

MUSIC FESTIVALS FOR AND BY THE COMMUNITY

Values Created Through Music Festivals and the Challenges Organizers Face in the Rapidly Growing Industry

MASTER THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The music festival industry represents the evolution of how communities share experiences to create cultural and artistic value. Furthermore, festivals have also become deeply embedded in the social and economic planning of urban life, often being employed by authorities to stimulate their local ecosystems. As new musical genres developed highly specialized music festivals catering to certain sub communities have emerged, each with differentiated products allowing individuals to participate with other like-minded people creating new ideas and aesthetical tastes. Music festivals have become a significant part of the music industry due to recent developments in the distribution of music. They function as the primary source of revenue for most musicians around the world but also stand as gatekeepers of the music industry through their power of influencing the taste of their audiences. The increased interest and benefits resulted in an exponential growth in the number of festivals, a trend some name festivalization. Festivalization in turn changed the dynamics of competition within the industry, empowering the position of some stakeholders while leaving others in a worse-off situation. Along with the huge growth of the industry came the inevitable consequence of commercialization, which by some companies was exploited to a great extent, creating inefficiencies in the festival ecosystem.

The theoretical framework of this thesis builds upon existing literature on how music festivals have become incubators of values also resulting in the festivalization and the commercialization of the music festival industry. In-depth interviews are conducted with organizers of music festivals differentiated in purpose, scale, location, and artistic focus.

The analysis led to a broad and varied view of the topics at hand. While most festival organizers view their festival to have a positive impact on the artistic and cultural life in their area, their approach in creating such impact differed. While not-for-profit festivals kept a clear objective towards providing the most artistically relevant programs, for-profit ones had to account for different factors such as growth or profit. Some consensus regarding the negative effects of festivalization could be found as most organizers agreed it caused aggressive competition resulting in astronomical artist fees, hurting the industry in general. Opposing views against commercialism was a common occurrence, as some criticized its impact on the artists ability to create, others mentioned how it stimulated underground scenes through creating wider attention around the industry.

KEYWORDS: music festivals, values, festivalization, consumerism, commercialization.

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This past year has not been the brightest moment in the history of live music and performance arts. Writing this thesis gave me hope that soon we will be able to go to a concert or a festival and share a beautiful experience with people who love music. As this research comes to its conclusion, the possibility to participate in such events appeared in the horizon. I hope that this thesis somehow contributes to the development of the live music and festival industry. I would also like to extend my thanks to Hans Abbing who has been very supportive throughout the course of this study.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TOPIC AND ISSUE

The first festivals can be traced back to the sixth century B.C when ancient Greek civilizations held games, performed music, and staged theatres in honour of their gods (Richardson, 2015). For more than two millennia communities of different cultures orchestrated festivals to celebrate life and fertility, or to welcome the harvest and revere the arts. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche (2008, (1872), pp. 20-21) says that “the significance of the Greeks' Dionysiac orgies was that of festivals of universal release and redemption and days of transfiguration.” He argues that this is the earliest example of a community emancipating themselves from their individual self through participating in a collective expression of art in the process of celebrating nature (Nietzsche, 2008, (1872)). The search for the transcendental cultural value is not an individual quest but that of the larger society. This search can be realized through shared experiences serving as instruments for the collective pursuit of the abstract universal values concerning society (Klamer, 2017, p. 63). Festivals provide such environments where communities can share experiences and realize cultural and artistic value.

Over the course of centuries as arts and aesthetics developed, more specialized festivals focusing on specific art forms started to appear. In the twentieth century music festivals have become industry reflecting the evolution of musical trends and genres and the different communities associated with them. As the number of festivals grew and started to become an important part of cultural and urban life, scholars began to develop literature around the field (Sassatelli and Delanty, 2011).

During the 1960's the world has witnessed the rise of a counterculture, often associated with the Summer of Love (Grunenberg, 2005), based on preaching certain ideals such as free speech, equality, world peace and love (Černohousová, 2018). This was a period in which monumental music festivals such as Woodstock took place. The period was followed by a steep rise in the number of music festivals around the world (Frey, 1994) along with a growing demand for experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). As the average disposable income grew around the world, music festivals have become increasingly popular (Frey, 1994). In the past couple of decades, this popularity was further enhanced by the developments regarding how music is distributed. Streaming services has rendered the ability of musicians to generate revenues from record sales to relatively low levels compared to the past (Swanson, 2013). This, in turn, created

an increasing interest for musicians to participate in music festivals and subsequently a growing incentive for consumers to attend and benefit from the bundling of artists into curated line-ups (Hiller, 2012).

There have been studies encircling the growth in the music festival industry around the concept of festivalization (Negrier, 2017; Jordan, 2015). It is suggested that following this trend an increasing number of cultural organizations have started to rearrange their events and activities in festival formats. By doing so these organizations hoped to benefit from the advantages of creating compact events that offer their audiences a variety of choices of artistic acts based around a certain theme (Negrier, 2017). This trend also reflects the changing consumer habits in the contemporary economy and the drive to identify oneself through the various consumption choices made by individuals (Morey et al. 2014; Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2007). As festivals took on a crucial role in the music industry the increasing focus in catering to consumer demand has created concerns regarding the cultural and artistic function of festivals being jeopardized. There are studies suggesting that when art is compromised by the influence of the market it results in the commercialization of culture (Abbing, 2019; Bourdieu 1985).

The expanding popularity of music festivals also attracted many privately funded organizations to capitalize on the growing demand, driving the commercialization of the scene. Especially in the last couple of decades, major event and entertainment corporations have worked to consolidate their dominance in the market by acquiring countless festival organizations and creating monopolies in the industry (Anderton, 2015). These companies have adopted strategies that bypasses the commercial image created by a monopoly, through differentiating their festivals and targeting certain customer segments. Thus, they managed to exploit the need of consumers to identify themselves with unique products (Morey et al., 2014).

While the festivalization trend has benefited the music industry and the realization of cultural and artistic value and stimulated local social and economic life, it also created a negative impact on the competitiveness smaller players in the industry. Furthermore, the unequal growth in the artist fees threatens the diversity in the field as well as the ability of festivals in creating equal opportunities for emerging artists. It is likely that some of these concerns may aggravate as the commercialization in the industry intensifies. This study explores the perspectives of organizers regarding the various advantages created by music festivals and the position they take concerning the trends developing around the scene.

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND DEMARCATIONS

The aim of this paper is to understand the essential benefits created through music festivals, investigate how the festivalization and commercialization trends manifest themselves within the industry and understand their effects on the festival ecosystem. As a following step, to understand how the organizers of different music festivals perceive these developments or occurrences, considering the divergence in their organization's missions and values. This being said, the ultimate objective is to gain understanding on the theories and literature around this field and furthermore gain insight on the varying perceptions of industry experts.

Considering that there are various types of music festivals, it is important to distinguish among them in order to encircle the scope within which this thesis is written. Music festivals cater to many different music genres each with distinctive audience characteristic. While jazz music festivals typically have older and more established audiences, electronic music festivals attract a much younger public. Some music festivals also incorporate different art forms within their organization to enhance the interactions and experiences their audience will encounter in their event. Studies suggest that whatever the genre of music, all organizers are forced by the industry to attract new and younger audiences (Kinnunen et al., 2019). Therefore, it is hard to come to conclusions about the industry by making general descriptions of the audience characteristics. In order to attain a general view over the industry, this thesis includes the perspectives of festivals' display of different music genres.

Furthermore, festivals differ in their purpose to achieve profits or not. While not-for-profit organizations can try to achieve an artistically relevant program with a much smaller budget, for-profit festivals can invest massive sums into attracting as many people as possible while also catering to a set of high-brow omnivores. It could also be the case that not-for-profit festivals are heavily funded by the government but still choose to book obscure talents to stimulate artistic value. This is highly dependent on the geographical location of the organization. While in some regions, such as the Netherlands, the conditions for organizing festivals are much more advanced, the same cannot be said for all of Europe. On the other hand, for-profit festivals can entirely forego their artistic goals and work purely towards maximizing their profits.

The numerous festivals within the ecosystem and their organizational decisions create an impact on the direction of the industry cumulatively. This thesis aims to shed light on the different experiences of the varying types of festivals in the industry encounter because of festivalization

and commercialization and in this light understand how each festival organizers approach to tackle the obstacles they face in creating cultural and artistic value.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND STRUCTURE

The objectives of this research are intended to be accomplished through a qualitative examination of the music festival scene and its stakeholders; more specifically by scrutinising the literature on relevant theory as well as conducting in-depth interviews with various players in the industry. The research question formulated as a point of departure to this study is as follows:

To what extent do music festival organisers have to sacrifice cultural and artistic value in order to keep up with the growing industry?

To successfully answer this question, it is useful to break it down and analyse it in parts. Therefore, some sub-questions are taken into consideration, beginning with: what cultural and artistic value is and how it manifests in the context of music festivals? This is followed by asking what could be advantages created through music festivals for their social and economic environment? Subsequently, the paper explores what the concept of festivalization is and how the created values have driven the music industry towards this trend? Next is asked to what extent the rapid growth in the number of music festival resulted in the commercialisation of the industry? Furthermore, the paper deals with the question of how this commercialisation effect clashes with the proposed cultural and artistic value creation from the perspective of festival organizers? Finally, the paper scrutinizes the answer to the question what the differences among the approaches taken by organizers of not-for-profit festivals compared to for-profit ones are.

This introductory section is followed by a theoretical framework part where the relevant theories and concepts are explored, laying the foundation of the structure. Later, the research methods used are discussed together with a description of how the research was designed and how the research sample was brought together. Later, the results of the conducted interviews are compiled and analysed in comparison with the theoretical framework laid out beforehand. Finally, a concluding section is put together to summarise the findings of this study, together with a discussion of how successful it was in achieving its objectives and pointing at the limitations faced in the process.

1.4 ACADEMIC AND SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

Festivals have existed for a very long time in many cultures around the world for millenniums, with an especially growing presence in the past century. Extensive research has been made by various scholars such as Frey (1994), who in his works took a closer look in the economics around festivals and why they grew so popular. The economic efficiencies of music festivals within performance arts as well as their benefit on surrounding economies have also been explored substantially. More recent works such as that of Negrier (2017) or Jordan (2015) have explored the reasons and effects of the festivalization concept, a phenomenon which became visible in the past few decades. They took particular interest in the relevancy of festivals from the point of view of audiences and artists. There also is extensive research on commercialisation in the music industry such as that of Moore (2005) which takes a closer look in the development subcultural aspects in specific music scenes as well as that of Abbing (2019) exploring the effects of commercialisation in arts in general. There is however no specific research that takes music festivals as the central point of reference in scrutinising the collision of all the above-mentioned concepts. Furthermore, most of the research remains rather conceptual and can become obsolete in an environment that progresses quickly, justifying a need to collect practical real-time insight.

This research will contribute to the literature on cultural and artistic value specifically about the process of creating them looking from the perspective of music festivals from an organisational level. This is important because music festivals have become important organisations representing a considerable share of the music industry. The research will shed light on organisers strategies for capitalising on the economic advantages brought about by music festivals, both in terms of supply and demand. This adds insight on the take of organisers on the impact of commercialism to their industry and examine approaches in handling its effects while remaining both artistically and economically relevant in their own vision. By emphasising the advantages of music festivals for cultural and artistic life as well as local economies and social life this research can encourage policymakers to cooperate with festival organisers. The results of this thesis can furthermore be used in various research disciplines such as management, marketing, or sociology.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The different concepts discussed in this thesis have been scrutinized by various scholars from different disciplines. To achieve the purpose of this thesis it is essential to build upon a theoretical framework that clearly encompasses the concepts at hand.

To begin with, an overview on the concepts of cultural and artistic value is laid out, with a focus on how music festivals facilitate their creation. This is followed by a brief outline of the social and economic advantages of festivals to their local ecosystem. Later, a thorough rendition of festivalization, its driving factors and its impact on the festival industry is provided. Subsequently, the concept of commercialization and how it manifests itself within the boundaries of music festivals is explored. This thesis aims to address the problem from the views of multiple disciplines by mixing theories from academic domains such as economics, management, and sociology, while the personal definitions of the respondents are also considered in the study.

2.2 CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC VALUE

To discuss what are the cultural values created through music festivals it is important to elaborate on the concept. “Value is the origin of economic behaviour” (Throsby, 2000, p. 26). Although a clear definition for the concept is hard to come by, there are attempts at encircling the notion. Arjo Klamer (2017) is one of the cultural economists who scrutinised cultural value in depth in his book *Doing the Right Thing*. He suggests that culture represents the “transcendental parts of a civilisation” (Klamer, 2017 p. 14). Being transcendental, cultural values can be perceived as those values assumed to go beyond what is considered earthly, individualistic, or economic and refer to ideals and concepts concerning society. We can therefore think of cultural values to be those abstract ideals that shape society through, a collective search for beauty, tolerance, the truth or what is considered good, moral, or spiritual (Klamer, 2017). These transcendental values for instance can refer to an experience of realization and enlightenment; “young people say they get such an experience at a dance party or when listening to music” (Klamer, 2017, p. 64). Overall, the main approaches to define cultural value has been oriented towards giving it a positive meaning. Although there are some aspects to it that are perhaps led by hedonistic individual wants and needs, in its essence cultural value is thought to be driven by a search for the better of society

(Throsby, 2000). Etlin (1997) in her book encircles this by pointing at the humanist understanding of cultural values and the universal and transcendental nature of cultural goods.

Values are hard to quantify due to their imprecise nature. In his book, Klamer (2017) compares the concept of value with that of utility, which is widely used by economists, emphasising their similarities in being abstract, but also argues that values call for a better explanation. While the concept of utility may be tightly aligned with individual preferences, cultural and artistic values consist of a wider set of parameters. This is in line with the reasoning of the transcendental characteristic of such values. Considering that one can acquire a taste for a certain artistic experience after being exposed to it, we can deduce that the preferences of individuals regarding arts is subject to change. This arguably is thanks to the educational characteristic of arts having an impact on the values of an individual. We can infer that growing a taste for arts is likely to improve the willingness to pay of an individual for an artistic experience. This differs from a change of economic preferences due to change in prices of a product for instance (Klamer, 2017). Money in itself does not pertain transcendental values and need to be used in an exchange to acquire some value that is of meaning. “The impetus for the functioning of an economic system can be said to originate from the value that economic agents place on the goods and services they produce and consume” (Throsby, 2000, p. 27). Exchange value is ruled by consumers preferences and what they are willing to trade-off for a perceived value. Here the price merely serves as a tool to value the exchange but does not explain the underlying values behind the consumer’s decision to buy or the producer’s decision to sell. “Price in itself is meaningless and worthless. It is just a number. What matters to those dealing with it, are the values that it enables to realise” (Klamer, 2017, p. 67). We can hope to realise such values through participating in an exchange and acquiring a variety of goods along with collective ones or those that does not have a price tag. Such realization would evidently differ for every other individual as the values which will be acquired, particularly cultural and artistic ones, cannot be grasped in terms of a quantifiable sum. McGuigan (1966) is a researcher that criticizes the valuation of cultural products based on their exchange value in the market, which is determined by the choices of individuals, deeming it “deeply flawed”. It is important to separate our perception of economic and cultural value to understand what is hoped to be achieved through the acquisition of a cultural good, which most often cannot be substituted from other goods that have similar exchange values (Throsby, 2000, p).

