

The vanishing of the underground in electronic dance music

A qualitative research regarding the influence of the values of restricted production on the economic and artistic practices of artists in the underground scene of electronic dance music

Student Name: Yannick van Wijk

Student Number: 527332

Supervisor: Dr. Hans Abbing

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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ABSTRACT

In September 2017, an artist in electronic dance music called Jeremy Underground received critique for demanding high hotel requirements and large performing fees, while claiming an underground status. This often used term underground within the context of electronic dance music seems to coincide with the notion of restricted production from Bourdieu: where arts is produced for the sake of art, authentic, associated with the cultural elite and aiming for symbolic capital instead of monetary return. This autonomous realm opposes a heteronomous realm. However, this strict dichotomy of Bourdieu might be questioned in the music industry due to influence of globalization, digitalization and technological innovation of the past decades. Additionally, it has been observed in other cultural sectors that there is an increased importance on business models regardless of public funding, shifting the focus from creative practices to business practices motivated by an economic logic. Therefore this thesis researches this dichotomy in a cultural industry relying on the functioning of the market by answering the question: how do the values of restricted production in the underground scenes of electronic dance music influence the economic and artistic practices of artists? This qualitative research has gone in-depth regarding these concepts and their influence on the practices of artists with the use of semi-structured interviews. Nine respondents from Europe have been interviewed in May 2021 with a total duration of over 11 hours.

From these interviews it has been found that some values of restricted production still remain important for artists in the underground scenes of electronic dance music and are part of the inherent motivation to produce cultural goods. However, the economic practices have become increasingly important in the music industry due to technological, innovative and social developments, making the economic logic an inevitable part of being an artist. The inevitability of the economic logic contradicts the notion of restricted production of Bourdieu and decreases the meaning and importance of the term underground within electronic dance music. This questions the dichotomy posed by Bourdieu and exposes the importance of the economic logic in the modern day music industry, therefore serving as an example of the effect of the market on cultural production.

Keywords: restricted production, underground, artistic and economic logics, electronic dance music, art for the sake of art

Preface

In the first place I would want to thank my parents, Han and Jacqueline, without whom I would not have been able to study this master program. Additionally, I want to thank my girlfriend, Naomi, without whom I would not have been able to finish it. The past two years have been ruff for all of you, so I really want to thank the three of you, and my brother Rick, for supporting me throughout this phase of my life. This also goes for Hans, with his believe in this thesis subject and in me. Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who participated in this research while they simultaneously faced challenging times during the global Covid-19 pandemic. May the electronic dance music industry thrive again after the end of the pandemic and keep growing in its cultural importance and status.

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1. Introduction

In September 2017, a small club in Edinburgh called Abstrakt had cancelled the booking of a DJ named Jeremy Underground (Muggs, 2017; Selektor, 2017). In a post on social media, the venue explained how they had to book several four and five star hotel rooms with gyms and sauna's for multiple nights because these were demanded by the management of the French DJ (Selektor, 2017). After several bookings and changes, the event was already at a loss when the management started to verbally threaten the programmers of the venue. Abstrakt decided to take the loss and cancel the booking, raffle the already booked hotel room to their audience but also released the threats on their social media channel (Selektor, 2017). It unleashed a large amount of critique on the Internet targeted at the name of the Jeremy Underground, mainly questioning if the DJ could still be considered as underground (Muggs, 2017). The DJ, who has the word underground tattooed in his neck, responded with saying:

“If Nina Kraviz flies in private jets and plays Dance Mania Records is she not underground? To my mind she is. (...) Jackmaster is underground. Dixon is underground. (...) It is not just music, it is about your lifestyle, your interests, your thoughts: are you sincere, do you believe in something, do you fight for what you believe? It is not just about being hidden or playing only in basements.” (Muggs, 2017).

Jeremy Underground makes a difference here between the records that are played by a DJ and the places where this DJ plays these records. It does not matter to him whether a private jet brings the artist to the audience, as long as the performance is sincere this artist can be deemed as underground. It is an interesting distinction between the creative aspects and the other aspects of being a DJ. And he is not the only one who uses the term underground. David Guetta, another French DJ that has an estimated net worth of twenty-five million US dollars, also states that his music was considered underground when he started (Greenburg, 2017). Electronic dance music has only increased in popularity since its origin at the end of the 1970s and currently consists of these superstar artists like David Guetta that gain super star fees. The phenomenon of larger audiences and rising fees have been noticed within electronic dance music in general and gives reason to question what it still means to be underground in this global industry.

