labels. Thanos (Tar Hallow) decidedly and succinctly sees only one goal and that is to create art, something that Bourdieu (1993/1996) would see as outside of the commercial space[8], even if Tar Hallow is actually part of this distinction. For all of the experts, the final result is not the end game, but the process of creating it to achieve something greater. While labels are identified by their particular sound or "feeling" to those in the public, there is no give and take to their consumers or a seeking sense of validation. Labels will always be a business to them, it is just their impulse to push the boundaries of their own musical identities through these labels that matter. The way the interviewees mentioned the intricacies of "feeling" is akin to how they understand performance. This understanding is often done unilaterally in the context of the many different influences to create something they would call a journey.

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[8] One could argue based on Tar Hallow's relative small size that they remain small-scale producers, but the genre they specialize is now consumed universally at more large-scale events such as festivals.

4.2 The role of context and space within performance

As aforementioned, these experts agree that performativity as DJs or spectators is not a defining characteristic of relating to electronic music authenticity, but specify the value of how track selection defines their experiences in 'performances'. Some such as Michael Albrecht (2008) would frame this as a "self-awareness problem," that audiences separate the performance as authentic to those around them (p. 384), more importantly, how this genuineness is exuded through these artists by not reproducing material. For a DJ, the freedom of expression in the world of dance music is done by reproducing material as a means of rearrangement, and thus must rely on a sort of *hyper-connected* level with their audience and the particular frame of the world around them more so than other genres. This is perhaps because if the set is not *live*, it is strictly dictated by reproduction. It essentially commands how they *should* play as opposed to what they *want* to play dependent on setting. All of these experts discuss how this is not a defined practice or guide, and separate influences of authenticity in performance based within the context of location aesthetic, knowledge, time and journey.

The factors of capturing a worthy performance is one that is threaded between the audience, the space they are in, and the subjective narrative they push in their own performances. Albrecht (2008) believes that audience anticipation is a key factor in producing authenticity in live performances. This is also the case for the majority of these experts, but many mention how it is an elaborate and complex process. Some experts mention the "unknown" and surprising selection as a means rewarding the experience and this discovery leads them to be elated and more enthralled in the set. As mentioned previously by Steven Pieters (Triphouse Rotterdam), they lose their sense of self in the music. In reference to importance of reaching this level of connection, he references a type of framework:

> That's always a combination between the location, music, artists performing, the audience inside, the lighting, decoration, but also the general vibe, and how you communicate about it. So there are very different elements. If you put them all together in the right way, you create the perfect setting for this special moment that everybody is searching for.

Authenticity is usually an insular idea of self-identity, but in this context it is about dissolving the constructs and reality around you by combining many different actors in a room. This is not unlike how Lewin and Williams (2009) understand the individualism behind the meaning of authenticity, the distinctions of "self, community, and space have collapsed" (p. 66). In this

respect, where people can momentarily leave their worries behind for a brief instances, the way these factors make up this occurrence is purely meant to be broken into nothingness for those involved. All of these lead to several components to make up this experience, varying from the somatic to metaphysical aspects that change the perception of performance. In congruity, they make up this dissolution that Lewin and Williams mention, but these moments are rare, as many experts discussed the perfect storm of its appearance.

4.2.1 First component: location aesthetic

The first component discussed with these experts in how the context of space connects with authentic experience was location aesthetic. Much like Prior (2008) points toward how complex human and non-human interaction effect the fields of cultural production in glitch music, this component showcases how all of the experts interviewed agree on the influences of sound, lighting, environment, aesthetic, and physical space enhance an experience of performance authenticity. For the majority of these label owners it makes a difference in the perceptions of performance. For dance music, the spatial orientation of club settings is much different from those within festivals, and this is aided by what some of these experts called situational aesthetics–how darkness allows for unabated expression on the dance floor, allowing a stronger connection with the music and collectives involved with the music being selected or how a particular place gives another dimension of uniqueness to spot, something that mirrors a label's identity. For DGTL manager Tim Hoeben, where his label has grown from a company known for festivals, a connection between the sound they are promoting and the exclusivity of an event is important:

> […] in relation to label showcase locations, […] venue is important thing for our identity. One-off locations or something small. Last year we had this idea about doing a subway station pre-party. That would be great to host a one-off small event like 500 people for the label because it's a special location. We would choose these locations because it has become part of our DGTL identity and [allows] us to connect to people.

The same sentiment was expressed by Boye 't Lam (Dekmantel), but a discussion of communication was raised:

> You'll get a better result [if say] with [a] Peter van Hoesen [set] in a small dark warehouse with 300 people and just one light bulb. It just works better. I mean that's why techno works so well at De Schoole because it's just a dark basement area […] If you want the best atmosphere, everybody should have a [sense] of surprise, also a very

good sound system. With a shit sound system, it's [difficult] to communicate. With a shit sound system communication just fatigues your ears after an hour.

The focal point of communication through sound, in this case a separation of lows, mids, and high frequency of the music. Without these audible difference, the moment becomes awash with static frequency. Without a balance, the translation is lost among the audience. This non-human actor, directly communicated through non-human means in a social practice has direct force within the way this culture is produced in these specific setting. While these active and passive actors are not necessarily the main catalysts at understanding a form of performance authenticity, they are indeed a make-up of understanding it within a location aesthetic, which in turn is part of accepting its relevance as a power in this field. In regards to the distinction of representation between clubs and festivals, the majority of these managers said that clubs are often forms of cultural identity to these scenes, as opposed to festivals which are often considered more open to what Marsel van der Wielen (Delsin) aptly described as "social party interaction," less representative of what this is all about–dedicated scene heads enjoying the music itself. A location says something about how these cultural movements are assembled, many of which go to the same parties, venues, and form a scene identity through the same interests. This is not unlike any other cultural movement or social order, but in regards to musical identity, they hold special bonds within the electronic scene.

Communicative non-human actors (location décor, lighting, physical site characteristics) that both resemble label and scene identity during that period is driven by sound and the social interactions within this space. This is a complex and organic set of circumstances that are aided by these non-human actors to create something that all those in dance can relate. ANT showcases these links by what Prior says are how "the technical and the social are inextricably linked, in turn sensitizing us to the fact that instruments and associated devices are not passive intermediaries but active mediators" (p. 315). These machine processes do not have a life of their own, but are indeed part of understanding electronic music performance and its relationship with authenticity. These technological advances are embedded in the way the interviewees understand electronic music, and other non-human agents within this field certainly effect the meaning of particular experiences in performance. This constant exchange of influence between those within the fields of social space, creative, and production is obviously an assemblage of how we see cultural production. In the case of electronic music, more specifically dance music settings, these non-human materials supplement this structure of producing part of the identity of those all involved in this exchange.