The discourse lays over a foundation to elaborate on the nature of products offered by the cultural industries; especially relating to experience based shared goods. Shared goods are usually acquired through practice; knowledge for instance needs to be diffused for it to become valuable and reiterated for it to remain so. Those goods that are created through the participation in social interactions and exchange of ideas for instance can therefore be called shared goods. As we try to realize our values, we benefit from practices around us such as a scientific field, music production of any kind, an artistic exhibition or other environments that enables the sharing of transcendental values created. Individuals add to their own search of values through participating in these practices as well as contributing in them. Contribution can be perceived as a key word to understand the nature of shared goods. The contribution does not necessarily have to be that one takes part in the production of the shared good, but rather their participation to its valorisation. Through this reasoning we can think of artistic and cultural goods as shared goods providing an experience that can be shared within a society serving as a tool for the search of the transcendental or cultural values (Klamer, 2017).

In one of his works David Throsby (2000) also highlights this characteristic of cultural goods, emphasizing that unlike common economic goods they “require engagement with the concepts and content of culture itself”. Music festivals for instance are a good example to this, offering such environments in which artists can share their works with people who take interest in them and participate in the collective experience. This participation also takes the form of a contribution through the conversation that looms from this atmosphere of sharing. It is indeed contribution that enhance the value of shared goods and make them sustainable, just like knowledge. This also relates to the concept of willingness to contribute which in contrast to willingness to pay refers to the idea of how much the consumer is willing to contribute to the valorisation of a shared good. Willingness to pay is much more intertwined with the notion of how much a consumer can let go in order to obtain a product. In the case of shared goods such as cultural goods the individual is more likely to make choices based on what values they can realize through participating or contributing to an experience. This is especially relevant in the case of art which Klamer emphasizes to be a conversation which is co-created, being a shared good serving a transcendental purpose (Klamer, 2017). Taking the perspective of music festivals, a conversation among participants in and around the event can enrich the value in multiple dimensions. Considering that most people in a music festival would have a special interest in music, we can

expect that their contribution would enhance the valorisation of the music and benefit the music industry as a whole. This can be described as an intrinsic value as the values created are derived directly in relation to the form of art. There also are extrinsic values created through the same conversation, especially in music festivals, as it strengthens the bonds of communities and feeling of identities. These concepts are closely related to the social and societal values created through music festivals which is explored further in section 2.3 (Klamer, 2017).

It is also relevant to elaborate on the intrinsic values created through the conversation around a cultural good to find out the impact it has for the art itself. In the context of music festivals this can have various effects that are beneficial for the music industries. Cultural products often are short in their life cycle meaning that a small fraction of them gets to capture enough recognition from consumers to succeed as a commercial product. Although this is not exactly in line with the rhetoric of a search for cultural value that cannot be compared to exchange value, it's important to state that in today's economic atmosphere there is a need for commercial success for the cultural industry to attract attention of consumers and investors. Furthermore, we observe an ongoing and "diversified flow of contents that caters for a heterogenous and unpredictable demand" in the cultural industries (Pons and Garcia, 2019, p. 1). In this ecosystem where there is an oversupply of products with no definitive value assigned, consumers face an informational challenge and high search and discovery costs. In other words, practices such as music festivals take on an intermediary role in the consumer discovery process, doing the job of selection and quality signalling to consumers, therefore raising consumers awareness of the cultural products available in the market (Hirsch, 2000). It is precisely at this point where the music festivals come in bridging the gap and alleviating the issue for both the supply and the demand perspective (Pons and Garcia, 2019). Music festivals not only allow consumers to reduce their exchange costs but also contribute to their perception of realized values by providing in an atmosphere where a conversation can be developed. Therefore, festivals serve as a crucial part of the music industry organism, in which artists soak their works and enhance the value of what they have to offer as well as catalysing their commercial success (Pons and Garcia, 2019). "Artists' behaviour is influenced significantly by their economic circumstances, and they respond to economic incentives in way that are broadly consistent with economic theory" (Throsby, 2000, p. 26).

We can interpret that this commercial success should have beneficial effect for the music industry in general although not necessarily pertaining to growth in terms of cultural value. These

are some of the main points behind the reason why there is a general inclination towards festivalization in the music industry, which is touched upon in section 2.4 in detail. Regarding what this section discusses, there are clear advantages harness through festivals in terms of transcendental values for both intrinsic and extrinsic. Music festivals enable artists to advance in their careers by allowing them to leverage their reputation, which can be perceived as one of those reasons behind festivalization in terms of supply side. With the power to influence the opinion of audiences, music festivals hold bargaining power and a possibility to negotiate better deals which also appears to be a driving factor for the trend in the industry. There are also knowledge spill-over effects incubated within music festivals which is what we mentioned to be an extrinsic value. Music festivals “spread information and, by and large, reduce uncertainty related to cultural consumption” and raise the awareness of specific performers (Pons and Garcia, 2019, p. 4). This is not limited to the place and time of the festival and can spread much wider in are of effect, potentially ‘educating’ the tastes of a much wider audience than what it had captured within the event itself.

By pooling different actors in one collective experience festivals reduce the risk of the attending audience giving them the incentive to find lesser-known artists (Pons and Garcia, 2019). One can argue that this depends on what Paleo and Wijnberg (2006) call the ‘degree of innovativeness’ of the music festival (p. 58). In their paper they attempt to create classification criteria for music festivals with a focus on understanding their role in the construction of music genres. The degree of innovativeness of the musical goods festivals present can have different implications. There are some festivals who focuses on displaying music that are widely accepted by the medias and “recognized as legitimate by the agent and/or organisations...” in their “...field” (Paleo and Wijnberg, 2006, p. 58). This can influence the matter of legitimacy as well as solidifying the borders of a specific genre. On the other hand, some festivals commit to innovating their program by exhibiting new and different artistic styles. Through persistently displaying an innovative program, a festival can be recognized for propagating new musical forms and genres. This is likely to increase the audience’s acceptance of new music provided by that festival (Paleo and Wijnberg, 2006, p.58). It can be interpreted from this argument that festivals also serve as a tool to signal to audiences the quality or legitimacy of new aural goods. Depending on the reputation of the festival this value signalling role can have added effects through knowledge spill-overs resulting in reduction of the search and discovery costs of consumers beyond attendance as

well (Pons and Garcia, 2019). This role of music festivals points at their ability to influence the taste of their audience which can have different effects depending on the goals and vision and purpose of the organisation.

Another important dimension of classification is therefore the purpose of the organisation, or in other words, whether a festival organisation considers achieving financial success among their main objectives. Where for-profit organisations heavily focus on gaining monetary returns through their event, not-for-profit festivals take presenting artistically and culturally relevant music and performances as their primary goal (Paleo and Wijnberg, 2006). However, one cannot necessarily conclude that a festival will not be creating artistically relevant or innovative programs because they are profit oriented. A research conducted by Hiller (2012) explores the relevant characteristic in the artist booking strategy of commercially successful festivals. The paper's findings suggest that these festivals tend to book less-known musicians and bands with promising quality more so than established and popular ones to benefit from the cost advantage. This suggests that with the increasing costs of the performing arts industry, hiring headliners to respond to more demand is not always the most profitable strategy even for commercially successful festivals. In fact, by providing a more diverse line-up festivals can offer experiences that will engage their audience at a lower cost (Hiller, 2012). Since their broad scope puts festivals in a position to present a mix of different acts, they have become relevant in creating opportunities for emerging artists. Furthermore, the continuous flow of constantly changing products with massive quantities in the music industry suggests asymmetrical information of consumers. This is another point that festival organisations can leverage, giving them the possibility to curate artists never heard of before (Pons and Garcia, 2019). One can argue that in this case that music festivals exploit the market failure, perhaps with purely capitalistic intentions, nevertheless benefiting new artists by allowing them to get exposure. Whether this can be considered as artistic value creation is open to discussion, however it certainly is providing grounds for experimentation, potentially allowing new tastes to flourish.

2.3 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE

Music festivals also have various effects to their social and economic environment. Although this research focuses on exploring the organizers perspective on the clash between artistic/cultural value and industry growth, social and economic values are integral parts of the equation too. This section first explores social value and its relation to music festivals, and later delves into the economic aspects to be considered.

Social value has different interpretations by various scholars. According to classic economic theory, all things are produced because they are demanded, and thus paid for and bought. But consumers also demand some things not just for individual benefit but for that of the society (Schumpeter, 1909). Therefore Schumpeter (1909) suggests separating the concept of social value from individual value, referring to the idea that this pertains to the social wants and not subject to individual utility. Klamer (2017), on a much more contemporary note, relate the concept of social value to those values acquired through human relationship. He argues that if such value is achieved, it is a shared value such as a friendship. Other examples he gives are “values such as family, collegiality, community, a neighbourhood, a team...” eventually making the connection to the idea that social values are strongly related to the concept of identity (Klamer, 2017, p. 62). Both interpretations of social value can be expected to be realized through music festivals in different ways.

“Social inclusion might be a potential outcome of a festival” through engaging parts of a community who would not normally participate in certain cultural activities (Laing and Maier, 2015, p. 255). Moreover, arts are thought to be a way to promote social inclusion, as well as contributing to communal and social well-being and community development. Therefore, festivals promote and advertise themselves using language of social inclusion, and this is frequently a significant priority of government agencies. According to Laing and Mair (2015) festivals can furthermore be viewed as an environment of social integration, offering possibilities for social benefit, as well as building identity and self-esteem.

These offerings are realised through a variety of complex features that are imbedded in the essence of festivals. To begin with, the deviation from everyday life is achieved through the idea of collective effervescence where a mass of people, sharing similar interests and taste, enjoy a

communal experience (Collins, 2014). The feeling of participation in a community is enhanced through this idea of collective experience where participants are not separated through their social differences. On the contrary, one can argue that the festival atmosphere melts those differences in by having an environment that offers an experience to everyone within the defined space and time. According to Stone (2009) this process to create a strong sense of belonging to a group because of a shared experience in an environment of social equality, sharing, and togetherness. One can encounter new people, cultures, form of arts in a festival thus getting familiarised with what was previously considered unknown, therefore bolstering tolerance. This familiarization can also be in the form of new political ideas about societal issues that inspires activism (Laing and Mair, 2015)

The social inclusion aspect can also be concerning the marginalized individuals or groups within a society for instance due to ethnic diversity or sexual orientation. Festivals often feature a variety of programs, some of which may showcase cultural and ethnic diversity or include minorities (Finkel, 2010). Through volunteering programs music festivals also call for various community participation thus enabling interaction among individuals from various backgrounds. This might also make it easier for people from different socioeconomic classes, ethnic backgrounds, and genders to interact (Laing and Maier, 2015).

The cultural impact of festivals can be observed especially in the local community through their ability to stimulate cultural life and create a sense of identity, particularly for those participating in the festival in the local area. Presently, while some arts festivals have a high profile and international reputation, they are typically firmly rooted in their communities, dedicated to attaining a specific set societal objective (Quinn, 2010). It is also likely that through capturing this unique identity a community can challenge the growing presence of globalisation in economic activity. Festivals, through their carnivalesque nature, also have a potential to activate the part of a community that might not be expected to make cultural consumption or production, which is particularly relevant for the youth or less educated sections of the public. This aspect of festivals can be expected to animate local life (Festival-World Summary Report, 2006, pp. 12-13).

Along with artistic, cultural, and social benefits created through music festivals, there are also important economic aspects to consider. Music festivals have been playing an increasingly important role in the music industry as well as in their surrounding economy. As the digitalisation of the music industry brought about various medias such as streaming services to distribute music, the ability of musicians to generate revenue through record sales was dissipated. This put forward

music festivals as a reliable source of alternative income for musicians as well as record companies, creating the opportunity for the industry to take-off strongly (Janssen and Nilsson, 2016).

Another supply related advantage of music festivals stems from the dynamics of cultural industries. While in general, consumers have a plethora of regular products they can choose from, the same cannot be applied to experience goods that are collective and based on participation. As the Festival-world Summary Report (FWSR) (2006) suggests, it is a trait of the cultural industries to create products that goes beyond everyday consumption. In the case of performance arts this trait is afflicted by a cost effectiveness issue (FWSR, 2006). An important element concerning festivals success is related to the difficulties of established concert halls and other organisations providing substitutable experiences. As Baumol's theory of Cost Disease suggests, the labour costs of live performing arts increase in parallel to the economy as a whole, while the productivity of labour remains roughly the same. Subsequently, traditional concert halls face constantly increasing costs and a threat to their existence (Baumol and Bowen, 1993). One could expect that music festivals might face the similar problem; however, some additional factors tip the scale to favour festivals (Frey, 2000). One of them is because festivals enjoy relatively low marginal production costs compared to traditional performance arts venues, and benefit from economies of scale due to the size of the production (Towse, 2019). Festivals, thanks to their larger scope, are also more flexible in acquiring funds that might not be as readily available for specialised organizations (FWSR, 2006). These are some of the reasons why music festivals in the past few decades have been increasingly responsible for providing alternative opportunities for musicians, putting them in an advantage in terms of supply (FWSR, 2006).

The advantageous position of festivals is further reinforced by the idea that they offer a wide range of acts in a compact program at one specific destination (Kruger and Saayman, 2019). What makes this factor especially relevant is that the need of alternatives on the supply-side coinciding with improving conditions, creating incentives increase demand (Frey, 2000). The demand perspective is dedicated to exploring the consumer related advantages of festivals that puts them in an attractive position. For instance, there is empirical evidence suggesting that consumers spend an increasingly greater part of their disposable income on live music acts (Frey, 2000). Furthermore, music festivals are more inclusive events marketed to a larger audience as compared to an established concert hall or an opera that might appear intimidating and elitist to some

audiences. The contemporary music festivals bring together the best there is to offer in a certain genre of music and related styles. They are therefore perceived to be a form of pilgrimage for people who connect with the music that is presented. This combined with the decreasing travel costs creates even bigger incentive for audiences to opt for festivals (FWSR, 2006). This idea is further supported by the Hotelling principle stating that because festivals cluster certain suppliers and products, they allow their consumers to spread the expense of travel across a variety of products, thus minimizing their costs (Towse, 2019). Festivals therefore appear as a relatively more attractive product compared to other substitutable events for most audiences.