Within the creative industries it is often assumed that there is a conflict between the creative side and the economical side of art (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007; Everts, Hitters and

Berkers, 2021). According to Bourdieu (1993), the conflict comes from the distinction of operating in an autonomous realm or a heteronomous realm. The first is a field of restricted production with the goal to gain symbolic capital, while the latter targets mass consumption and mass or dominant culture with the goal to gain economic capital (Bourdieu, 1993; Oware, 2014). Practices within these seemingly opposed realms are motivated by different goals and logics (Bourdieu, 1993; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). On the one hand, artists create ‘art for the sake of art’ and at the other end artists are market oriented and view success as the ability to generate an income (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007; Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021). Focussing too much upon the economic side of being an artist instead of the creative side is often viewed as selling-out or commercial by the ones that act the other way around (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021; Thornton, 1995). This dichotomy has been observed in many different cultural industries and the persistence of the debate has often been a sign for different art forms to be accepted as serious art.

Contrarily, within the music industry a new generation of musicians is less hesitant to consider themselves as entrepreneurs and take on non-creative tasks (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021; Schediwy, Loots and Bhansing, 2018). This might be explained by the changes in the entire music industry due to globalisation, digitalization and other technological innovation, resulting in the inseparability of art creation and commercial or promotional practices (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021). After all, the production of cultural goods remains embedded in a context of economical utilisation (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). According to Everts, Hitters and Berkers (2021), it might therefore not be suitable anymore to understand how artists value their work in the dichotomy described by Bourdieu. This research will therefore try to understand how this is applicable in an industry that is increasing in popularity and almost completely depending on the works of the market by answering the following question:

How do the values of restricted cultural production in the underground scenes of electronic dance music influence the economic and artistic aspects of artists’ practices?

To answer this question, several sub questions need to be answered: 1. how does restricted production occur in electronic dance music, 2. what does the underground entail in electronic dance music, 3. how do artists value economic and artistic logics for their practices in electronic dance music and 4. what influence do other stakeholders in the market of electronic

dance music (e.g. consumers, peers and intermediaries) have on the practices of artists? Answering these questions will enable to answer the research question and to contribute to the existing literature on restricted production and the seemingly opposing artistic and economic logic of artists' practices. How the dichotomy of Bourdieu occurs in modern day creative industries has already been researched in the field of theatre by Eikhof and Haunschild (2007) and in Hip-hop and Rap music by Oware (2014). The latter has shown how artists deemed as underground could possibly operate in the field of restricted production as in mass production. Within electronic dance music, this term underground seems to coincide with the notion of restricted production of Bourdieu (1993). Therefore, this industry could be interesting to research, since it is a music genre that increases in popularity while it also contains subcultures that oppose everything mainstream and are deemed as underground (Butler, 2014; Thornton, 1995). It is therefore also expected that individuals in this industry depend more on the works of the market than industries that are more prone to market failure and associated with public funding, which could influence choices made by artists (Butler, 2014, Snowball, 2011). In 1995, research has been done regarding the underground in electronic dance music by Thornton (1995), but this needs additional research to ensure its current relevance with the developments and growth of this industry in the past 25 years. Additionally, research regarding the way musicians build careers remains underexplored (Everts, Hitters and Berker, 2021). By researching the dichotomy between art and economics in the field of electronic dance music, this research will add to the debate and provide insights in an industry where little research has been done.

Additionally, the performing arts are in general experiencing a decline of public funding for non-profit organisations, which emphasises the importance of stable business models that are functioning more on the works of the market than on public funding (Klaic, 2012; Langeveld and Hoogenboom, 2012). According to Everts, Hitters and Berkers (2021) musicians are less hesitant to explore this economic side of the arts as I mentioned before, but research regarding the way musicians operate and build careers in the music industry remains underexplored. Again, electronic dance music might therefore be an interesting case, because besides the important market aspect of this industry, Germany has recently declared its clubs as cultural institutions, giving nightlife and its venues the same legal status and cultural importance as other acknowledged institutions such as museums and theatres (Jhala, 2021; Akingbehin, 2021). Since electronic dance music is considered an industry that runs almost completely without public funding, this research will provide insights on the societal impact

of the emphasis of these business models in the arts and could serve as an example for this direction in the other art sectors.