4.2.2 Second component: knowledge

The largest divide between experts was how to assess the concern of a knowledgeable social environment placed in performance. Much like the first component, it is predicated on the circumstances of the event itself–festivals harbored less maneuverability, while club showcases or residencies offered more experimentation for the curator. Next, the split is twofold for the conditions of audience knowledge which will be elaborated on shortly. The most important aspect of this component is how the DJ impacts those around him by his track selection and what some experts described as 'reading the room'. When a DJ is selecting and transitioning through his material in a performance.

Audience Knowledge

The ongoing conflict of how much innate understanding of what is being done and how much needs to be left for discovery is something that these experts could not agree on. Often times this was not sufficiently expanded upon due to the intangible and difficult nature of explaining the logistics. Many agreed that they love discovering new material through DJ selection. A particular feeling where of the unknown is brought forward, an excitement and energy to the space itself, but some lament that this is lost with the digital age when creating social connection of hunting these tracks down. Music applications such as Shazam have destroyed this sense discovery within these performances, where post-analysis was ingrained in these cultural identity for many of these experts. Attempts at describing music this was often part of finding out your own boundaries and discerning your own identity within the scene with each new revelation.

Some pointed toward having a knowledgeable audience for their showcases as a means of "getting the right crowd." This was in reference to the artists mixing, performing live, or the track selection itself. Boye (Dekmantel) cited it as a means of "people understand who is playing and what they're doing instead of coming for the hype." This is an ongoing battle between these two schools of thought. Where is the right line to allow yourself to be a metaphorical empty vessel for new experiences, while still having the ability to appreciate what is being attempted in the context of the space? The majority agreed that there is no 'fine line' between these two, but more so the emphasis on reaching a plateau of shared experience is often associated with either a knowledgeable or unknowledgeable crowd. Olf van Elden (Artificial Dance) described his local scene has far more open than it once with discovery in the club realm saying, "I have the feeling that people really want to [hear] stuff they don't know, instead of playing your hits. Back in the days, it was a bit more narrow-minded, I think, at least in Amsterdam."

The emergence of electronic music as its own independent genre within mainstream music has left the unknowledgeable to rise. Every expert did not see the negativity for this, as this growth is a natural process, and decidedly stated that they only see positivity in wake of this massive arrival. Their explanation for this is that they were not concerned with the divisions of real or not real in the present market al.l of them knew why they started this commercial enterprise, and by demonstrating their internalized values through their artists and label's unique sound they would capitulate to past pitfalls. This idea of audience knowledge is mentioned by Rietveld with her own personal experience with "seductive mysticism" (p. 14), and still applies to these label managers in terms of understanding how audiences play in the dynamic of journey. This also echoes how one of Jonathan Yu's (2013) interviewees, Claire Raynor, understood the art of DJing–that it was about reading the room and understanding the situation, not necessarily the technology, but how you select your music.

DJ Knowledge

Initially the presumption put forth to understanding authenticity through performance would normally be technique for a DJ as proposed by Jaimangal-Jones (2018), but all experts stated it had nothing to do with appreciating the aim of the artist's goal in mind. Pascal Terstappen (Atomnation) bluntly explained this point: "you can be skillful as you want, as long as your taste is shit or you don't know how to playing in certain situations when in a room then […] it doesn't really matter." Others reiterated this perspective through a delineation of experimentation and wonder instead of focusing on ability. For these experts, knowledge is key, and expressing the way you weave this conception through a musical narrative in an attempt to connect with everything around you. This obviously has much to do with selection and context of the atmosphere. The former is expressed by Moore (2002): "success which depends in some part on the explicitly musical decisions performers make" (p. 220). While every label manager agreed that taste is something that evolved through multiple stages of discovery that is eventually filtered through this consumption, they all agreed that this is up to for that person to decide what is real for them. This point is telling because despite the varying sub genres that these experts live–techno, house, experimental, ambient, and their expansive sub sets, are collectively part of an umbrella term, yet perceive this belief the same way. Montano's (2009) own study of the Sydney commercial electronic music scene points toward this as well– understanding narrative, the room, and the audience. Biehl and Lehn (2016) reiterate this narrative responsibility and that "collective synergy between the person mixing and that of the crowd" (p. 612). While Langlois (1992) and Yu (2013) look toward this as a matter of keeping

employment, they both point toward how a DJ keeps a vibe going as opposed to their beat matching, which with the introduction of CDJs and other seamless mixing technology is not regarded an indicator for musicianship in the electronic music community.

4.2.3 Third component: time

As previously mentioned in this chapter, performance is often times influenced by the space in which you are presenting the craft. *Time* itself is of utmost importance in understanding this particular performance context. A look at how Geeves, McIlwain, and Sutton (2016) discuss music performance through the lens of professionals gives an indication as to how these previous components work. Their findings concluded that performers often gauged audience attentiveness and body language, mentioned audience size, and venue itself as triggers for their own connection with those in the crowd. One caveat about this development was that these musicians "vary not in value they place on connecting with an audience but in the way in which they understand and go about achieving this connection" (p. 195). While some of their findings parallels with this research, time in particular is not discussed with most studies with this type of connection. This is mainly because set times vary by circumstance for electronic musicians–day parties, festivals, club nights, label showcases, after parties are as short as 45 minutes to as long as seven or eight hours. Where all experts that were DJs stated audience size and knowledge was not necessarily determining factors to achieving to experience a full-fledged journey, or connection, it was often times predicated on how much time was needed to reach the aim of the artist in relation to the room's influences. Olf (Artificial Dance) mentions a particular set he attended that eludes to this discrepancy:

> I saw a [DJ] and he played eight hours and in the middle of his set he started to play free-jazz. I mean, every other DJ would try to play this in his set and it [would be] completely different [compared to this]. That was a journey and that moment was insane at six, seven hours, you know? If a DJ only plays two hours there's no space to really start that journey.

Later in this interview he would discuss the issues with applying this certain performance and connection to a festival setting, where time is limited and circumstances change:

> You're constantly playing at the same time as five other DJs are playing. So you kind of have to give [consistent] energy so they don't walk away. In the club you can like maybe do deeper, [stranger] things because they'll stay anyway.