One of the most important economic advantages brought about by festivals is their effects on local tourism (Laing and Maier, 2015). It is suggested that the consumers attracted through festivals are likely to spend more than the average (FWSR, 2006). We can therefore assume that festivals are likely to stimulate economic activity by attracting more visitors who are expected to spend more than the average tourist (FWSR, 2006). Furthermore, festivals can also result in creating employment opportunities as well as stimulating various sectors of the economy directly or indirectly (Laing and Mair, 2015; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis and Mules, 2000). Some examples could be the food sector, transportation, hospitality etc. (FWSR, 2006). In fact, the increase of urban tourism has been a major cause of the proliferation of festivals in metropolitan settings. Festivals appeal to tourism policymakers looking to revitalize and refresh destinations because they are highly visible, vibrant, and enticing cultural events (Quinn, 2010). There is ample evidence suggesting that many festivals are advertised as tourism attractions, creating a massive flow of visitors as well as income (Getz, 2008). Because they produce cultural capital for a certain location, festivals have become widely used organizations among urban officials to improve their cities attractiveness also generating potential creative capital (Quinn, 2010).

It is also in the function of festivals to broaden the scope of venues and events such as making open air organisations or other locations that might not have been otherwise used for performances. This function of festivals reflects once again their role as a mediator between the performance arts industry and their consumers developing potential for growth for the industry through making new locations and therefore public available (Frey, 2000). Creative industries and the cultural sector have been linked to economic growth and development via the use of different conceptions of locational advantage, such as creative clusters and cultural districts, as well as the notion of creative cities as a basis for urban regeneration (Towse, 2019).

Klamer (2017) suggests that economies grow quicker because of the existence of an artistic and cultural atmosphere, and that cultural industries flourish in certain places. This is highly dependent on how well cultural policy is administered at those locations. It is a crucial issue for cultural policy, which aims not only to maximize the cultural value created, but also to enhance their consumption and accessibility to consumers (Towse, 2019). When approximating the willingness-to-pay of consumers for festivals, the travel costs and accommodation for instance are things that need to be considered. On this point agglomeration economics is an important idea used to understand why both the production and consumption of cultural products cluster. There are potential internal and external advantages for creatives that can be reaped through the formation of clusters. Likewise, festivals provide a platform for artists to extend their creative output and offer increased variety of activities and encounters for consumers (Towse, 2019). However, because of a potential for externalities, it is essential to take action in internalizing the advantages and disadvantages through reduced levies and subsidies.

It is worth mentioning that the coronavirus hit the festival industry and its financial stability quite hard given all or most events being cancelled. The uncertainty brought by the pandemic can perhaps be reduced to some extent by the governments; however, because it is hard to predict what the damages will be in the unforeseeable future the situation creates a major challenge for festival organizers (Davies, 2020).

2.4 FESTIVALIZATION OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

The stated advantages brought about by music festivals have fuelled their fast growth in the past couple of decades with major implications on the functioning of the music industry (Naveed et al., 2017). Multiple sources suggest that a considerable part of the revenues in the music industry are generated through live performances (Naveed et al., Ernst and Young, 2014). Festivals have likely created opportunities for musicians in their search for new streams of revenue with the downfall of record sales.

Festivals are distinguished from artistic events conducted in theaters and music halls by their participatory, interactive, and immersive quality (Jordan, 2015; Robinson, 2015; O'Grady, 2015; Anderton, 2015). Festivals provide one-of-a-kind chances for artists and audiences to interact without being constrained by the normal regulations that divide performers and audiences

in music venues (Jordan, 2015; Fabiani 2011). Festivals are expected to provide engaging and outstanding experiences, with less status differences among performers and spectators. Artists as well as organizers find new ways to respond to this growing industry while spotting trends becomes easier and the numbers of festivals kept growing (Jordan, 2015; Quinn, 2010). This tendency has resulted in the coining of the concept of festivalization, referring to the growth in the supply of festivals (Richards and Wilson, 2004). According to Negrier (2017) festivalization is transformation of cultural activity, “previously presented in a regular, on-going pattern” into events “programmed around one or more themes or events, concentrated in space and time” (p. 1). Negrier (2017) in his article describes the process of festivalization as a self-perpetuating cycle resulting from the explosion of festivals leading to more cultural activity being festivalized. However, these changes create some concerns for organizers and artists, as well as audiences, much as the development of streaming services disrupted the economic patterns in the recorded music industry (Jordan, 2015).

It is insightful to begin by exploring the relationship between the audience and the changing festival industry. A person's connection to culture is shaped by a variety of social variables, including school, relatives, friendships, coworkers, and neighborhood, which might contribute as separate aspects to a person's cultural journey through life (Negrier, 2017). According to Negrier (2017) an individual's environment have a significant impact in the development of what he calls “cultural competence”, especially for socioeconomically deprived audiences. By this logic he argues that a person's connection to culture is subject to “unequal access” (Negrier, 2017, p. 4). The fact that the relationship to culture is highly influenced by an individual's environment brings some criticism to festivalization. Festivalization is transforming the fabric of cultural life from what Negrier (2017) calls “cultural permanence” to more temporary or “ephemeral experiences” (p. 2). Since traditionally policymaking regarding what activities should receive funding is primarily dependent on the necessity for cultural permanence in certain places, festival's temporary nature is often not suitable to this approach. Negrier (2017) argues that because the rapid growth in the festival industry has reshaped the performance arts, it must have equally affected the social structure that surrounds it. According to his paper, “festivalization is not a source of new practices, but a hybridization between permanence and transience” (Negrier 2017, p. 5). As a result of the so-called hybridization, an increasing number of permanent venues organize similar events. In doing so these organizations hope to convert audiences to long-term

customers (Negrier, 2017). From this it can be understood that festivalization forces the adoption of new marketing strategies as society's relationship with culture is evolving.

It is also suggested that music festivals jointly produce cultural content with the artists they host, through playing a signaling function in the industry. Because festivals increase the awareness of artists, customers become better able to recognize the options available to them, resulting in a change in their tastes. Because of the variety of performances, the level of uncertainty around quality is uneven, with obscure artists posing a larger risk to consumers. Festivals help consumers identify these new musicians by incorporating well-known artists into their programming, with which they can be associated, hence reducing the ambiguity around them. This ability of festivals enables artists to leverage their reputation in order to acquire recognition and legitimacy (Pons and Garcia, 2019). "By granting access to markets and fostering consumer discovery, festivals have direct market creation effect" (Pons and Garcia, 2019, p. 13). As the festivalization trend is gaining popularity, it is likely that festivals' importance as gatekeepers in the industry will expand (Pons and Garcia, 2019).

The economic and sociological effects of festivalization are growing as it's altering the way performance arts are organized. Formerly abandoned buildings are being converted into concert halls and other event venues are being repurposed for live music (Hitters and Winter, 2020). Various outdoor festivals are being built with ephemeral structures in parks and fields (Kronenburg, 2012). These changes are slowly becoming an ordinary part of urban life (Hitters and Winter, 2020) as cities and their surroundings are becoming staging grounds for a constant stream of festivals, resulting in the idea that even urban life is being festivalized (Richards and Wilson (2004). According to Hitters and Mulder (2020), since 2010 the festival business has grown at an exponential rate, "adding to the complexity of live music policies in most cities" (p. 46). They suggest that festivalization must be considered as a cultural phenomenon influenced by shifting consumer behavior, social norms, emerging industries, and laws, rather than just as a rise in the number of festivals around the world (Hitters and Mulder, 2020). "Stakeholders in the live music industry perceive festivalization as an inevitable reflection of contemporary society" (Mulder, Hitters and Rutten, 2020, p. 18).

As mentioned earlier in this section regarding festivalization, there are some pressing matters that need attention surrounding this subject. The increase in the quantity of festivals around the world create obvious issues in terms of environmental pollution, urban design as well

as competitiveness in the live music industry (Hitters and Mulder, 2020; Allen et al., 2002). It can also be argued however that festivalization can be used as a method to tackle some of these issues. For instance, Hitters and Winter (2020) suggests that some already existing concert venues as well as urban officials have used festivals to their advantage. On the other hand, the environmental impact is a rather controversial issue. There is some literature suggesting that certain more institutionalized festivals are taking the initiative to tackle certain environmental issues by trying to reduce their carbon footprint and creating a sustainable business model that is ecofriendly (Bennett, 2014; Anderton, 2008). However, there is not much material covering the extent of this issue for the entirety of the industry.

2.5 COMMERCIALIZATION IN THE MUSIC FESTIVAL SCENE

Just like many other economic trends which went through immense growth, the music festival scene too has become visibly commercialised. What makes this particularly worth investigating is the idea that although the value of cultural goods cannot be measured by monetary value, the economic elements within the cultural industries have a major impact on its evolution. As argued previously there is an analogous relationship between music festival industry and the music industry and its stakeholders. This is especially valid when considering their ability to attract and influence audiences as well as promote and create opportunities for artists. Furthermore, in the previous section it was also discussed that the evolution of the music festival industry somewhat reflects contemporary society. Therefore, we can expect to gain insight on where society stands in their relationship with the cultural environment around them, through analysing the evolution and impact of commercialization on the festival industry. This will also be useful to understand the challenges and strategies of music festival organizers concerning this issue.

While culture is not something that can be exchanged in the marketplace, it appears that there is extensive discussion around it being commodified. Often it is ambiguous as to what the commercialization of culture refers to and the notion seems to be open to interpretation, therefore creating various explanations as to how the issue manifests itself. For instance, the process can be thought as arts and culture being commercialized or being transformed into market-generated goods. It could equally be considered that culture is being used as a means to generate profit progressively to a greater extent (Abbing, 2019). According to Abbing (2019) the term commercialization has a negative connotation for artists, regardless of how the concept is

interpreted. There are some layers to the answer as to why this concept is primarily thought of as a scourge, tainting the virtuous aspects of arts and aesthetics. The fact that most artists and art enthusiasts consider commerciality to be, as Abbing (2019) names it, a hostile sphere to the art world, there is a wide tendency to be against it.

Nevertheless, artists and cultural organizations are subject to cultural industry around them and while some artists can benefit from the “aesthetic capitalism” there also are those who suffer from the phenomenon (Abbing, 2019). This situation is also enhanced by the idea of a winner-takes-all mechanism, where audiences of a cultural field can remember a limited number of artists, often the more successful mediatized ones, limiting the ability of others to emerge. This is one of the reasons why there is an increasing income gap among established star artists and less-known ones (Abbing, 2019).

There is a common concern around cultural industries as it is expected that commercialization and the marketing strategies certain organizations employ can influence the tastes of consumers, potentially resulting in reduction of diversity (Abbing, 2019). From this thought, one can also infer that, because of the taste making function of music festivals in the music industry, they can strengthen the process of commercialization. The most compelling criticism around commercialization of culture stems from the idea that art must be autonomous and therefore uncompromised by the influence of the market and organizations (Abbing, 2019; Bourdieu, 1985). However, the influence of the established anti-commercial ethos on current conduct seems to have eroded. There is a visible increase in profit-oriented activities and marketing from cultural organizations and a wider acceptance by a broad range of consumers participating in the industry (Abbing, 2019).

While during the 1960’s music festivals depicted an atmosphere of freedom and egalitarianism strong with counter-cultural elements, ideals and preferences have evolved over the years. The presence of counterculture has slowly disappeared as the prominence of pop festivals rose, requiring improved organizing and living conditions, especially for the massive influential ones (Stone, 2009). As mentioned before the change in the music festival market reflects a wider transformation of society and cultural values. In the past few decades, a surge in consumption rates has been an observable behaviour of society. Since pop festivals are organizations that are steered by the market, they are expected to react to the changing dynamics of their industry to survive.

Therefore, commercialization appears to be an unavoidable consequence of the changing market, increase in the income spent for leisure and consumption (Stone, 2009).

The effects of commercialisation in the festival industry can also vary depending on the genre of music the organization represents and their respective audience base. It could be case that for genres with established audiences such as classic music or jazz, organizers may need to actively work towards attracting the youth for long term sustainability. However, it is a known issue that younger audiences are not readily influenceable and typically have volatile behaviour, subject to changes in what is considered hip or cool (Moore, 2005). Therefore, large organizations hire young employees to help them market their festival and create an image that is appealing to the youth. Through displaying artists considered new and cool to capture young audiences, larger festivals contribute to the commercialization of sub-cultural scenes (Moore, 2005). Moore (2005) suggests that, because the essence of sub-cultures or youth cultures is highly embedded in the idea of “provoking authorities”, the commercialization of their trends brings the youth a sense of “liquidation of subcultural capital.” Since it is important for young people to differentiate themselves from what is considered mainstream, they feel the need to protect their subcultural capital from being absorbed by commercialization (Moore, 2005; Bannister, 2010). To achieve this, they identify themselves with the brands or producers that initiated the trend. Therefore, large festival and event companies adopted strategies aimed at creating images that these young audiences can identify themselves with through branding and differentiation (Anderton, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, there has been a massive growth in the festival industry starting from the 1990’s (Anderton, 2015; Morey et al., 2014). Today a large portion of the music festival industry is monopolized by a handful of international mega event companies such as Live Nation, AEG Live and others (Anderton, 2015). While these massive corporations play an important role in the commercialization of the festival industry, they’ve positioned their brands in a way that bypasses the issue of scaring the youth away (Moore, 2005). Through adopting marketing strategies that create niche brands for their events they have facilitated their quest to gain the loyalty of young or marginalized audiences (Morey et al., 2014). Morey et al. (2014) argues that this approach, for instance, employed by Live Nation, has allowed them to create segmentation where the festivals they strengthened their own identities within the industry rather than becoming homogenized due to being owned by a monopoly.

Various scholars argue that the contemporary individuals identify themselves with what they consume (Morey et al. 2014; Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2007). Some theorize that today's consumeristic society drives individuals to define oneself via the goods and experiences they purchase (Morey et al. 2014; Walkerdine, 2003; Dittmar, 1992; Belk, 1995). Everyone's personal selection from the countless options of different brands and products is a way of expressing the unique individual self (Morey et al. 2014; Slater. 1997). In the music festival industry, the strategy to offer differentiated brands and products for different customer segments serves the purpose of providing consumers a variety of options through which they can make free choices through which they define their identity (Morey et al., 2014). With the increasing influence of social media and improving techniques of digital marketing, identifying, and capturing different customer segments for this purpose has become a very powerful tool.

Furthermore, the branding of these festivals is also enhanced through the new meta of self-branding of individuals through social media. Many individuals participating in these events will post pictures or videos of moments within the event, signalling a good experience, thus helping the festival organization boost their image without even incurring direct costs. With the rise of social media, user generated content and self-marketing have become a significant part of contemporary culture, especially among young people. As a result, individuals increasingly feel like they are the authors of their own media identity (Morey et al., 2014). Morey et al. (2014) states there are theorists suggesting that "user generated content is nothing short of the marketing and commoditisation of identities and selves that are constructed thereby" (p. 9). This is to say that the commercialization of the music festival industry, and the strategies applied by monopolizing companies within were tailored to the evolving society and the consumers have taken part in the process as digital marketing is highly influenced by individual perception. Should the commercial large event companies have used traditional marketing techniques whereby they tried to create an illusion of a counterculture within the event they promote, this would likely fail. There we can argue that because the consumers themselves were involved in the commodification of their experiences the advances of certain organizations in commercializing the festival industry were so influential.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research question of this thesis is the following:

To what extent do music festival organisers have to sacrifice cultural and artistic value in order to keep up with the growing festival industry?