The settings and circumstance of location, once again comes up on the basis of making these connections. *Time* is more static in certain performative genres such as rock music or at festival conditions in general as experimentation is placed at a limited state due to these constraints. Ben Buitendijk (Oblique Music) points toward something more destabilizing in regards of electronic music, for its betterment when he discussed the issue of time within the circumstances of DJ sets:

> I prefer long parties, long sets because I think in the scene right now because everyone has to think about [their] profile and their brand. Everyone and everything is becoming pigeon-holed [certain genres]. Oh, you're hard techno, you're deep techno. I'm a techno DJ, but I own so many house or minimal records[…] The longer I played, the more I can show what I do[..] but I like the longer hours [because] it really becomes a journey to what they [the DJ] offers you.

Less freedom is given to the performance, and for many of these experts, this ability to elaborate and extend these sets gives the artist more room to breathe and expand the boundaries of his audience and the sound. It should be noted that perhaps live sets are not necessarily bound to this structure. Their experimental nature and sometimes mysterious musical existence is assumed to be already linked with "the right crowd," often times having spectators looking for the unknown of what will be produced in front of them instead of relying on standard mix sets. As previously declared, a standard DJ performer would usually function as conduits of reproduced material, as often times the material they present is not their own. Ideally both of these connections are forged through these components until the ultimate goal is reached in understanding this context: the *journey* itself.

4.2.4 Final component: journey

The final component is the culmination of how the role of context and space work as an assemblage in which to achieve this experience. Experts that acknowledged the rarity of these moments were first to mention how omitting one of these elements would not make or break this occurring. As exhibited with the other three components *location aesthetic, knowledge, and time,* the coordination of both human and non-human actors of understanding electronic music authenticity through performance is often complex and at times anecdotal. This idea of authentication somewhat echoes Moore's (2002) want to shift from originator authentication to the focus of reasons why "they might have for finding, or failing to find, a particular performance authentic" (p. 221). This mediation of this field would lean on what Moore would call second and third-person authenticity, the elements of performance in electronic or dance music are often not

constrained to such perceptions of traditional genres. The key is to weave such a coherent, often times surprising narrative through performance as opposed to actually performing in the sense of physical or technical ability. This in some ways lies on onus on the DJ, having the responsibility to guide those within the space, but it is not entirely centered on them to reach this metaphorical summit. For this journey to be complete "the creative DJ will be informed by his crowd, not individually, but as mutual or communal interaction of the dance floor" (Biehl & Lehn, 2016, p. 612).

The *journey* and all the aspects these experts elaborated upon were not an all or nothing approach. Ben Buitendijk (Oblique Music) discussed how some people say someone can be terrible at mixing, but his track selection is great, but for him and all of these interviewees "it's about everything." Pieces of this puzzle can be rearranged and some can be excluded to form such a connection in social space. In the process of these interviews many of these experts stepped out of their label identity and into what could be called self-identity, as it seems that the two have become mirror images of their own forms of authenticity. This is not unlike that of Sarah Thornton's own writings on dance subculture, where authenticity lies an essential preamble with how technology incorporates itself in this movement (Thornton, 1995). She refers to the mixing culture of the 1990s, but while the practice remains the same, the technology has leaped forward. Additionally, J.E. Patrick Johnson's (2003) own assessment of what makes performance has to do "with context as it does with the aesthetics of the event itself. In each context the 'rules,' conventions, and expectations of text, setting, performer, and audience vary, and in each context they contribute to our understanding of performance events" (p. 11). For those involved in these scenes it is still about the music and how the incorporation of these technologies and actors resolve what all of those in this subculture search for when being part of these collectives. For these label managers, the imperative is within sharing innovative ways of making, experiencing, and sharing music. Albrecht (2008) sees this as varied mediated actors, "where certain kinds of performances allow performers to differently negotiate the complicated terrain of contemporary popular culture and the expectations of authenticity therein" (p. 393). For these label managers, audience expectation is based on balancing a connection and as Albrecht stated, negotiate this complicated terrain. While the next theme is not necessarily part of electronic music cultural production, the way that music is consumed and purchased was important for these interviewees, as it created part of their identity within the scene and allowed more appreciation of certain aspects of electronic music: production, artwork, technique, and craft. This is of importance for these interviewees because of the consequences of the digital disruption of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

4.3 Shifts from digital volatility and the appreciation of art

Discussing notions of purism and electronic music culture, some experts inadvertently mentioned how digitalization and growing expense of physical products has warped their own perspectives of art itself. Steven (Triphouse Rotterdam) referred to this as "digital volatility," others such as Thanos (Tar Hallow) mentioned as a consequence of his over-consumption caused him to clear his entire digital library in order to start over and "reset" his outlook. While some of this research's theory and possible understanding of authenticity within the electronic music scenes in Netherlands connected to the possibility of performance in vinyl-only sets or distribution in the same way, these experts all disregarded those forms as being more representative than the present digital tools of today. However, many mentioned the overabundance of material at their fingertips, one click away, that has caused a lack of art appreciation for themselves and what they think has occurred in the scene. Vinyl, as Sjoerd Oberman (Nous'Klaer Audio) and Marsel van der Wielen (Delsin) described as careful design and offers a form of exclusiveness to those that purchase these products. For the experts that described this in more detail, a nuance of looking at vinyl is how to approach a piece of music in a more attentive and engrossed manner, where as digital music is often tossed aside and thrown into a digital void. Once released into internet space, which all described as an overabundance and lack of standard of quality, it essentially fades into obscurity. Unlike physical products, the tangible space it lives in and the design of the art allows for a more in-depth appreciation of the process it took for everything involved. While vinyl does eventually physically deteriorate compared to digital, Steven (Triphouse Rotterdam) points toward a "certain factor of longevity," this offers another form of discovery through someone else's collection being sold off, but more importantly like the others, focuses on this creation. This has had significant and unintended cost to performance for actual producers in the industry. Since gross income for producers isn't near the same standard as actual event performances, producers are held to the standard of actually mixing based on their productions in this market this leads to an uneven and tepid representation of these two fields. Paul (Manual Music) elaborates his dislike of this development since electronic music's emergence:

> When I started you got booked because you were a good DJ even if you didn't produce any records, you got booked. Now, we shifted to a mentality where you get booked [based] on [whether] you have one known or hit record[…] You make a hit record, everyone wants to book you. They [bookers] throw a lot of money at you. I've seen DJs play, and I'm not going to mention names, but they put this guy on a main stage and he couldn't DJ for shit.

Steven divides this issue from need as opposed to artist's exploiting sees a problem mounting within the scene because of it:

> People are forced to start performing as a DJ, but a producer and a DJ are two completely different things[…] You need those bookings because you to pay the time that you're making music. So these people performing based on a hit record are not necessarily the ones that create the best atmosphere at a party, and [vice versa]. Some really good DJs don't get enough shows in because they don't produce this 'good' record, and this is [exacerbated] by the likes of media [tastemakers].

This has developed an unhealthy pyramid structure in these music scenes, creating a vacuum of artists that are financially reaping the benefits, while others struggle to make ends meet. This dynamic is not unlike any other scene that has developed with commercial viability and according to these experts is up to the people within positions of power–promoters, publicized labels, bookers, and even audience to explore the unknown to have the ability for others to live off their art. This is a direct consequence of the digitalization and increase in its popularity (Klein et al., 2016; Tschmuck, 2016). This, according to Montano's (2009) study on commercial DJs within the Sydney scene reaffirms this belief, that "this is not considered to be the embodiment of dance culture for DJs–instead of working in unison, their aim [is] to promote themselves" (p. 85). What this means is the responsibility falls on the social scene itself and how they go about correcting this problem to create some sense of stability and sustainability in the scene. This leads back to Boye 't Lam's (Dekmantel) forecast of the industry itself. A boiling point caused by standardized material whether considered commercial or underground sound has become the norm, and those not willing to embrace the innovative landscape of the strange sounds of electronic music are bound to be left behind in this upcoming change. The final theme presents an obvious identifier of cultural scenes: collectives and how they represent their vision of authenticity. In the case of these interviewees, more importantly their label perspective, it represents sub-collectives within an expansive electronic scene to determine and maintain authenticity for themselves and their labels.

4.4 Social collectives

        The electronic subculture is ubiquitous with what all social and cultural academics consider to be rites of passage, rituals, or common means of discourse. In this respect to these label owners, their own distinctive ways of understanding authenticity are grounded within their own collectives. While the understanding of this based on how journeys take place in its connection of the space itself, often times the majority of these experts reiterated their need to

keep their label going because they have a common goal and vision shared by mutual friendships. These collectives assemble as part of the larger social scene of electronic music, but are intrinsically different based on the tastes and experiences of these users. Not one experience is the same for everyone and those that share commonality in their viewpoints often created these commercial entities as a means of sharing their excitement to those around them. This still remains a common link between other socio-cultural phenomena, that of bond and collaboration, reflecting other subcultures in other fields of art. Biehl-Missal's (2016) assessment of why these sub genres of electronic music are "ideal for creating meaningful and communal experiences" is because of their objective, non-narrative style (p. 9). This is perhaps because of its obscurity and is often times an individualistic mean-making experience, where collectively this discourse is understood on the floor itself.

Outside of these 'ideal' genres, where other 'non-dance' genres are meant for another form of consumption externally, this collective is still individualistic, but not in the context of familiar scene locale identity, it is shared by those same like-minded individuals. In a way, these labels act as sub-groups of these scene collectives themselves–retaining their authenticity through those same connections once they are given exposure. This is why Prior's (2008) thoughtful view on how Bourdieu's field allows for maneuverability, that the way that an issue such as authenticity can wrangled through "according to a series of associations and schisms between genres, institutions and associated personnel" (p. 311). This is how the cultural field is brought into existence, by combining contextual, physical, and non-physical actors in this field can we begin to see how these managers distinctly differ from other perspectives on this. Thus, these social collectives are forms of constructing label identity, as their own electronic music overview is a stark difference to more traditional audience views on genre purity, practice, importance, and authenticity. The sense of collaboration is nothing out of the ordinary within music scenes, but as Langlois (1992) affectingly illustrates:

> "recorded forms of almost any music in the world today have more cultural significance than 'live performance,' and are the result of a great deal of collaboration and connivance between musicians, studio engineers and record producers, including at various points a whole network of music industry personnel" (p. 237-238).

The vital point of discussion with performativity is how it relates to the *real* in any music scene. These social collectives do not look toward performance as a clear marker for understanding authenticity. In fact, a few looked toward music selection in sets, not whom is producing a narrative through what is essentially reproduction of material from other artists in sets. Clearly

the way musical journeys are weaved are important, but this has to do with a variety of factors, not just the selection; the artist or his actions, the audience, the location, this amalgamation of these things determines what is important to achieve authentic representation. There are exclusions to this thought in electronic music, as previously discussed with live modular sets, but they are often uncommon in the world of electronic music.

The social collective aspect is very insular to the beginning origins of these scenes– whether they be in Berlin, Detroit, Amsterdam, so on and so forth, but they eventually reach a network of common and mutual scene connections internationally. The way that these interviewees establish and maintain authenticity in this fluid definition is through these origin connections. They emphasize that they remain consistent in their vision, transparent in artistic and scene intentions, and do not change their attitude or approach in an attempt to reach superfluous success or immediate financial gain. This dialogue was often mentioned as a way to see someone as being true to themselves in reference to being authentic to those in the scene and around them. If they were to lie about their intentions when being part of this scene, say with only monetary wealth in mind, but perpetuate their passion to contribute to the music scene, this would be considered for these interviewees as inauthentic or fake.

5. Conclusion

The main ambition of this research was to understand how Dutch electronic music labels see authenticity within a music scene that has recently entered a state of commercialism and immense popularity in the last 10 years. Additionally, how these labels construct their identity within the cultural production field of social space, what are the most important aspects of this scene in relation to authenticity, and how what other influences, human or non-human, contribute to understanding the main research question.

As previously demonstrated within the understanding of music authenticity, perspectives on this definition perceived through the lens of artists in performance (Albrecht, 2008, Elafros, 2013) audience exclusivity (Hracs et al., 2013; Kuppens & van der Pol, 2014), media interpretation (Jaimangal-Jones, 2018), or scene interactivity (Thornton, 1995), oddly omitting label takes on this understanding, inadvertently revealed a lack of research. Early accounts by Lee (1995) and later Strachan (2007) offer insights of how label owners see music authenticity, but in respect to this research, expert interviews offers a tripartite viewpoint within the fields that produce culture according to Bourdieu because of electronic music's unique position. Furthermore, the fact that the way to understand cultural production is often in a broad sense for dissemination offers this research some strength in its assembly (van Poecke, 2017). The deconstruction of authenticity and how label managers effectively present values in social space, creative and commercial fields is natively broad and has created a convoluted understanding of label identity and authenticity. Thus, the most pertinent findings will be given in the most concise matter possible.