The underlying sub-questions are as follows:

- 1. What is cultural and artistic value and how they manifest themselves in the context of music festivals?*
- 2. What could be the advantages created through music festivals for their economic and social environment?*
- 3. What is festivalization and how has the advantages of music festivals have driven the industry towards this trend?*
- 4. To what extent has the rapid growth in the number of music festivals resulted in a commercialisation of the industry?*
- 5. How does commercialisation effect clashes with the proposed cultural and artistic value creation from the perspective of festival organizers?*
- 6. What are the differences among the approaches taken by organizers of not-for-profit festivals compared to for-profit ones?*

To answer these questions, the research needs to be designed in a way that corresponds to the nature of their objectives (Bryman, 2012).

This thesis employs a qualitative research method, implying that the entire process of collecting and examining data was undertaken with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is the most appropriate research design for this thesis because it focuses on the subjective views of organizations engaged in the scenario, as well as their judgement, which is influenced by their practices and interests. As suggested by Bryman (2012) an inductive approach in qualitative research is well fitted for concentrating on subjective interpretation and acquiring a better grasp of contextual situations. Quantitative methods may have been convenient for identifying certain

relationships, but they are not appropriate for the scope of this research. This thesis, instead, attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the why and how behind the subject, as well as the decisions, views, motives, and values of the organizers. The objective was to obtain insight and knowledge into the events and subjective experiences of the respondents, rather than attaining quantifiable and general conclusions. Because of its qualitative character, this study uses an inductive approach, which comprises the construction of theory based on data collection, which is also why hypotheses were not created (Bryman, 2012).

In actuality, the research design is cross-sectional since it includes the collecting of data from various instances at a specific moment in time, precisely May and June 2021, including a variety of factors (Bryman, 2012). In addition, this research also has exploratory and descriptive aspects, as it scrutinizes the practical occurrences of theoretical concepts within an industry in different situations, hence outlining its perimeters.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve its objectives this research traverses different stages. A theoretical framework is first laid out with the purpose of broaching the subject and the various concepts engaged throughout the research. This was imperative in order to ground the structure of interviews on a theoretical foundation.

Since this research aimed to acquire real-time insight on the current state of the festival industry from organizers perspectives, the employed research design is that of interviews. Interviews appeared to be appropriate with the prospect of accounting for various subjective views (Bryman, 2012). Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used: the interviews were done with a set of previously selected topics and questions in mind, but with the freedom to ask additional questions if they seemed appropriate (Bryman, 2012). The structure of the interviews allowed for a full overview to be maintained, the numerous interviews to be adequately compared, as well as making certain that all pertinent issues were discussed. On the other hand, the flexible nature of the format provided some leeway to take unexpected detours and made it possible to delve into relevant material that was not anticipated. All themes and related sub-topics were included in the interview guide (see Appendix B).

The interviews were fully recorded and transcribed, then classified by topic, evaluated, and contrasted. The findings from the interviews were linked together and related to the theoretical groundwork to assess if they coincided or conflicted, creating a potential to propose fresh notions.

3.3 SAMPLING METHOD

The goal of this study is to obtain fair representation, in which the sample properly reflects the reality, as if it were a mirror of the broader population (Bryman, 2012). This being said, obtaining a fair representation of the festival industry, for the purpose of this research and the limited sample size, proved more challenging than expected: haphazardly sampling 9 festival organizers is likely to miss out on outlying details regarding the topic. However, because contacting and convincing festival directors to agree on making an interview was quite difficult, the sampling methods used in this thesis are convenience sampling (Bryman, 2012). This method was chosen simply because of the limited accessibility to respondents, and although many more has been contacted only 9 of them have committed in participation. As Bryman (2012) mentions the difficulty with this sampling approach is that we can't generalize the results since we don't know what population this sample represents. However, he also states that the convenience sampling is used quite regularly in the field of organization studies and social research, and that probability sampling is typically avoided due to its complexity and costs (Bryman, 2012). At the beginning different sampling methods such as purposive sampling were considered, with the hope that more organizations would be keen on cooperating, especially because of the halt in the festival industry due to coronavirus. However, as the festival industry is picking back up, the thesis coincided with a period in which organizers are quite busy. For instance, normally there was supposed to be an extra respondent, however, because they schedule were so tight, they waived from their decision to cooperate.

Even though, the method used was convenience sampling, some criteria were used to select which festivals would be approached. For instance, it was intended to compile a set of festivals that focus on electronic music or jazz music to have representation of a wider audience range. These two genres were expected to represent two main consumer groups to determine whether this impacts the views of organizers: younger and more senior audiences. The geographic scope was also limited to festivals around Europe, however taking examples from both places with very advanced scenes as well as those who are catching up. The sample also aimed at including festivals

with different funding structures such as publicly or privately funded, as well as different ownership structures for each genre being independent or company-owned. The purpose for this was to highlight potentially contradictory views within the industry.

The sampled 9 participants were classified into three categories, which altogether represent the three most relevant perspectives for the purpose of this research: independent/not-for-profit, independent/for-profit and company owned/for-profit. The sample contains a variety of different sorts of examples under these three categories such as representative or common examples, and extreme or unusual examples. The common examples are those that reflect the greater population of festivals who exist in the industry, for instance, independent/not-for-profit festivals can serve as an example of the larger group of which they are a part (Bryman, 2012). On another note, certain circumstances might be considered outliers and therefore unusual examples, such as an independent/not-for-profit festival opening a parallel for-profit company to sustain themselves economically. With this approach, the evaluation reflects a broader and more diverse set of examples, resulting in a much more comprehensive view over the topics at hand.

3.4 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

In order to attain an overview and good grasp of the issues that spans not only one perspective, but an industry-wide viewpoint on the discussed topics, the sample comprises organizers and directors of various festivals with different formats and organizational values. There are multiple stakeholders in the festival industry, including musicians, record labels, audiences, booking agencies and various other kinds of professionals and business organizations. However, since this paper aims to examine the different approaches and perspectives of festival organizers regarding the various issues in their industry, the sample uniquely involves them.

Exploring the studies of Hirsch (2000) we can discern the idea that music festivals have a crucial part in mediating the relationships between musicians and audiences from an organizational perspective. In their paper Paleo and Wijnberg (2006) puts the effort to illustrate this plateau of differing relationships by classifying types of festivals, thus giving this research a point of reference in identifying the characteristics of the respondents. While some of the classification criteria were not pre-identified and conversed upon during the interviews, some were taken as a gauge to approach the prospective respondents. The two most relevant items of these classification criteria were used to categorize the respondents in three distinctive groups. The first being the

purpose of the respondents, implying whether they are for-profit or not-for-profit and the second one the degree of institutionalisation, implying whether the organization is independent or institutionalized (Paleo and Wijnberg, 2006). These two criteria were selected as they were expected to give a well-off contrast within the industry regarding festivalization and commercialization.

Furthermore, although the audience is a significant part of the festival industry and a crucial stakeholder in every topic discussed in this thesis, especially in relation to the creation of values, they were not considered in this set of samples as it would needlessly complicate the research. Also, this research focuses on understanding the perspectives of the organizers and how they react to certain issues is another reason to exclude the audience from this research.

As mentioned earlier, the respondents of this sample are categorized into three groups: independent/not-for-profit, independent/for-profit, company-owned/for-profit. Because it covers a wide range of factors, the sample of these three groups is appropriate and can be justified for this study. The creation of cultural and artistic value can be present in all types of organizations in different forms, but the difference between the approach of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations can be very insightful. Additionally, comparing the approaches to handling the effects of festivalization and commercialization among these three categories can give a wider array of organizational acumen, hence providing a better understanding of the actions organizers can take.

The representative of the participating organizations needed to be key people who has a clear understanding of the artistic vision of their organization, but also the rest of the industry. Along with this the representatives were expected to be knowledgeable regarding the financial aspects of their organization and scene as well as having a considerable knowledge and experience to give well established insights. Almost all the respondents were either directors or highly senior officers of their organization with considerable experience and industry knowledge, with just one exception. The exception proved to be an asset to the research giving an entirely fresh perspective to some of the concepts.

The geographical locations of the respondents were also somewhat relevant to have a well-diversified set of findings that reflects the truth in the industry. This could be made sure by targeting both areas that are well advanced in terms of music festivals as well as others that aren't as much. The sample set included respondents that are all located around Europe. However, the

locations of these festivals had significant differences in terms of how developed the music festival industry is in their area. There were respondents who are based in the Netherlands, Belgium or the United Kingdom representing places where music festivals are very well established. On the other hand, Portugal, Greece, Austria and Norway also were included on the map of this research.

Independent/Not-for-profit

The first category consists of five festivals. These five festivals cover four different countries, most of which have very strong governmental support for cultural activities while one of them lacks the means to do so. Within the range of these respondents are included representatives of both jazz and electronic music, along with multi-disciplinary formats while keeping music as a main priority. This category's importance stems from the fact that independent/not-for-profit festivals are organizations often prioritizing the creation of cultural and artistic value. Furthermore, they are also likely to be challenged the most by issues such as festivalization and commercialization within their industry.

Respondent 1 was the CEO of a mid-sized multi-disciplinary festival based in Austria. They combine contemporary electronic and experimental music, art, and political discourse with the hope of creating a discussion around contemporary issues and creating innovative projects and initiatives hoping to solve them. The organization is mostly publicly funded but fully independent.

Respondent 2 was the managing director a small multi-disciplinary festival based in Austria. They combine music (electronic and experimental) and art performances. This festival is also funded by the public for the major part.

Respondent 5 was the creative director of another small multi-disciplinary festival based in Portugal, mainly focusing on electronic music but also including various arts and crafts activities. This organization mainly relies on ticket sales and private subsidies for economic survival.

Respondent 7 was the director of a large music festival based in Norway focusing strictly on jazz music. Unlike the previous festivals mentioned, Respondent 7 is a festival spread across the city and not within one big location. The organization is publicly funded.

Lastly, Respondent 8 is the head of festivals and label of a mid-sized multi-disciplinary festival based in Belgium. The festival combines music (electronic), arts and architecture, sometimes asking the artists from different disciplines to collaborate in creating a project for the

event. The organization is funded through ticket sales and private subsidies, however the representatives mentioned that they have also created a parallel for-profit company as the festival was not making enough profit to sustain themselves.

Independent/For-profit

This second category consists of two large electronic music festivals that belong to two different countries, one of which can be considered the capital of music festival while the other is not so developed. The relevance of this category lies in the impact of its representatives in their surrounding cultural ecosystem. The representatives of this category also display the importance of geographical differences in terms of facing the challenges.

Respondent 4 was the music director of a large electronic music festival based in Greece. The organization started as various smaller club events and then was transformed into a festival taking a lot of initiative in developing their scene in the area. The festival focuses on electronic music, mainly headliners while also including some experimental acts. The festival is privately funded as the government in their region is not very supportive of such organizations.

Respondent 9 was the festival director of a large electronic music festival based in the Netherlands. The organization started as a small music label and events collective emerging into one of the most prominent techno festivals. The festival is mostly known to be an electronic music festival but also includes some different musical styles (experimental, world, jazz). They are privately funded, mostly relying on ticket sales and perhaps some government incentive as their area is quite developed in this sense.

Company-owned/For-profit

The third category consists of two large festivals that are owned by major event and organization companies. Both large festivals are considered to be landmarks in their location and are located in countries where the festival industry is highly developed. This category is especially relevant for the purpose of this thesis as they represent an entirely different perspective from the rest of the sample especially regarding commercialization.

Respondent 3 was the marketing and promotions coordinator of a large jazz music festival based in the United Kingdom. This organization is owned by a European media conglomerate that

owns numerous other festivals along with this one. This festival includes various scenes in which they include popular artists from genres related to Jazz along with much more high-brow jazz acts. The organization is entirely privately funded.

Finally, Respondent 6 was the music programmer of a large jazz music festival based in the Netherlands. This festival is owned by an American entertainment company that owns more than one hundred music festivals around the world. The organization is a well-established brand that includes many high-brow jazz acts. On the other hand, this festival also includes various music genres related to jazz, presenting many popular artists.

3.5 LIMITATIONS

This research has faced various limitations. As per the qualitative nature of this research, it was challenging to fully reflect the some of the different factors involved in the various situations that this study has explored (Bryman, 2012).

Another major limitation has been the number of respondents that could be aggregated for interviews. A set of 9 respondents, appeared to be insufficient to reflect the reality of the diverse range of organizations in the music industry in its entirety. Even though the study includes certain comparison components, such as the outcomes of the three different categories, the number of respondents is too little to derive significant inferences.

In addition to this there were some limitations regarding the varying characteristics of respondents within the sample. As mentioned, the sample covered festivals of different formats, representing various musical genres. Although this variety proved useful in terms of getting entirely different perspectives within the same industry, it also limited the ability to fully cover the point of view of a specific category of organizations. This variance within the sample set was also observable in relation to their geographical locations. As though it was expositive to have a larger overview of the festival industry within Europe, the situation in one specific location might not have been represented in extensive detail. Due to the time constraints of the thesis and the difficulty to get in contact with the directors of music festivals, it was not possible to have a larger sample set.

The decision to spotlight the perspective of organizers within the industry, eliminated the chance of exploring the views of how audiences, perceive the discussed concepts in the research.

Although including audiences can prove informative, considering they are a crucial participant of the industry, the decision to focus on the views of industry experts was made deliberately.

Moreover, given social status and competitiveness, there may be restrictions in the interviews, such as a hesitancy to divulge sensitive information and a probable predisposition to deliver biased responses.

3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES

The ethical dimension of this research also must be taken into account to anticipate the occurrence of potential issues.

The anonymity of the responders is a significant consideration. It is likely that the respondents might have withheld some information in order to protect their position, considering their involvement with their organization and the industry. Admittedly, it cannot be disregarded that the sensitive information they share can harm their undertaking should their competition acquire it. Some of the respondents requested to be anonymized while others did not. In any case, to avoid any problematic consequence, all respondents were anonymized throughout this paper. Every respondent was informed that the interview would be recorded but would not be made public, along with the possibility to be anonymized upon request to make sure they do not hesitate to share their thoughts freely.

Finally, it could be mentioned that my personal opinions and knowledge could have affected my judgement in one way or another. For instance, having a certain connection with certain festivals or places could have played a role in which I interpret certain comments from the respondents. In this sense I have sought to be as objective and unbiased as possible, to bring about conclusions that reflect the combination of the thoughts of actual industry experts.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section the main findings of the interviews conducted with the organizers of music festivals around Europe are laid out. As explained in the methodology section, a qualitative approach was employed to develop meaningful analyses of the collected information. Through putting them in contrast with the theoretical framework and compiled literature, this section attempts at creating new and relevant insight for the topic at hand.