First and foremost, how the default sensibility of understanding authenticity leans on us v. them mentality. This refers to an elitist, more exclusive identity association is equal to or a preamble to stay authentic. This argument often goes hand in hand with an anti-commercialism perspective with authenticity, but as we can see from these themes this is not valued for these varied hierarchies in electronic music culture. It is initially understood in its place within the cultural field of production, but regarded as inconsequential to the narrative of identity. This pivots away from art for art's sake, in the sense that electronic music has been inherently a connection between the music, audience, and performer. Unlike other forms of performativity within social space, these experiences are registered as organically fluid, *live* or *reproduced,* by whomever is creating the narrative. Instead, a significance is predicated on context as well as actual collective respect for those around the scene. Independent label or not, their brand has become an inevitable fact of life for this genre now that it has entered the confines of

mainstream consumption. The discourse between how DJ performance, crowd involvement, experiential open-mindedness, and other factors eventually lead to a "quasi-religious" experience (Jaimangal-Jones, 2018) are the key factors of seeing authenticity pass brand practices now ingrained in electronic music scene identity. What is being seen as authentic is a form of a materialized brand from all those in the field of production (small-scale or large-scale, creatives, social space). It is an inevitability of any genre of music that enters the world of mass consumption. These practices have sufficiently been determined to be part of these experiences and associated with these labels within the electronic music sphere. There is clear sense of technological affluence in making performances easier in the electronic music community, but this focus on "technological determinism" can be seen as a natural occurrence for a genre that relies so heavily upon these new practices. Instead of attempting to see where the DJ or producer is placed in this framework, it is more relevant as Yu proposes, to see how these "new creative practices … contribute to an ongoing redefinition of musicianship" (Yu, 2013, p. 170). While discussed previously with social collectives theme, these are not necessarily widely consumed by producers or audience, but for a large majority the accessibility factor involved with present-day electronic music looks to be an attempt to share this involvement with DJ performance. This goes against the ideology of the music itself and for most of these interviewees, but it is clearly understood as a part of the industry's evolution. There really is no longer a way to operate within electronic music without showcase some form of brand identity in musical style or label reputation, they are becoming synonymous with understanding and identifying these characters and actors in any niche genre within the electronic landscape. A perfect way is the way the totality of reaching a journey is multitude of coalescing influences, but each one lends itself to forming this identity for these Dutch labels. Some efforts are done knowingly, others unknowingly, but they know what they want to share and in the process carve out their own place in this world are perceived authentic for it.

In regards to context, nothing is more important next to the social collective aspect for the interviewed experts within the dance industry. Identity is constructed through an amalgamation of influences in social space: location, atmosphere, a priori or posteriori given circumstance, and non-human assessment of sonic landscape and music selection. These actors are constantly shifting, and unlike some areas of genre musicianship where one is considered more important than the other, electronic music does not crumble with the absence of one. In essence it is as Biehl and Lehn (2016) look toward the dance floor experience, a "collective, cultural memory" (p. 1-2). Furthermore, social aspects of these collectives is vindicated as a major sticking point in understanding objective authenticity. Unlike one of

Thornton's (1995) understanding of club cultures in the 1990s of exclusiveness being an aspect, the communal side of how DJs, managers, promoters, and producers work together to reach similar goals has more to do with purism within authenticity than arbitrary subjectivities of particular sounds of electronic music niche styles, accessibility, or crowd size. As previously mentioned as politics of purism, this distinction reiterates that their understanding of authenticity is in a more broad sense, not just within performance or sound, but in the realm of attitude. Moore (2002) mentions how elements of authenticity cannot be strictly referenced through "sonic design […] but a matter of interpretation which is made and fought for from within a cultural and, thus, historicised position. It is ascribed, not inscribed (p. 210). Thus, Moore's understanding partially mirrors Hesmondhalgh's (1999) money and power over aesthetic and social connectedness as inauthentic. It still stands true in the scene today that has been encapsulated by profitable sustainability. While Moore's view does not object to such claims of sonic design as being part of this concept, its subjectivism is of importance, as many interviewees claimed this to be the case. Purism is progressive and predicated on individual authentic subjectivity filtered into collective thought. This eye of the beholder dissemination of music gives more freedom of expression, something that has not been lost since electronic music's emergence and still a key for these labels in seeing authenticity within themselves and the scene itself. The network that these people hold within the social collectives are not just the audience, but their own contemporaries, scene 'heads', producers, and other communal volunteers that form an understanding of authenticity. John (2009) emphasizes this point in dance culture, but does not stress how social space and other non-human actors move to produce this culture. As technologically reliant and innovative as electronic music is, it is only complimentary to its identity with respect to those that tell a story through the music. The term spirit was often eluded to in a way in understanding what is *real* and offers shades or perhaps an overlap of what both Sarah Thornton and Graham St. John describe as distinct portions of this culture.

        Ramifications of new players in every avenue has changed the way these label managers look toward the scene. They find it less vibrant and engaging as it once was, but juxtapose these feelings not with resentment but embrace them for a new age. According to them, an over-reliance on particular acts starves the way the industry is being consumed. Producers are forced to move into performing, regardless of actually understanding how to approach particular atmospheres. In some ways this has caused in a static representation of the scene, particularly Amsterdam, where electronic music has grown into the city's identity. These changes do not sway them from their initial reasons why they started in the first place–common

interest in the genre itself and giving a platform for individuals. But if what was expressed as a static representation remains to be the case in the coming years, the ramifications that include a lack of innovation, originality, discovery, or change will inevitably lead to suspension of these elements to eventual demise (Jaimangal-Jones, 2018). While digitization has offered significantly lower barriers, the quality is still perceptibly in their hands as they prop unknown artists on their labels based on their production style and uniqueness as opposed to carbon copying material to suit the label's appeal and profit margin. This may be the saving grace for these important elements that push for change in scene dynamics for originality and innovation.

Social space may be the most important aspect to examine in relation to this research; the network of agents through the process of analysis has shown a culmination of authenticity is produced through aesthetic, physical, and non-physical means. The spirituality experience is still the core part of how social space relates to identity for these labels–mixing location aesthetic, crowd, time, and music narrative to create something more than what is being played. This eventually moves in such a way that worries about identity are immaterial, much of how Lewin and Williams (2009) understood individualism in authenticity. We see a merging of these forms of authenticity, most likely because these managers are themselves either in this space directly, controlling a part of the narrative, or observing as commercial entities. Clearly these threads need to be even more communicated, as it is difficult to discern where one begins and the other ends for these managers.

Lastly, moments of what makes a particular music *real* was never contingent on actual skill, but how these people move through the context of space–their negotiation and understanding of the room. Purist proclamations of vinyl only sets or vinyl collectors being more representative was not the case. Despite their acknowledgement of physical products being the end result of art for art's sake (its creation is most important, not its result). Thus, this aspect has moved outside the idea of authenticity, and into subjectivity and appreciation. Design, longevity, discovery, and more focus on what the album is trying to articulate or how it effects their own sensibility of music taste was why the love for vinyl still exists over digital formats. There is a certain volatility associated with the overabundance of material. The Internet has given everyone an opportunity to showcase their music good and bad. For these managers, it is far too easy to get their hands on it and it results into less appreciation for it.

One of the more interesting divisions of the findings was the idea of how vinyl, while appreciative, is considered outside the space of authenticity or even a form of constructing identity for the label. Consuming art outside the concept of cultural production raises a few interesting connections with the way digital formats have changed listening habits, producing, and consuming art itself in relation to individual music identity, regardless of genre.

Given the research presented in this paper, it should offer a more open discussion on how labels in other genres, not just electronic music, are part of authenticity for those involved. While limitations are based on historical precedent of the music itself, electronic music is an exotic case study to examine the overlapping contingencies of socio-cultural identity and the construction of authenticity. Also, the presented findings on social space offer a complimentary view on present dance floor and electronic music scene academia (Biehl & Lehn, 2016; Biehl-Missal, 2016; Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Thornton, 1995) as well as how these network of actors form identity using ANT (Elafros, 2013; Prior, 2008). ANT showcased the relationship between these label managers, the equipment they used, and how the entire spectrum of community identity was grappled with new advances in technology to understand possible redefinitions of musicianship as means of understanding authenticity. For many, technology was a compliment to showcasing easier uses of particular selection, but ANT revealed how locations, audio/sonic space, the dance floor, and the DJ's selection interacted to create this network. Alone, these elements did nothing for cultural connections in this scene, but together they created bonds of understanding both cultural production in this industry as well as general themes and differentiations of authenticity.

While notions of performance were considered to be less important to Hesmondhalgh (1999) compared to Biehl-Missal (2016), my stance on this subject sides with Biehl-Missal's understanding of this. While performance in the physical or direct influence is not of importance, it is often an amalgamation of performer narrative, space, and atmosphere that creates sense of authenticity for those in attendance. This is a more in-depth understanding of what was previously considered to be a non-factor in electronic music. This may have evolved because of how branding has been implemented itself within more dance-oriented styles of electronic music, but it should be noted many of these experts were part of their respected scenes as producers, scene 'heads', or DJs themselves five years or more before this emergence occurred. Hesmondhalgh's (1998/1999) examination of this industry was within the British dance scene, not the Dutch scene, and that this performativity aspect does have credence in his understanding *real* electronic music. This may not be the case because of two important factors:

the British scene may have different values or more likely, the time period in which his research resides in has changed immensely. Thus, Biehl-Missal's (2016) take on understanding this performance aspect as part of cultural identity is more relevant to this research's own examination of the Dutch scene. While not in the physical sense, performance for DJs in electronic music as indicated and explained in the findings comes through selection, 'reading the room,' or vibe aesthetic–not choreography, physical tells, or traditional performance factors as Hesmondhalgh eludes to. This research provides indications that these ideas of obscurity/intimacy are still part of assessing performance (Rietveld, 2011; Straw, 1991). Unlike Hesmondhalgh's (1998) take that "post-house dance music/postwar dance music," does not reflect the ideas of integrity, and authenticity as rock does, it can be determined that through the discussion of brand, the hallowed notion of distinctly being different in terms of "lack of interest" from the audience for performance has changed (p. 238). Like other genres, the balancing act between remaining authentic and continuing a brand is difficult, but this research shows that the majority of interviewees did not go into events or management attempting to showcase their work individually as producers or collectively as a label with an idea of branding strategy, but mentioned many times that they knew individuals that solely did this and paid for exposure from high-end elitist magazines, promoters, and festivals. This notion of *not* intentionally marketing their label as a product is perhaps why they think a person's intention or attitude needs to be transparent. By declaring your purpose is one of the most important aspects to understanding authenticity for these labels in Dutch electronic music.

The multilateral viewpoints of these experts offers a brushstroke approach to this research, which in this case can be even more narrowed toward one perspective–often times these perspectives melded together with performance, management, and audience causing some discrepancy in the way the findings were assessed. In some cases it may be an impossibility to examine one perspective, as electronic music blurs these lines between creator, commercial management, and social space, but if one such approach were to be found than it could give more significant insights on how these connections and perspectives connect even further.

Lastly, this last point of impossibility of assessing production in the electronic music industry may be because of how Bourdieu's cultural production model does not fit in this circumstance. It can be argued it needs to be reworked in the context of this genre. While the "negotiation" of these fields are already discussed by him and other academics more heavily, it seems as that the case may be professional, non-professional creatives with small-scale and

large-scale production need to be one field and how this interaction works with social space is often the actual "negotiation" that is occurring. This idea is presented by Moore (2002) and Albrecht (2008) in the way they understand authenticity, but not in the frame of cultural production. This idea of a more organic and flexible distinction between social space and a proposed merged creative/production field is in interesting dynamic and could possibly be of use in future understanding of label perspectives. This negation of these lines offers a significant impact on understanding how cultural production works in such a horizontal plane of DIY aesthetic and ability as the electronic music social scene prides itself on, both individually and collectively. This merging of the two fields may solve the problem presented by Hesmondhalgh (1998), as his assessment of the post-rave scene in Britain shows how cultural and economic relationships are always changing and that electronic music's cultural fragmentation is becoming more and more difficult to assess in Bourdieu's boxes. More unstable within these fragmentations are their own cultural practices based on scene and technological circumstance. The methods of technological production in electronic musicianship and scene norms are always determined by particular set of evolving technology production trends, something that Yu (2013) and Prior (2008) mention when evaluating cultural production within particular shades of electronic music scenes using ANT: house music in Melbourne and glitch in the United Kingdom. This combination of production and creative process offers more flexibility when augmenting it with ANT. In essence, we see how the interaction of social space of actors continually and progressively shapes cultural production and authenticity in any electronic musical scene.