The results derived from the interviews are connected to the research question and the underlying sub-questions which forms the foundation of this thesis. Even though the organizers in the interview sample might have different priorities in terms of objectives, one can observe similarities in their understanding as to how cultural and artistic value is created through festivals. This understanding is also reflected in their approach to the social and economic impacts of their presence. What is particularly interesting is the divergence in their perception of the interplay of festivalization and commercialization in the process of creating these values.

The structure of this section is similar to that of the interviews conducted, starting with a conversation around the characteristics of the music festivals as well as their musical vision. This is followed by a reflection on the concept of festivalization and how the selected festivals relate to it. In this part, the relevant insight on what this trend might entail for the future of the industry is displayed. Finally, the different attitudes of the festivals towards commercialization are presented together with an examination of what this means regarding their artistic decisions.

4.2 VALUE CREATION – ORGANIZERS PERSPECTIVE

As mentioned in the sample description section 3.4, the interviews aimed to collect a variety of opinions and interpretations of the concepts discussed in the theoretical framework. It is an essential task to cover a diverse array to elicit meaningful answers to the research question of this thesis. A large portion of the interviews focused on discussing the different advantages of creating value through festivals, forming the basis for a discussion on festivalization and commercialization in the industry. This section lays out the points of view of the interviewed festivals organizers on value creation, highlighting the divergence in their vision and organizational priorities. To simplify the findings for the reader, festivals are categorized in three groups: independent/not-for-profit, independent/for-profit, and company owned/for-profit. Each topic point addresses the findings from the perspective of these three categories as much as possible, given the collected information.

Vision on cultural and artistic value creation

Before delving into the differing interpretations as to how cultural and artistic value is created through music festivals it is efficient to talk about what festivals from different categories have in common. Overall, the respondents were on the same page on bringing together the best music available to be one of their primary tasks in creating artistic value. Offering an environment in which audiences can be exposed to a multitude of different acts that represent the best of the respective genre appeared to be a common goal among them. This also meant that they would give the opportunity to people who does not have a particular interest but is keen to discover something new.

Although perhaps for different reasons, there seemed to be a general inclination among the respondents on bringing new acts as much as possible. An important inference of this is that organizers mostly agreed on bringing together new acts and providing opportunities for emerging artists, to be another important element of creating artistic value. As mentioned in the theoretical framework of this thesis, this is an important role of festivals in creating artistic value (Hirsch, 2000; Hiller, 2012; Pons and Garcia, 2019). Throughout the interviews a common theme was to provide the audience with something that is artistically relevant. Although it must be said that the variance in the respondent festivals nature suggests a difference in the understanding of what is considered as such. The overlapping theme here hints at the educative aspect of festivals striving to provide their audiences with something new and giving them a basket to choose from, whatever

may appeal to their taste or help them develop it. This also coincides with what Klammer (2017) suggests regarding the educational virtue of festivals.

Although, it must be said that the scale at which this objective was prioritized differed among respondents. There was a clear tendency from independent/not-for-profit organizations to lean on this. Some said they were able to get experimental thanks to being publicly funded. Albeit these reasons may be interpreted to serve different underlying goals, all respondents perceived providing new acts as part of their artistic vision. In fact, some even described the fashion in which they remain artistically relevant to be through this approach. For instance, Respondent 2 states:

“In music and arts in general, it's very difficult to be informed all the time because there are a lot of things going on. When we are doing the bookings for the next year, we only know half of the lineup, and the rest we haven't heard before. That's how we define that we want to present the art that is going on now.”

Even though there is a clear consensus on the idea that supplying new acts is imperative to have artistically relevant programs, some mentioned the financial perspective to this cannot be neglected. Being complex organizations festivals are very costly to produce. In addition to this, as the costs in the industry keeps growing, there is a constant struggle for financial stability. Therefore, to remain relevant there is also a need to attract younger audiences. Just as Moore (2005) suggested, this is especially valid for a festival representing a genre that normally appears to attract older audiences such as jazz. Two of the company owned/for-profit respondents, focusing on jazz have stated their interest in growing their target audience through including more attractive popular contemporary acts. For instance, Respondent 6 states:

“We spend a lot of money and a lot of attention on the young artists... We try to bring them in as much as we can, because we want to keep on attracting attracting younger audiences.”

A different jazz festival that is independent/not-for-profit insisted on preserving the highest quality in their acts regardless of their ability to attract much wider audience. They mentioned the

importance on remaining strictly a jazz festival but do not have a worry to dissolve in time because of the lack of attracting audiences through popular acts.

Another element that appeared to have a significant impact was the geographical location and the surrounding cultural ecosystem of the festivals. For instance, one of the independent/for-profit electronic music festivals, Respondent 4, mentioned that it is particularly hard to organize large events in their region due to limited infrastructure and low interested to that genre of music. They've started off by making small events in collaboration with venues around their town and prospected some demand for it. They thought it would be a good opportunity to incorporate these separate small events into something that is larger and compact to give a wider range of audiences reason to visit their location. They also added that the separate venues that they collaborated were very much focused on making commercial gains and would not consider their artistic image, prioritizing only on what would bring the most amount of ticket sales. Hence, they've initiated a festival in their vision that would stimulate the scene with an ability to incorporate a much wider organization and provide opportunities for new as well as domestic acts. This aligns with what Quinn (2010) suggests regarding festivals stimulating cultural life in their location. The same respondent described their festival to be an incubator for their music genre, stimulating their scene and attracting a wider audience even through financial crisis'. In addition to this, a different independent festival who in contrast is not-for-profit also mentioned the general lack of attention to cultural products in their region and their goal to work towards creating progress in the region that goes beyond the music scene.

A different perspective was of those respondents from the category of independent/not-for-profit festivals, which agreed on the relevance of the quality of music presented but emphasized the importance of combining different artistic elements together. Through this combination of different art forms, they anticipated to appeal to a wider community and hoped to harness this attention to create stronger meaning around the music they present. All four independent/not-for-profit respondents have mentioned their primary appeal as a festival to be the music but pointed at the fact that they could expose their visitors to a much wider range of artistic experiences along with music. One of the respondents also stressed the ability of music to bring people together in collaborating to create something new. This is also in line with the ideas put forth by Laing and Maier (2015) regarding festivals creating an environment where participants can collectively create new ideas and contribute to a community. Respondent 5 described this process as follows:

“There are specific departments focused on performance arts and visual arts called the collaborative campsite. It is like a collaborative space where people can do their own camp and come up with a team and then the team comes up with a theme. (...) It’s interesting to see how this puts people out of their box. Also, when they present the idea it’s nice to steer it also into unlocking some potential that you see, and this is also culture. It’s not just to be there, following the whole lineup.”

Most of the not-for-profit festivals have mentioned either similar activities, interactions, or different artistic elements or even forums and panels incorporated within their festival. There was a clear difference among not-for-profit organizations and for-profit ones in this aspect. Respondents of the former category focused on exposing their audience to experiences beyond a musical program and prioritized the idea of creating a conversation around a theme. Respondent 8 also mentioned that they ask their DJs to collaborate with artists in creating an interesting stage or a show for instance. Festivals in the for-profit category stated a much heavier focus on the quality of the lineup they bring and the balance they aimed to create. This balance hints at both keeping their image by bringing new and experimental (left field) acts but also showcasing enough headliners to sell tickets. Not-for-profit festivals also pointed out this balance to be a vital element, but it appeared so that the image they aimed to create prioritized their experimental aspirations.

Importance of audience participation, inclusivity, and knowledge spillovers

Another dimension of audience participation is connected to the idea of knowledge spillovers. As the respondents mentioned festivals create an environment in which audiences can interact with each other and pass on ideas. Most of the respondents agreed that a trigger for such effects is the possibility to find new experiences within a festival. By allowing them to participate in something new music festivals can be a place that, in a way, challenges the taste of their audience. This corresponds to the taste making aspect of festivals as Pons and Garcia (2019) suggest. Respondent 6, a company-owned/for-profit festival, said the following about their efforts to cater to different parts of their audience with different objectives:

“We have people who love music but not necessarily jazz. We want to offer them something appealing enough that they will buy tickets, but also something they can find and explore, and maybe get into jazz music. In the meanwhile, we also try to cater for our audience that are hardcore jazz listeners.”

As mentioned previously, respondents reported different explanations regarding how they perceive their organization to create cultural impact, depending on the region. Respondents in regions where electronic music was not so developed said that through creating an inclusive atmosphere, they would be able to attract audiences and engage them in new experiences. This fits the idea suggested by Laing and Maier (2015) that festivals offer inclusive environments that can strengthen the bonds of a community. Some respondents also reported an increased popularity in their region for festival like events after their arrival. Respondent 4 stated that they have inspired other organizations in their region to create all sorts of festivals for different genres of music as well as different formats such as food or beer festivals. Overall, from the attitude of respondents demonstrated a general mission to stimulate all sorts of cultural activity through knowledge spillovers. Here is what Respondent 4 had to say about the atmosphere they aim to create:

“We wanted this to be a meeting point for the people (...). For us it's positive if a person who listens to different music styles comes in electronic music festival. That is a great win for the whole scene.”

According to one of the independent/not-for-profit respondents festivals are not only creating an environment for people to exchange their tastes and be exposed to new kind of music. It is also a space in which they can exchange their values and develop their personality. They claimed this to be part of their vision in terms of creating artistic value, saying that it would make their event more interesting. These functions of festivals as mentioned by the respondents overlap with the explanation proposed by Klamer (2017) regarding the conversational aspect of the arts. Respondent 1 aptly describes this situation as follows:

“That's what the festival is about I guess it's not only about the program but it's also about the spirit behind the scenes and where people meet up and mean you have fun,

maybe discover same interests, maybe this other discovered the opposite, but it's a big get together and I think a big fertilizer for personal development and for change.”

Festivals can also champion new ideologies, in the following not-for-profit festival also views the conversation from what you've experienced is a big part of the value creation process (Laing and Maier, 2015). They see as being able to discuss the topic with a friend has great value. From this we can take that organizers of not-for-profit festivals find the conversational aspects of their festivals as one of the important benefits. Respondent 2 underlines this conversational aspect of their festival:

“I think that is a good way to participate at the festival, not just to consume, but I guess that's what you do you consume it you watch a concert or a theater piece, and then you might like it or might be disturbed by it, and you go out to talk to your friends or to people that you don't know about the things that you saw.”

Another very important theme that was mentioned by all respondents was the responsibility they take in terms of having diverse lineups. They mentioned that the festivals industry has been criticized of having all white male line ups in the past years. Regardless of their size and type of funding all festival organizers recognize the role of their organization in creating a positive image around inclusivity. There is a common view that their audience participating in their events reflect how they curate their programming. This was another point in which festivals from all the categories were agreeing upon. However, Respondent 8 mentioned that this is not the case for all festivals saying the following on the matter:

“We're also quite diverse as we try to find some balance in booking equal parts male female but also try to make sure that we put a lot of spots available for diverse sexual orientation. We try to make people feel at home and feel safe and our audience also acknowledges that the crowd is diverse, and they respect each other, a lot. Something I really miss in a lot of other festivals in Belgium, is that you if you're a bit out of the norm then you get left out.”

The topic of diversity was a major point of discussion for all respondents. Some of the respondents also pointed a finger on the effect festivals can have in terms of creating awareness on such hot subjects thus spark tolerance.

In summary, on the point audience participation there is a much more intense focus by independent/not-for-profit festivals to have their audience contribute to the creation of artistic value by creating a conversation around the experiences they have. This is in line with the idea of Klamer (2017) mentioned in section 2.2 of this thesis, that art is made through a conversation among the artist and their audiences. Larger for-profit festivals consider their festival to provide the artistic value through the program they curate for their audience. This suggests that there is a deviation on the way in which organizations perceive to create value, depending on their organizational mission. They do however recognize the power of knowledge spillovers and how this can create an impact in their environment be it in the development of a musical style or certain more obscure artists. Furthermore, all the respondents agree on the idea that their festival has an impact on the development of new ideas through the atmosphere they provide to the audience. Along the same lines there is a common awareness of festivals being a place of social mixing, as all organizers emphasized the importance of creating as diverse an atmosphere as possible. However, there is a skepticism by some, especially from not-for-profit festivals, that all their counterparts in the industry are mindful about this situation, arguing it would not have been at this unbalanced state should they have been. All respondents also expect that these effects would go beyond their festivals limited time and space constraints creating a wider impact by through the power of knowledge spillovers. This confirms what's been said by Pons and Garcia (2019) on knowledge spillover effects, cited in the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Creating a community around the festival

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, festivals have the power of enhancing the feeling of identity by integrating the public in a community like experience (Laing and Maier, 2015; Quinn, 2013; FWSR, 2006). In this context, the community refers to a group of people who have special interest in the league where the festival organizations are active, rather than a general public. However, the interview respondents had differing views about building or investing in a community in their cultural ecosystem. There was a stronger tendency by publicly funded independent/not-for-profit festivals to invest in such community, especially because they

perceived as a responsibility due to their providers. Being cultural organizations the most relevant investments for the community mentioned was around making returns to the demand for culture in their community. Respondent 1 captures what they deem a duty for their community as follows:

“When you’re heavily funded, you don't have to care about marketing or promotion. I don't really like that mindset, I think, since we get a lot of public funding, and support from taxpayers, it’s also our responsibility to create something of value and not just for everyone, but for a certain community that we see. A lot of people mentioned the festival when they were asked about what is cool in the city. I think it is an integral part of self identification, if you live in a certain city, you know.”

Where publicly funded festivals seemed to have a clear focus on circling their productiveness within the community in which they reside in, larger festivals had different approaches to address the matter. The latter were not necessarily focused about creating an identity around a certain location where they have their organization based. Rather they promoted the artistic community in their country that relates to the music they are presenting. Two of the company-owned/for-profit festivals both focusing on jazz mentioned they’ve had an important impact on the jazz community around them through creating landmarks at their locations for their genre. Nevertheless, they did not have the same resolve in getting involved to create a year-round stimulation in their area. One of them mention most other venues had the worries of not being able to sell enough tickets, thus opting for established artists. Despite their effort in creating such a circulation they were not successful working with the local clubs and venues. This resulted in trying to make smaller festivals throughout the year and engage a larger portion of the local jazz community. Other larger festivals also stated a difficulty in associating themselves with year-round venues and emphasized the value they brought to the community as appearing to be a landmark rather than having continuous associations with the local music scene. Though this same larger/ for-profit festival has also endorsed local music collectives, giving them space in one of their free stage. Having the ability to incorporate multiple stages opened opportunities for the mentioned collective, later becoming an incubator for new musicians by collaborating with the large festival organization. Of course, large festivals overall agreed that they were only able to promote such acts on hours and

stages with lesser attention due to economic concerns. Respondent 3 said the following on the matter:

“In a genre like jazz, there’s a high level of recognition expected before artists get booked. However we have smaller stages in which we present a local jazz community called New Generation Jazz, and they bring proper grassroots stuff.”