5.1 Limitations and future research

        The strength of this research is built with expert interviews, but this very well may be a weakness. Since these questions relate to music labels and their construction of their identity and how they see authenticity, it is a valid point of contention to discuss the broad perspective they hold. The participants all have occupied forms of cultural production presently or in the past, and thus may cloud the end result of this understanding. This reaffirms possible issues with Bourdieu's cultural production model being used as a means to understand how cultural capital is produced within the electronic music community; the field is so substantially rooted with independent-minded aesthetics, it fundamentally disregards these distinctions since it has become a massively consumed cultural product. Artists, producers, and social space all are part of the cultural production model, but in electronic music, the majority of label managers occupy all of these spaces. This makes it difficult to recommend this model to understand electronic

music cultural production, but the aforementioned merging of two fields could possibly be the first step in the right direction.

In relation to its centralized nature of looking at Amsterdam and Rotterdam scenes to illustrate the Netherlands electronic music scene, it is apparent that there are other labels in the Netherlands outside of these cities, but it was of the opinion of this researcher that these scenes would produce more representative results based on history and propagation of label creation in the last decade. The disparity of the popularity between these labels can be seen as a sticking point. A label such as Dekmantel has more visibility compared to a smaller, newer labels such as Tar Hallow. This is was not the purpose of this research, to directly compare these labels, but to understand how they all form an idea of authenticity in the field they both occupy. It could be argued that this research could have been more refined in respect to this disparity. This limitation was done knowingly, but the end result is considered to be worthy representation of the electronic music scene label perspective in this author's opinion.

Lastly, the research illustrates how important ANT has been in understanding social scene attitude(s) and practices in relation to how they interact with technology. This research supplements previous work by Hesmondhalgh (1998), Albrecht (2008), Thornton (1995), Rietveld (2011, 2013), Montano (2009), Yu (2013), and Prior (2008) in regards to understanding how technology, cultural production, and authenticity relate to one another within various music scenes. It also shows this continual evolution of the electronic music scene. The vast network of influences assessed by ANT is understood as a constant redefinition based on specificity and technological practices, the latter still remains the same as Thornton painted the electronic community and its conquest of technological embrace in cultural identity decades ago. This research should add to the great foundation that these academics have and still are contributing to understanding the intricacies of this fascinating genre of music.

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Appendix A:

Label Profiles

Delsin (1996)

Since its emergence in the Dutch scene in 1996, the record label has been a staple for the spread of European experimental ambient and techno records. Marsel van der Wielen's impact on not just the sound of techno within Europe, but his local scene in Amsterdam has impacted collectives, future labels, and how quality and experimental techno music was perceived and consumed in the Netherlands post-Detroit. Much like Clone Records in Rotterdam, Delsin's historical longevity and presence offers something more than just a label for the majority involved in the scene.

Atomnation (2012)

Created by then Berlin-based Pascal Terstappen and Amsterdam-based Guido Hollaers, Atomnation has increasingly put out a wide spectrum of electronic music. Often looking to present unknown artists to their audience, the two look toward the discovery of new material and unknown musicians in the scene.

DGTL Records (2017)

A newcomer in the label scene, DGTL Records is not unknown in dance music scene. Their festivals are considered to be top-tier entertainment and showcase of local and international electronic music in the world. The label emphasizes localized talent as well as internationally respected producers for present and future releases. Their evolution will be of interest in the coming years as they have yet to establish a label identity, despite their already known commercial event presence.

Nous'Klaer Audio (2013)

This label spawned from two Rotterdam-based producers and DJs–Sjoerd Oberman and Matthijs Verschuure. Their goal was to present local talent and give a platform for Rotterdam-based electronic musicians. Initially a vinyl-only label, the two decided to present digital formats with Matthijs' (known as artist name Mattheis) debut was released. They have gained a dedicated cult following with a diverse showcase of techno, house, and ambient.

Manual Music (2005)

The mellow, deep house, tech house, and trance label Manual Music has been around the Rotterdam scene for quite some time. This diverse approach has given a following over the years and label owner Paul Hazendonk has emphasized local Dutch producer talent.

Artificial Dance (2017)

The recently formed music label by Olf van Elden, known as Interstellar Funk to those outside of Amsterdam, at this point does not have a consistent music identity. According to Olf. it is only about putting out good music and sharing that experience. As of now only Job Sifre's *Worries* (2017) and Dr. C Stein*'s *La Bombe Plastique* (2018) have been released. Both offer new wave, electro styles merged with either industrial or dub techno influence.

Dekmantel (2007)

The growth and reputation of Dekmantel has only risen since its founding in 2007 by Thomas Martojo and Casper Tielrooij. The label has released unknown, emerging, and established international and local artists. Dekmantel functions as an event management, promoter, as well as a label. Their coverage of wide-range of spectrums has offered an eclectic collection and library from hard-hitting Marcel Dettmann, acid soundscapes of Juju & Jordash, or even deep house grooves provided by Joey Anderson. The label formed from outside of what was happening in Amsterdam–minimal house parties. The two founders wanted to offer parties and a platform for those to experience varied sounds from the other parts of Europe and the Americas.

Triphouse Rotterdam (2012)

The people involved within Triphouse Rotterdam itself is in fact older than its emergence. Steven Pieters,, who has been part of the Dutch scene for over 20 years, is the main label manager. The label acts as a collective for like-minded individuals within the musical landscape. They usually offer deep house releases and function more so both event promoters and a label to showcase their talent.
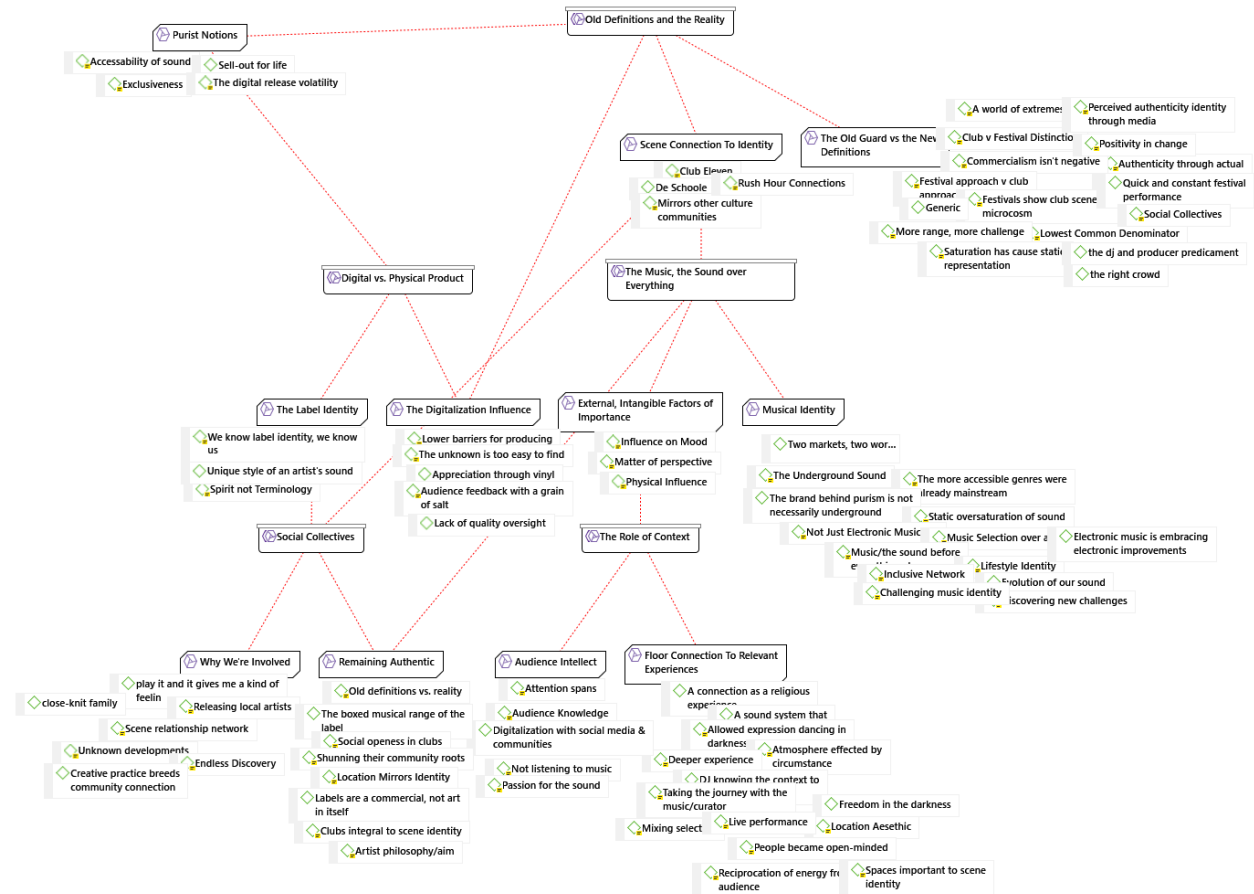
Tar Hallow (2015)

Run by DJ/producer Thanos Hana, Tar Hallow has positioned itself in the Rotterdam scene as a hard-hitting and experimental techno label. It the past several years, releases by Charlton, Rhyw, and Klankman present the label's growing industrial sensibility.

Oblique Music (2016)

Oblique Music was founded by Ben Buitendijk to showcase more mellow and hypnotic tones of techno music. The label releases on digital and vinyl, with an emphasis on balancing the hypnotic with urgent soundscapes.

Appendix B

Code Tree

Interview Guide

Dance scene past and present	
Integration within the local music scene	The following questions were asked to measure this topic: "How did you get involved within the dance music industry?" • Involvement with other artists • Influences that spurred your interest
	"What attracted you to this type of music?" • Specific loves of the scene • Social relationships • Inclusive nature
Scene differentiation	The following questions were asked to measure this topic: "Have you noticed any differences in the music scene from when you started to now?"

	• People involved • Exposure of certain sub-genres

	"How has this been effected by the mainstream exposure of the electronic music today?"
	    • Acceptability of the niche
	    • Distinctions between what is real and not real music

The real and the audience	The following questions were asked to measure this topic:
	"What do you consider real dance music?"
	    • Distinctions between commercialism and underground sounds
	    • Aspects and realities of real music
	    • Distinguishing this in the audience and the scene itself

	"What is the most important aspects for you, if you were attending a DJ set or festival event?"
	    • Live performances
	    • Mixing and sample selection
	    • Atmosphere

Credibility perspective and scene representation	The following question was asked to measure this topic:
	"Are other genres of electronic music more credible to you compared to more accessible genres?"
	    • Distinctions of mass produced and niche genres
	    • Perspective on commercialism within dance music

Label attributes	

Ethos and philosophy	The following questions were asked to measure this topic:
	"When you started this label, what was the vision that you had going forward?"
	    • Scene implications
	    • Social network and collectives

	"How has your philosophy changed over the years since you started the label?"
	    • Influences on label identity
	    • Specifics on mission

Label identity and artist discovery	The following questions were asked to measure this topic:
	"When you release new material, what do you look for when you want to release a specific artist on your label?"
	    • Particular characteristics
	    • Production method and mixing techniques
	    • Quality perspective

	"When you work with an artist, do you look at how he represents your label going forward?"
	    • Branding and identity
	    • Performativity
	    • Maintaining a persona

	"Are there any particular changes you've had to do with in the last ten years due to the popularity of this music?"
	    • Shifts in artist potential
	    • Influx of music content
	    • Sifting through the digital space

Showcases and events	The following question was asked to measure this topic:

	"What do you look for when you want to host a label showcase?" • Type of feeling • Architecture • Organizers and other management • Audience experience • Artist representation
Social Space	
The tangible and intangible source	The following questions were asked to measure this topic: "What are the elements involved when you have encountered a 'perfect atmosphere'?" • Audience involvement • DJ involvement • External factors
	"How important are the locations when you host or attend events?" • Club verse festival distinction • Aesthetics • Educated/Knowledge of those attending the event • Lighting and sound
The role of the DJ, producer, and audience	The following questions were asked to measure this topic: "Do you feel the DJ has a specific role or responsibility when playing at certain events?" • Context of mixing • Educating audience • Reciprocation of DJ and audience feedback
	"How important is the connection the audience has with the dynamics of what's playing and where they are important?" • Location aesthetic • Connections and shared experience • Audience knowledge • DJ knowledge • Surprise and unknown mixing selection factor
Festivals and clubs	The following questions were asked to measure this topic: "Either as a performer or as an audience member, do you prefer festivals or clubs?" • Club verse festival distinction • Audience dichotomy • Performance aspect • Expectations
	"Do you feel this way because it is more representative of the scene? Why?" • Dynamics of social space • Circumstances of event • Location identity
Web 2.0 effects	
Digital shifts	The following questions were asked to measure this topic: "In what ways has the Web changed the way you run your label?" • Distribution • Social network connections • International exposure
	"How has the effect of community feedback changed the way you run your label?"

	- Social media - Direct product feedback - Label mentality shift