Participation in the local artistic, cultural, social, and economic life

Throughout this topic point, the notion of local life pertains to the cultural, artistic, social, and economic life in a place. In terms of animating the local life all respondents mentioned clear accomplishments and future aspirations. Of course, each of the respondents had different areas in which they excelled in participating to the local life. For larger festivals that have more established names, the positive image generated through their presence have stimulated cultural and economic activity as well as attracting artistic interest. For example, one of the respondents representing a for-profit organization mentioned their festival’s arrival as a significant change for their city’s cultural image. This matter was also touched upon multiple times throughout the course of the theoretical framework (Towse, 2019; Quinn 2010). As Respondent 6 states:

“Our festival really helped them with their image, among other things, and they really made a profile for themselves as being a jazz city.”

The respondent also mentioned that the city authorities had a firm vision in acquiring such an image, thus working towards facilitating this. Regardless, this festival, previously at another location, clearly had an impact on the city’s cultural and artistic life. This also goes hand in hand with the theory that festivals can have a positive impact on the brand image of a location, as mentioned citing the FWSR (2006). Two festivals in the whole sample changed their location after their inception and both acknowledged their recognition of how they can leverage this positive impact. Both reported that the mayor or respective counterpart in their new location acted more than welcoming for their arrival.

Some of the respondents also took the matter at hand to intensify their locations development in terms of artistic and cultural life. There was a consensus on allowing this to happen

but not organizations took the same initiative. Not-for-profit festivals appeared to be much more proactive in terms of engaging the people in cultural and artistic activities. They also actively collaborated with local authorities and associations engaging in cultural activities. One of the respondents emphasized their effort in taking their initiative beyond their region to an international extent. Unlike the example in the previous topic point, this respondent described this project as part of their mission in contributing to the artistic and cultural life. Respondent 7 presents a good example to this with their various projects aiming to provide opportunities for younger artists to participate in the scene:

“We have several projects that include students or young professionals such as one that is called Nordic Showcase. It's for students in the Nordic region who can apply to play showcase gigs for us. We also have a collaboration with The Music Academy, they have a little festival called Serendip for the students and Serendip presents artists for us during the festival. We also have a talent prize for young emerging artists, that is given by one of our main sponsors. We also have workshops for children called bus workshops, which is for smaller children to learn how to improvise on instruments.”

Some of the respondents also mentioned their activities throughout the year not being limited to the festivals three days, mentioning initiatives with other cultural organizations. It was mostly the not-for-profit organizations that reported collaborations on a wide scale. Some of these collaborations were directly related to artistic activities such as collaborations with cinemas, theatres, and the like. There were also some respondents who define their purpose to reach beyond cultural and artistic activity. For instance, Respondent 5 mentioned multiple activities in which they collaborate to preserve the nature in their area as well as creating an environment where people can come and enjoy throughout the year.

It can be understood from the respondents answers that they assume an important role in making their location more attractive which they recognize. This is not limited to being a nice festival brand on the map attracting tourists, but also a place that can attract other creative workers from the region or even internationally. A lot of the respondents mentioned collaborations with the local business and students who volunteer in their events. This is to say that festivals actively

engage the younger labor capital, giving them chances to engage with an industry they are interested in, or collaborate with other like-minded individuals. Of course, hiring the local businesses for the supply is also likely to stimulate the local economy. Some respondents also mentioned their interaction goes beyond creating job opportunities to participating in different levels of societal tasks such as bringing solutions to local maintenance or environmental issues as mentioned in the previous point.

To briefly summarize this topic point has analyzed if festivals directly or indirectly engaged in developing the local life through contributing to different parts of society. Taking on the answers of interview respondents, it appears that there is indeed a tendency from organizers to give particular care to this function of their organization. While for-profit festivals participate in this process more so indirectly by making their location more attractive and creating job opportunities, not-for-profit ones actively take on the objective to stimulate local life. However, it would be a problematic assumption that one is more beneficial than the other. One difference that can be observed could be that larger for-profit organizations might have a stronger impact on the economic life compared to smaller not-for-profit organizations. It is however hard to say whether a similar comparison can be made for cultural, artistic, or social life as they are less quantifiable. We do know however that not-for-profit organizations take a greater interest in empowering such aspects of local life.

4.3 FESTIVALIZATION OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

As touched upon in the previous section all the respondents believe and strive to have a positive impact on their environments. This positive impact comes in many forms such as “stimulating the scene” as Respondent 8 would put it or engaging the community and inspiring an identity through creating a diverse environment in which people can interact with each other. Going forward in the interviews, after discussing the different advantages of festival in creating cultural, artistic, social, and economic value, the respondents were asked to explain their interpretation of festivalization, why it has become a trend and its effects. This section focuses on highlighting the similarities and differences among the views of respondents and their thoughts on how this phenomenon impacts the now and the future of their industry.

Interpretations and indicators of festivalization

Respondents made various interpretations of the festivalization concept drawing attention to how this phenomenon affected the music industry. They've also brought perspective on what the rapid growth in the industry entails for the future of their organization and the festival scene. While some respondents recognized the festivalization concept, some was questioning its existence, or was not aware of it but could make an educated guess. This topic point, demonstrates the perception of organizers on where they stand in the process, underlining the divergence in the answers of different types of organizations.

One of the memorable answers collected came from the category of company owned/ for-profit festivals that described the festival industry as the equivalent of streaming in the live music world. In the introduction of this thesis, the effects of the changing music consumption patterns were mentioned. As streaming and digital distribution grew larger, record sales were largely reduced, resulting in lower income of artists who consequentially found refuge in doing more live performances. It is self-explanatory that such developments altered consumption patterns of the audiences along with the supply side of the industry. But as Respondent 3 indicates, it also created a whole new path as a ripple effect for the live music industry, being festivalization:

“I think that the festival is the closest representation of the streaming experience in a live setting. You know people don't listen to one act; some people listen to an album. Most people will listen to a playlist with fifty artists on it and the closest way you can get that is by going to a festival, not by going to a hard ticket show.”

The respondent expressed his thoughts as to why festivalization might have caught up in the age of streaming, picking up on the similarity of the consumption pattern. Another respondent from the same category also emphasized the importance in the evolution of how music is distributed, particularly in terms of streaming, attaching the rise in the festivalization trend to this development. This means that organizers recognize the role of streaming on artists' income, resulting in them wanting to participate in more live performances. Throughout the theoretical framework, the impact of streaming on the music and festival industries were mentioned multiple times (Jordan, 2015; Janssen and Nilsson, 2016). Many of the respondents also mentioned that the

sheer number of artists and acts going around to be presented makes the production of a festival more efficient in terms of organization as well as costs. These organizer perspectives highlight the fact that streaming indeed created a disruption in the industries supply and demand patterns that requires attention.

On the other hand, the change in the demand patterns of the music industry is also related to consumers having and increasing amount of disposable income and a rise in the demand for experience typed products (Klamer, 2017; Frey, 2000; Collins, 2014). Respondent 2 summarizes the aptitude of festivals in catering to these needs as follows:

“The advantage of festivalization is that an idea is condensed to a theme on a weekend creating an exceptional art experience in a short time. To think and discuss, to question the now the present is what I think is the biggest advantage of festivals.”

This statement also gives a good idea of how the rest of the independent/not-for-profit respondents perceive the role of their organization to be in the process of festivalization. Two of the other respondents also mentioned their drive to provide an unforgettable experience which they expect to be shared, resulting in more demand and thus more festivals. One of the respondents also mentioned the power of social media as a catalyzer to this phenomenon. These thoughts measure up to a satisfying look into organizers perspective on the reasons why festivalization has picked up.

Another important point that was discussed in relation to the festivalization concept was how it resulted in increasing artists fees. Other respondents of the independent categories have especially emphasized the trouble brought by the increasing artists costs resulting in bigger cost challenges to organize a festival that offers a valuable experience. Respondent 8 has said the following on the matter:

“The rising ticket prices over the past ten years have been crazy. There’s a large influx of money and people are willing to spend a lot on festivals. There’s been a lot of competition between festivals, fighting against each other to have the biggest artists. You bring people for the experience, but you

also need a large headline to sell a lot of tickets. So the the fees for artists have also been been going up like crazy.”

In summary, festival organizers recognize their function to cater to the changing dynamics of the music industry. There is a far bigger awareness by the independent festivals on the matter of providing an out of ordinary experience. Company owned/for-profit organizations also recognize this, however, perceive the main reason behind festivalization to be related to more artists being available due to streaming services not paying them off. Furthermore, there is a common observation that is described as a negative effect of festivalization, being the increasing artists fees putting the whole industry in strain. The festivals of the independent category are the ones who suffer the most from this effect.

Supply perspective

As mentioned in the previous point, festivals have become an important part of artists’ livelihood. While festivalization is perceived to be partly due to artists wanting to play in more live performances, it is also the reason why artists fees have grown astronomically. In this point a closer look at what respondents think on how this rise in fees have affected the artists themselves.

Most independent festivals have described the rising fees as problematic, saying that it made it harder to balance the ticket sales while presenting enough emerging or obscure artists. This indicates that the increased fees caused by festivalization of the music industry has eventually resulted in organizers not being able to present equal opportunities for exposure. Another important point is on the unbalanced distribution of this influx. Respondent 8 explained how it really affected less-known artists as follows:

“There’s a large gap growing between a very small percentage of artists who are making a lot of money and a large group of artists who are struggling to to make ends meet or, to be able to make a living from their artistic.”

This in the long-term can result in a very polarized music industry. Furthermore, because most artists rely on live performances, the ones that are in the less paid are put through a “rat race”, as Respondent 8 describes it, meaning that they must run around doing unsustainable amounts of acts

to make a living. Three other respondents from the independent/not-for-profit category also mentioned their concern on the environmental impact of having artists travel so often.

Music festivals have evolved into gatekeepers of the music industry, giving audiences quality signals, especially if they have a successful image in curating artists. It was mentioned in the theoretical framework, referring to the works of Pons and Garcia (2019) that through a festivalized music industry, artists have started to increasingly rely on festivals to gain media recognition. Respondent 3, a company owned/for-profit have explained their ability to allow artists to leverage their brand as follows:

“Black Midi is a big UK band they're kind of like math rocky and mad. Their music is abrasive and difficult to listen. But you know some people at these festivals were just like this is great, and they put it on, and it really legitimized them as a band. It really made them seem like more more credible than they were at the time.”

As fees of well-known musical artists are rising and festivals are dependent on ticket sales, there's a larger share of the budget spent on established artists, leaving less-known ones out from the possibility to benefit from such legitimizing effects. However, some of the independent respondents also mentioned that they would not enter in a price war with larger festivals, simply because they can't. They would give the option to these larger artists to play in their festival for a smaller price and rely on their brand image to attract the artist anyways. This way they believe can keep the balance in diversity of their line-up, which is what made their brand image in the first place.

Exclusivity contracts is also considered to be a result of festivalization according to some respondents. The increase in the number of festivals results in them competing over certain artists that would secure them ticket sales. Most respondents agree that it would hurt their image to have the same artists as another festival in the same period. There are some respondents however, which mentioned that they were not particularly worried by this and give the artists the freedom to do whatever they want. One of the respondents also mentioned that this negatively affects the local venues and club scenes which often cannot compete with festivals bargaining power, especially for international artists. Respondent 4 puts this in words as follows:

“Because festivals have so much competition, they make artists sign exclusive contracts to protect themselves. This also makes it very difficult for clubs to actually give the opportunity to invite international artists.”

Having considerable bargaining power, company owned/for-profit respondents were not particularly worried by this, where most independent festivals said exclusivity deals have negatively affected their programming. Even if this is the case, most of the respondents including some independent ones agreed sometimes it was necessary to protect their programs uniqueness.

To summarize the understanding of organizers of how festivalization affect artists, we can highlight a few key points. FThere is a consensus that the increasing number of festivals cater to more artists willing to participate, as well as providing them means to gain legitimacy through their gatekeeping role. While this indeed is advantageous, over the past years it brought about certain inefficiencies regarding the distribution of income among artists. As our respondents mentioned this led to a less paid majority to play in unsustainable amount acts, also causing considerable environmental damage just as suggested by Hitters and Mulder (2020). Finally, due to the increased competition among festivals, enforcing exclusivity deals have become a common practice, which is deemed to be exploitative of artists according to some respondents.

Demand perspective

To have a clear overview of the impact of festivalization it is important to gather perspectives on all stakeholders. Which is why the interviews proceeded on collecting thoughts about how this trend affected the consumers. Most of the respondents agreed that they offered experiences that would carry their audience to somewhere separate from their daily lives. This would allow them to disconnect from everything and enjoy themselves and the moment. The idea that the festival experience has gained in popularity because it allows participants to disconnect from everyday life was also mentioned in the theoretical framework of this thesis (FWSR, 2006). It was a common theme among respondents to think of this as a necessity in the very intense socio-economic lifestyle we have today. Respondent 5 summarized the perception quite clearly, saying:

“It's kind of a pilgrimage to reach high spirituality when you compare it to religions, like when the old Romans went to the temples on the hills to party together, or when Muslims go to Mecca. This is what festivals represent for music lovers, who works constantly but then has the festival summer to look forward to. You prepare for it, and then you arrive there and get completely in trance.”

Throughout the interviews the word ‘pilgrimage’ reappeared, especially when respondents were engaged with questions related to festivalization. They thought that the wide diffusion of festivals, particularly in the past two decades, had a lot to do with people feeling marginalized and looking for connection with like-minded people with similar interests. The works of Finkel (2010) and Lang & Maier (2015), mentioned in the theoretical framework, highlighted the ability of festivals to integrate marginalized parts of society. Some respondents also agreed that the festival experience goes beyond just showcasing artists, touching senses of freedom, and belonging among people. Respondent 6 said the following about this:

“Going to a festival means to see all your heroes at once, find new music that you never heard before, and meet with you friends, enjoying good food and company. I think especially the alternative festivals became a very big playground for youngsters where they can do all sorts of things they aren’t allowed to do at home.”

This was one of the points during the interviews where organizers from every category really were in the same page. They acknowledged their function of providing consumers a place to be free where they can learn from others and themselves. It was especially the respondents of independent/not-for-profit festivals however that reiterated the importance of finding new inspirations during festivals. For instance, Respondent 1, representing a multi-disciplinary festival, emphasized that the atmosphere is more than just giving freedom and about learning and discovering new ideas.

All in all, through the interviews it was possible to observe that the general tone, among the various respondents of this research, was in line with what has been suggested by Frey (2000) regarding audiences looking to participate in pilgrimage like experiences, finding people of similar

interests. It can be said indeed that festivalization has facilitated the access to such experiences. Respondents also recognized that through festivalization, a much wider set of consumers are now able to enjoy the benefits of festivals, suggesting a more inclusive market just as expected by Frey (2000).

There are some additional reasons as to why there was such growth in the festival industry in relation to demand. Some respondents have mentioned for instance that there is an increased amount of expense by festival tourists. Which makes it more attractive for people to organize festivals, as suggested by Frey (2000). Another important point adding up to this fact, according to our respondent is the decrease in the costs of travel, allowing consumers to discover new things they haven't had the chance the experience before. This effectively stimulated the festival industry beyond what it could have been third decades ago. Three respondents from different categories also mentioned that overall, they observed decreased interest in clubs from younger people, saying that people are much keener on participating in a festival rather than go out every week. These are some of the points as to why festivalization might have picked up. Respondent 1 explains his view on the matter, elaborating on how this trend deformed the industry:

“Every so often people decide on three or four festivals that they want to visit per season, where they also intend to spend a lot of money. I think, is this whole industry has evolved. I mean it is a market driven development, and of course, when there is a market when there's revenue there's agencies there's management's and that jump on the bandwagon. This brings a situation where sometimes agencies are asking for five thousand upwards DJ fees.”

This independent/not-for-profit, publicly funded respondent also reacts to the fact that increased demand in festival type organizations have resulted agencies in exploiting the situation.

Another independent/not-for-profit festival however sees the situation of having a commercial festival around them completely differently. This related to the idea that festivals can also have positive impact on each-other, along with stimulating interest in cultural activities As suggested in the theory regarding festivalization by Negrier (2017) there is positive relationship among the growth in the amount of festivals and more activity being festivalized. As more people discover the advantages, they can reap from attending to a festival rather than one single concert,

they are more inclined to attend to them. This has to do with reducing their risk through reducing their search and discovery costs. In this line of thinking, when there is an increase in awareness people are expected to have an increased interest. Respondent 7 gives a very good example to this by explaining their relationship with another festival in their town:

“There's a big festival taking place every sixth other year, at the same period of our festival. What we've noticed is that that year those years, we sell more tickets, because the more that happens in the city, the more tickets are sold. I haven't seen yet that it's just eating away part of our market share just because we are at the same time”

Although concrete and quantifiable conclusions cannot be drawn from such statement, we can interpret the respondents comment as a positive relationship between the number of ongoing activities in a certain place and the amount of interest aggregated from the public. There can be a connection between increased marketing from different organizations that stimulates attraction. This is also aligning with the expectations of other respondents who commented on the relevance of social media in the increase of demand.

To outline the findings of this topic point briefly, we can highlight the fact the festival industry is shaped in direct relation to the changing dynamics of the consumer demand relationship. While some respondents find it counterproductive to shape their organization completely based on audience expectations, they also agree that it is necessary to adapt to their needs and wants to survive. Some respondents stated that this sometimes challenged their innovativeness as they would have to provide some highly demanded artists that demand unproportionable fees. The festivalization process also resulted in more options for consumers throughout the past decades but according to our respondents this only resulted in more demand.

The implications of festivalization

One of the most important takeout from the respondents regarding festivalization is the common view that the trend has made the direction of the festival industry unsustainable if it keeps growing as it does. Some of the smaller, independent festivals are in the view that the industry has come to a saturation. There is also a view that this saturation will mostly affect large festivals negatively.

On the other hand, independent festivals think that, because they have quality of experience as a top priority, they will find a way to remain relevant. Respondent 8 has expressed his expectations as follows:

“I believe that we're going to see that the very large festivals will shrink a little bit while there will be a bit more attention for the boutique style festivals like ours. I mean the last few years I've seen a lot more of those kind of festivals popping up.”

Some of the other respondents said that there would always be larger festivals as landmarks, giving the Glastonbury as an example. Not all the respondents agreed that the industry was at a saturation point. There were however significant differences among the level of development of the festival industry between respondents that suggested such saturation and those that disagreed. For instance, it is common knowledge that in the Netherlands and Belgium, there is an abundance of festivals. The respondents of that area were much more skeptical about the existence of festivalization in the present time. They even mentioned that in the big cities, the legislation was becoming increasingly strict to limit the number of existing festivals, especially due to pollution concerns.

On the other hand, a company owned/for-profit festival with a very large capacity at a location where there is an abundance of festivals, has expressed a perspective overlapping with that Respondent 8 mentioning that very large festivals, especially outdoor ones, are unsustainable in the long term. This idea, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, is supported by the works of Hitters & Mulder (2020) and Allen et al. (2002). Here is what Respondent 3 had to say about the future of large festivals:

“I think there's a long-term issue for festivals, especially large outdoor ones, as building loads of temporary structures in the middle of a field is unsustainable on a lot of levels. For instance, on an environmental level. Practically, there are no festivals that don't operate on diesel power generators, so once you start changing that, things are going to run out and these organizations are going to run into trouble really quickly.”

According to this respondent, another very dire consequence of having an overabundance of festivals is the environmental damage that might be brought about through them. Throughout the interview, respondents from smaller independent festivals have mentioned their priority in reducing their carbon footprint, through various collaborations and initiatives. For instance, Respondent 7 mentioned their collaboration with their cities public transport to avoid having visitors use cars for transportation. Another independent festival, Respondent 8 revealed their increased budget for artist travel costs, to have them use trains instead of planes. Different examples regarding using paper cups and the like came, especially from independent festivals. This demonstrated that it is also easier for smaller and more flexible organizations to cope with the emerging needs of the festival scene.

This topic point discussed where the festivalization trend may lead the industry. As it appears there are some views that the industry is slowly becoming saturated, although some might disagree. There is a general understanding however that very large festivals are becoming unsustainable both in terms of costs and environmental friendliness. Some respondents stated there might be a rise in the success of small scale ‘boutique’ festivals. Some other respondents state there are an increasing amount of niche festivals gaining momentum in their region, indicating that there might indeed be some truth to this expectation. The findings regarding the unsustainability of the growing industry also coincides with the literature regarding the direction of festivalization, especially in terms of the environment, as mentioned in the theoretical framework (Hitters and Mulder, 2020; Allen et al., 2002).

4.4 COMMERCIALISATION IN THE MUSIC FESTIVAL SCENE

Just like in other industries, cultural and artistic ones also become commercialized. The research question of this thesis aims to scrutinize how organizers perceived the challenges created by festivalization and commercialization in their industry and whether this forced them to make sacrifices. In this section what has been found out on this matter is highlighted in somewhat a disorganized way. The reason for this is the fact that not one category of respondents has reported similar views on the matter.

Commercialization of the music festival industry

As stated in the previous paragraph, there are quite a bit of contradictory views on the matter of commercialization among the respondents of this research. The largest amount of contradiction regarding how commercialization manifests itself in the festival industry can be observed in the stances of not-for-profit organizations. This topic by its nature has different effects to its surround that could be considered. Therefore, it was very challenging to capture the perspectives regarding the various points throughout the interviews. Which is why various points of view has been brought to this section, sometimes without them being representative of their category as a whole.

To begin with, one of the independent/not-for-profit respondents mentioned the role of social media in driving the prices in the industry upwards while also controlling the amount of interest around certain artists. Although this specific organizer prioritizes the artistic value they offer, he confessed that they would have to consider the interest around certain artists that could be tracked on social media. Otherwise, they would not have been able to achieve the necessary revenue or attraction they require for their festival to be feasible. The significance of how social medial influences the commercialization of the music festival industry was also mentioned in the theoretical framework of this thesis (Morey et al., 2014). Here is what Respondent 1 said about what they thought was a form of commercialization in their industry:

“When I started promoting events, artists were happy to perform an act for a couple of hundred euros. This simply doesn't exist anymore as everything starts from a thousand euros and moves up pretty quickly. Social media plays a very tragic role in this process. The whole music landscape analysis so diverse and it's really hard to tell if if a certain artist is worth the money in terms of market revenue and sadly we have to take this into consideration. Not only because of the monetary aspect, but also in terms of relevance and so we want to offer a program that this is ideally relevant to many people at the same time and very good.”

As this respondent hints, a lot of the commercialization in the industry revolves around the optimization of attraction and revenues of festival organizations. Another independent/not-for-profit respondent also shared their thoughts along the same lines, also underlining the role of other

stakeholder in the industry such as ticketing companies and booking agencies. Here is what Respondent 2 added to this topic point:

“Many ticketing companies and booking agencies are often behind these festivals with the only interest of maximizing their profits. Working with these companies, bidding for artists is like the stock market. Talking with these booking agencies you realize they aren’t interested in your festival or your theme. They are not interested if the idea of the artists that they represent is connected to the idea you want to express.”

This respondent also hints at the fact that the commercialized stakeholders within the industry inhibit the artistic and creative value through competing for the highest fees possible for the artists they represent.

On a contradictory note, another independent/not-for-profit festival however sees a completely different impact of the commercialization in the festival industry, claiming it’s necessary for an underground culture to flourish. According to Respondent 8 while there will always be demand for the commercial festivals, but this will not change the fact that there will always be people who will look for something more experimental. Instead, Respondent 8 claims the following:

“I really believe that, if you have this large sense of commercialization and these very large commercial festivals, they also create some sense of decent oxygen for the underground culture.”

A coinciding view came from a respondent of the company owned/for-profit festivals category. They claimed that commercialization is necessary for industries to develop and make it more accessible for the consumers to partake in the activities. Where most events would be exclusive two decades ago with very expensive ticket fees, many more people can enjoy their heroes live thanks to festivals. According to the same respondent it also allows artist to reach a larger audience and earn what they deserve as well. The respondent pointed out that most festivals made negative

returns in their first years due to the huge costs of production and it would not have been possible for them to survive without commercialization for instance.

“I think that commercialization makes festivals more egalitarian in a lot of ways. It opens the market to people who don't necessarily know someone. Anyone can buy a ticket to our festival in a way that not anyone could have gone to those illegal raves for instance. As long as the ticket price doesn't become prohibitive, and no one's making super exaggerated profits. I think that people should be paid for their work and so the festivals have to be commercialized.’

Some festivals organizers agree that commercialization is one of the main factors driving fees up in the industry, thus inhibiting their ability to provide artistically interesting and relevant. Others would say that it is a necessary process, creating a more accessible market to the consumers while also creating better opportunities for artists. Most of the other respondents also stated different ideas, stating some benefits as well as disadvantages to the commercialization phenomena. In the following topic points these perspectives are scrutinized in depth.

Impact of commercialization on artists

Some of the respondents also drew attention to how commercialization affected the artists. As mentioned in previous sections music festivals have grown to become a very crucial part of the music industry, especially in terms of artists incomes. Therefore, we can assume that a commercialized festival industry must have some impact on artists livelihood and creativity. While some respondents especially focused on how the commercialization was affecting their challenges as organizers, others also thought that the impact it created on artists brought negative consequences to artists creativity. Here is how Respondent 7 underlines this situation:

“Commercialization is not really good because it sets a pressure on what the artist wants to create. The moment you have a commercial success, you have other people who wants to benefit from you interested in your project. While some artists can cope with this very well and still be creative, others face it in

a way that they feel trapped. You are expected deliver something that sells concert tickets, so you are not free anymore, to create what you want. “

This respondent answers also recalls the idea that perhaps a commercialized festival industry was beneficial for already existing artists, but it might have brought consequences on the artists emerging now and in the future.

Another important impact of commercialization on artists is regarding the diversity of lineups. As the topic of having dominantly white male line ups have been heavily criticized in the recent years a lot of the festivals have acted to amend their mistakes. While this is positive, some respondents expressed concerns on how this was only applied superficially. This led to the creation of female champions, especially in the commercial electronic music scene with a few female artists being booked by all the major festivals. Here is what Respondent 1 had to say about this issue:

“I think women in electronic music have been marginalized, we can agree that there is a male dominance in the industry. What I consider a bit sad is that I see a lot of festivals ending up with Nina Kravitz. I find it funny how narrow the spectrum for female headliners has become.”

As it appears a lot of the independent respondents draw attention to the negativities of commercialization. The main problems that have been repeated on multiple occasions are related to the rise of fees, reduced space for artistic creativity, and cookie cutter solutions to diversity in line-ups.

Impact of large companies on the rest of the industry

Independent/not-for-profit agrees for instance, that the large festivals create many challenges for them in terms of booking headliner artists. At least four of the independent festivals have mentioned that they did not have the means to compete with them. Few less have attributed the source of their concern to the large companies owning multiple festivals. One of the respondents also mentioned that the festival industry has become very dependent on the market, especially in case growth is a priority. This could appear as a problem since often growth is necessary to survive the increasing costs. According to some of the respondents one of the main drivers of increasing

costs are larger monopolizing companies. This effect of monopolies is also suggested in the works of Moore (2015, Anderton (2015) and Morey et al. (2014). Respondent 1, an independent/not-for-profit festivals organizer expressed his concerns as follows:

“The sheer amount of corporate festivals, with often very good headlining lineups, is a huge problem for us. We can’t and do not want to compete with with that industry. It’s that it is impossible for us to poke interesting artists. It’s just very painful and annoying experience oftentimes because you end up realizing how much of the business by now is completely driven by these agencies.”

As this respondent claims, the rise of the fees is perceived to be as one of the most important negative impacts of commercialization. Other independent/not-for-profit respondents also expressed that the divergence in the objectives and vision of other more commercialized festivals constrains their ability to achieve their artistic vision. In this case relying on governmental support appears to be a relieving factor for festivals who would not like to give up on their artistic vision. Here is an independent/not-for-profit festivals representative, Respondent 2’s perspective on the matter:

“Commercialization and the rise of the fees is more or less because of festivals that has a different agenda, such as the maximization of profits. I’m glad that we have the possibility to work independently, since we know that 70% of our funding comes from public funds.”

The same respondent also mentioned that this is not a recent issue for them. In fact, they stated that because the industry was steering in this direction, they had to find an alternative to remain artistically relevant, by combining their festival with different artistic forms. Since the fees in the music industry kept rising, they had to balance out their expense by including different experiences.

Respondents from various categories agreed that large companies owning many festivals resulted in similar, artistically unsatisfying programs. On one occasion, even a company-

owned/for-profit respondent expressed their concerns about large companies owning a multitude of festivals. The same respondent claimed that they inhibit fair competition within the industry. Respondent 3 explains their point of view as follows:

“Where there’s monopoly power you've got a problem. Three or four big companies own most of the festivals in the UK and internationally. This is why all these festival lineups look the same, it's because of the same company owning it and it's the same booking agents talking to the same bookers. Then you've got a monopoly power where the products are very good and there's not a proper competition.”

This respondent from the company owned/for-profit category recognizes the monopolistic tendencies of these larger festival owning companies and their effects on the competitiveness within the industry.

Another company owned/for-profit respondent, on the other hand, underlined the benefits of being part of a large organizations. They highlighted the benefits of reduced costs as well as the advantages they gain in terms of marketing their event, managing their organization and the benefiting from economies of scale and scope. On top of this the respondent also mentioned that the company did not necessarily meddle with their artistic choices and merely had expectations in terms of organizational goals.

On the other hand, an independent/not-for-profit festival has given an entirely different perspective than most other respondents. They mentioned that as a highly dynamic industry the music festival world requires a lot of flexibility. Respondent 8 explained their perspective of the current position of the large ‘monopolistic’ companies in the music festival industry:

“Fifteen, twenty years ago, these companies were very dominant and monopolistic. But this is over with social media and the digitalization of our society. Those companies became very large and slow, hence creating opportunities for smaller companies and promoters to do something relevant since they're much faster in picking up new trends. I have a feeling they're like slow elephants trying to react to a business that is going very fast. They

will always stay in existence, but they aren't able to react fast enough to the ever-evolving music industry.”

The respondent like other independent participants highlights the importance of social media in the transformation of the festival industry. Though its counterparts think social media has been a major catalyzer of growth for commercial festivals, this respondent interprets the effects as being beneficial for smaller and independent festivals. These contradictory points of view suggests that there isn't a clear understanding of how exactly social media transforms the industry. On the other hand, one can infer that being flexible in recognizing and adapting to new trends on social media gives a major advantage in the contemporary music festivals industry. Moreover, this view suggests that even though monopolies were able to create niche brands for their festivals, they are still not reflexive enough to catch on the trends as suggested otherwise by Morey et al. (2014).

There are multiple opposing views among the interview respondents of this research on how commercialization affects the music festival industry. While some respondents think that it puts restraints on artists creativity, others claimed it is beneficial for the industry to grow and develop. On the other hand, most respondents expressed their belief that even though the industry might be commercialized, the demand for events prioritizing artistic value will always be satisfied.

5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 CONCLUSION

With the observed growth in the popularity and size of the music festival industry, this research aimed at evaluating the notions of festivalization and commercialization and how these notions clash with the creation of cultural and artistic value through festivals. The research took a special focus on festivals around Europe, scrutinized how these notions manifested themselves within that scene and how they were perceived by the organizers of festivals with different purposes, values and approaches. Through conducting 9 in-depth interviews with organizers of various festivals and by means of qualitative methods, these concepts were analyzed and compared with existing theoretical literature. Considering the fundamental differences among the three categories of festivals included in the sample, the approach of this conclusions is of highly comparative nature.

The initial phase of the interviews revolved around mapping out the characteristics and the artistic vision of the festivals as well as identifying the organizers perspectives on how their festival generate cultural and artistic value. The answers of respondents regarding their understanding of their organizations ability to create such values revealed disparities among them depending on the purpose of the festivals. Not-for-profit organizations prioritize presenting a larger number of experimental acts and emerging artists and give more importance to engaging their audience with the themes of their events to create a conversation or exchange around them. On the other hand, festivals of the for-profit categories suggested that their artistic relevance was drawn from their ability to curate extensive programs that showcase the most relevant artists in a specific genre. In this case the attitudes of not-for-profit festivals in engaging their audiences were more in line with the conversational aspect of creating artistic value as suggested by Klamer (2017) or Throsby (2000) and seemed to offer more potential in stimulating consumer awareness on cultural products available through exhibiting a higher degree of innovativeness (Hirsch, 2000; Paleo and Wijnberg). Diversely, for-profit festivals represented a wider range and variety of artists including much more well-known and established ones, also giving space to more obscure artists in smaller scenes, hence reducing the risk of consumers in their discovery process, thus creating incentive for a larger range of participants to discover new acts. This ability to expose a wider audience to new acts through diversifying their program is beneficial for the public but also increases the ability to legitimize certain artists which according to Pons and Garcia (2019) is an important function of festivals in creating cultural and artistic value.

The development of local social and economic life, as suggested in the literature, appears to be more than just a side effect of the rising music festival industry. As implied by the organizers of some of the publicly funded festivals in the sample, it rather is a powerful tool purposefully employed to stimulate the desired effects by governments and cultural organizations around Europe. Just as in the previous point, there is a deviance among the attitudes taken by the different categories of festivals. Most of the for-profit festivals envision to contribute to their environment through creating a landmark, hence improving the attractiveness of their location, which as suggested by Getz (2008), Quinn (2010), and Laing and Maier (2015) would result in various economic benefits. On the other hand, not-for-profit organizations appear to take a much more hands-on attitude in stimulating the local life and community through workshops, volunteering programs and repurposing of certain locations. Furthermore, the geographical differences in this aspect were apparent among festivals, as in certain cases respondents mentioned their local government being pro-active in accommodating their organization while others suffered from theirs being neglectful. This also coincides with the warnings of Towse (2019) regarding the importance of local cultural policy in reaping the benefits of such events.

Especially in the past couple of decades, the perceived benefits of music festivals seem to have heavily outmatched the costs therefore resulting in the rise of their numbers and subsequently the trend of festivalization. However, drawing from the interviews, festivalization appears to have both positive and negative effects. According to the respondents, festivalization has cultivated a culture of pilgrimage around music festivals, which are thoughts that are in line with FWSR (2006). Furthermore, this trend appears to have created many opportunities for artists to benefit from the exposure and recognition they attain from festivals, just as suggested by Pons and Garcia (2019). Many of the respondents mentioned that they give much importance in showcasing less-known artists, but that they pursue a balance in their line-up by booking more established artists and secure tickets sales. According to all of the respondent, the increased competition fueled by festivalization has resulted in an astronomic rise in artist fees leaving many organizations in a difficult position. The continuous growth in prices, makes it challenging to balance the budget among more and less-known artists for some organizations, potentially inhibiting their artistic capacity. In this sense, there was a clear division among those organizations who are publicly funded holding an advantage in terms of not having to give up their artistic vision and the ones

who are privately funded who must find an equilibrium between ticket selling targets while keeping their good image.

Another important issue mentioned by respondents was the negative environmental impact of festivalization and the uncontrolled growth of the industry as suggested by various scholars (Hitters and Mulder, 2020; Allen et al., 2002). Even though, festivalization appears to have brought clear positive developments within the music industry, providing opportunities for artists as well as communities and their local ecosystems, the trend have also resulted in some deficiencies pushing organizers to make some sacrifices.

Just as in previous points, opposing views appeared on the topic of commercialization. Many respondents though that it was necessary for the industry to develop. Some of them, including respondents from not-for-profit organizations, mentioned that it gave way to underground movements. On the other hand, some respondents, especially from the independent/not-for-profit category underlined the negative impact of commercialization on the creativity and production of artists involved in the industry. This thought coincides with the literature of Bourdieu (1985). On a festival organization perspective, the interviews suggested that some independent/not-for-profit organizations had to deviate from just displaying music and integrate other art forms to remain artistically relevant.

Furthermore, as suggested in the literature there are some major event companies monopolizing the festival industry (Anderton, 2015). According to the responses gathered from the interviews, these companies are challenging the ability of smaller independent festivals to compete and survive. The fact that monopolizing companies are signing exclusivity deals as well as create bidding wars on artists fees is seen to be a problem not only for other festivals but also the artists themselves. It is suggested to create an anticompetitive environment where a very small amount of the artists earn a large portion of the surplus while others suffer. This also coincides with the winner-takes-all mechanism cited by Abbing (2019).

Having analyzed this situation on different fronts this thesis concluded that there is indeed good reason for the festival industry to have grown so much. Festivals appears to be an incubator of cultural and artistic value along with stimulating social and economic life. However, the industry has grown so much that the festivalization phenomenon is now having negative implications on artists, organizations, and the environment. The commercialization of the industry has brought a lot of development and allowed for the industry and a lot of musicians to flourish as

well as attracting more people to participate in cultural and artistic activities. On the other hand, commercialization has also resulted in the forming large monopolizing companies which push some of the smaller players out of the competition. However, according to the respondents of this research, the music festival industry is at a turning point where smaller and independent festivals will persevere through their flexibility and fast adoption of new trends. The future of the industry will be defined by how well the organizers of the many festivals be it for-profit or not respond to the existing challenges such as environmental aspects or skyrocketing artists fees that puts them in a hard spot.

5.2 DISCUSSION

It may also be concluded from these results that the literature put out in the theoretical framework applies generally to the data. However, the existing literature on festivalization does not necessarily consider the subjective decision making for different types of organizations within the industry.

This thesis confirmed that the way in which festivals correspond to what has been written in the literature varies depending on their purpose, size, location, artistic vision, and other factors. While independent/not-for-profit festivals are more in line with the main literature regarding cultural and artistic value borrowed from Klamer (2019), this does not reflect the whole truth for the entire industry. However, entirety of the literature compiled for the justification of artistic and cultural value overall covers the major benefits shared by most festivals such as providing income for artists (Frey, 2000) or reducing consumer discovery costs (Hirsch, 2000; Hiller, 2012).

Furthermore, the social and economic advantages mentioned throughout the literature seemed to overlap with the general perspective of organizers. For instance, in terms of building community and identity (Laing and Maier, 2015), the realization of social value through collective effervescence (Collins, 2014), and thus attaining a sense of belonging from festivals (Stone, 2009) coincides with what was mentioned by the respondents.

Festivalization was a concept that was not easily recognized by all respondents and so created some issues in terms of acquiring certain viewpoints. On the other hand, the idea of creating a theme-based event in a compact space appeared to be an efficient and exciting idea for most respondents. They suggested that this would both allow their audiences to integrate more than they would have in a traditional concert and that anyways it was much more efficient to combine

multiple acts at a specific location within a few days. This largely corresponds to the thoughts of Negrier (2017) regarding the concept of festivalization. However, literature regarding festivalization that was compiled within the literature did not seem to be enough to account for all of the different perspectives and conclusions that an industry expert can devise, once the subject is properly laid out.

Once again, there is extensive literature regarding the commodification of culture (Abbing, 2019; Bourdieu 1983) and the related reasons as to why the music festival industry has experienced commercialization. However, the literature on the challenges of different types of music festivals and what they can do to remain artistically relevant in the face of commercialization remains rather superficial. Therefore, not many comparisons could be made between the responses provided by the interviewees and existing literature.

The most important limitation to thesis was the fact that the sample set of 9 respondents was insufficient to reflect the complete reality of the festival industry and neither the nuances among the different kinds of organizations within. Although this research was focused on finding out the perspective of organizers and industry experts, it would have been more illustrative to include some perspectives of artist and audiences.

Further research on this subject could focus more on the clash between not-for-profit and for-profit organizations and the differences among them in stimulating cultural and artistic life. Also, perhaps more specific research on festivalization in the music festival industry specifically can be made as festivalization is a term concerning a wider cultural economy. Furthermore, the findings of this research could possibly extend towards a comparative analysis of the different categories of festivals and their stronger aspects in stimulating culture. The findings of such research can help policy makers adapt regulations to optimize the benefit brought by different categories of festivals. Lastly, this thesis focused on the organizers perspective in the festival industry and how certain concepts are experienced by them. It could be an interesting initiative to conduct surveys in order to assess the attitudes and understandings of the audiences regarding these concepts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF THE INTERVIEWEES

| Respondent | Genre | Size | Country | Function of Representative | Characteristics |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Multi-disciplinary | Medium | Austria | CEO | Independent/ Not-for-profit Public-funding |
| 2 | Multi-disciplinary | Small | Austria | Managing Director | Independent, 75% publicly funded, not-for-profit |
| 3 | Jazz – Funk - Soul | Large | United Kingdom | Marketing and Promotions Coordinator | Company-owned/ for-profit |
| 4 | Electronic | Large | Greece | Music Director | Independent/ For-Profit |
| 5 | Multi-disciplinary | Medium | Portugal | Creative Director | Independent Not-For-Profit |
| 6 | Jazz | Large | Netherlands | Programmer | Company-owned/For-Profit |
| 7 | Jazz | Large | Norway | Director | Independent/ Not-For-Profit Publically Funded |
| 8 | Multi-Disciplinary | Medium | Belgium | Head of Festivals and Label | Independent, Not-For-Profit |
| 9 | Electronic | Large | Netherlands | Director | Independent, For-Profit |

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Checklist

Emboldened questions were sent as an interview guideline to the interviewees.

PART A - Introduction:

Focused on discussing the main characteristics of the festival such as vision, musical profile, audience features, partner or parent companies, stage of growth and motives.

- Introduction of the topic + asking permission and consent to record.
- Introduction of the interviewee
 - Name, age, city
 - Function
 - How they got involved with the festival (briefly).
- Introduction of the festival
 - Audiences and musical profile
 - Institutionalization – Independent/parent company
 - Scale – Age – Growth
 - Purpose – For-profit/ Not-for-profit
 - Motives, drives of the festival and how it started

PART B - Cultural and artistic value in the context of music festivals:

How do you think your organization participates in the creation of cultural and artistic value and how does your audience contribute to this process?

- What they consider cultural/artistic/transcendental value
- How they participate in the process
 - Their festivals vision/goals in this aspect
 - Artist's perspective

- Degree of innovativeness - Type of artists (emerging/popular)
- Challenging taste through selection
- Audience - Range
 - Type of audience (specific/wider) (socioeconomic, gender, ethnicity)
 - Participation/contribution in value creation
- Social and Economic Value
 - Local economy - collaborations with local businesses
 - Social Life - building community/ identity
 - Local - International - Digital

PART C - Festivalization of culture:

What would you say is the driving reason behind the festivalization trend in the music industry and what kind of advantages/disadvantages does this create from the perspective of your organization?

- What is festivalization for them
 - Supply Side – advantages/disadvantages for artists (brand leveraging/exposure)
 - Demand Side – advantages/disadvantages for consumers
 - search/discovery
 - demand for experience
 - gatekeeping
- Fast Industry growth
 - Growth limit – saturation
 - Effects on the rest of cultural/music ecosystem
 - Reflections on policy
 - Effects on environment

PART D - Commercialization in the music festival scene:

Do you judge the music festival scene to be commercialized and where does your organization stand in this process?

- Commercialization in the music industry
 - Their standpoint
 - What this means in terms of artistic originality for the industry
- If they perceive power differences within industry linked to commercialization
 - Contract negotiation/ bargaining power
 - Exclusivity deals
- If they think some parties exploit this trend
 - The effect on their festival economically/artistically
- How this affects artists freedom of creation

PART E - Organizational decisions to remain relevant artistically/economically:

Do you find yourself in a position where the commercialization and fast growth of music festivals forces you to make sacrifices from your organization's artistic vision?

- Effects of festivalization and commercialization on their festival
 - Effect of growth → positive or negative
- If they have to/would trade off values for financial success
 - Sacrifices from their artistic vision
- How would they use financial success and recognition/brand value
 - Support emerging artists – target bigger artists

PART F - Positioning your organizational brand – a contrast with the competition:

In a market where there is a growing number of competitors, what is your approach to making/keeping your organization different – artistically relevant?

- Who they perceive to be their competitors

- Local ○ International
- Cross-genre
- Relation with major event companies (livenation etc.)
 - If they are independent - public/private subsidy
 - If they see an advantage to have a relation with them
 - If their dominance affects the festivals success in its goals
- Priority and definition of success - artistic quality/ commercial success
- How they intend to keep their organization artistically relevant
 - If exclusivity deals make this task harder
- Most relevant elements of their brand image
- Economies of scale – optimize experience or optimize return

PART G - Final remarks:

What is your take on the clash between artistic/cultural value and commercialization of music festivals in terms of the future of your organization?

- POV on clash between artistic/cultural value and commercialism
- Future of their organization
- Impact of corona
- Something relevant not addressed?
- What they consider most important out of what has been discussed
- Thank you for your time and input!