In order to research the relation between artistic and economic logics, there must be an analysis of the individual practises in relationship to their motivations (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). This asks for an exploratory approach associated with qualitative research. (Babbie, 2016). Therefore, this research makes use of in-depth interviews to understand the practices of artists in relationship to the meaning of underground and the notion of restricted production within electronic dance music.

First the theoretical framework will further explain the concepts that are posed in the main research question. This entails an explanation of restricted production by Bourdieu (1993), a broad definition and brief history of electronic dance music, the works of performing artists and producing artists in electronic dance music, the influence of the consumers of the genre, an explanation of the meaning of underground and the economic and artistic aspects of the practices of artists. Thereafter in the methodology, there will be further elaboration on the qualitative research design and explanation of the in-depth interviews, sampling methods and qualitative data analysis. Thirdly, the result section will explain in detail the findings from the respondents and how these relate to the pre-existing literature. Lastly, the conclusion and discussion will answer the main research question of this thesis and reflect upon the research itself.

2. Theoretical framework

In this section, the existing literature relevant for this research will be explained. First restricted production will be elaborated, then electronic dance music and its origin will be described. Thirdly, the multiple roles that individuals could embody in electronic dance music will be explained in three parts. Then the quality assessment in music will be elaborated and finally the distinction between economically and artistically driven practices will be set out.

2.1 Restricted production

According to Bourdieu (1993) there is a distinction between producing cultural products in a heteronomous realm associated with large-scale production and an autonomous realm associated with restricted production. The former produces cultural goods that targets mass or commercial culture, and thus reaches the largest audience possible with the purpose of gaining economic capital. The restricted production refers to the production of goods with the goal of gaining symbolic capital (often within the so-called high-arts). Bourdieu (1993) states that artists who engage in restricted production, produce their art ‘for the sake of art’, which I will revisit later on. These artists view their restricted production as authentic and commercial art production as inauthentic. The term restricted production thus entails more than solely the deliberate refrainment of reaching the biggest amount of consumers. There is also a value determination in there. However, Bourdieu only considers the elite bourgeoisie to operate in this realm of restricted production, because these artists would have the economic resources to devote one selves to the arts (Bourdieu, 1990; Oware, 2014). Oware (2014) disagrees with Bourdieu and states that working-class or lower class groups could also partake in the field of restricted production, produce for the sake of art, create products that are deemed authentic and targeted solely at other producers instead of mass audiences. Here, restricted production is not facilitated by economic resources, but still motivated by a particular autonomous nature (Oware, 2014). Restricted production could than be viewed as deliberately restraining from reaching a larger group of consumers, because of particular motivations and values. However, in Hip-hop and Rap music the line between operating in large markets and restrictive fields has been blurred (Oware, 2014). Additionally, Everts, Hitters and Berkers (2021) noticed this same blur in Pop music, beyond subgenres (like Indie or Folk) that were expected to be more restrictive fields. Since electronic dance music has similarly increased in popularity in the recent decades as Hip-hop, Rap music and Pop music, it will be interesting to see how restrictive production occurs in electronic dance music. But first, there must be an understanding of electronic dance music.

2.2 Electronic dance music and its origin

The term electronic dance music entails many things and scholars have also used many different terms to describe particular phenomena within electronic dance music (Butler, 2014). Some terms are used interchangeably, for example clubs and venues, scenes and subcultures or even authenticity and credibility. This thesis will therefore also try to clarify what these terms mean, how they are distinct and how they relate to each other. To start with electronic dance music, it is an umbrella term that includes many subgenres and it vaguely describes the attendant cultural network of the producers and consumers (Butler, 2014; McLeod, 2001). According to McLeod (2001), this meta-genre keeps developing many subgenres in such a vast way that any other type of music can't equal it. Still, all these subgenres are deeply connected by the social and economic systems that create and consume these types of music and its corresponding origin (Lena and Peterson, 2008; McLeod, 2001). Before I discuss the importance of the social and economic characteristics of this music genre, I will very briefly explain the history of electronic dance music for the ability to view every development in the current state of the genre in retrospect.

Electronic dance music has emerged from the death of Disco. By the end of the 1970's, the 'disco sucks' campaign in the United States tried to diminish the commercial peak of disco (Butler, 2014; McLeod, 2001). The genre never really disappeared, but it had returned underground again, was transformed with the use of different instruments and had taken on 'House music' as a new name. Although there are many stories about the origin of the new name, it is mostly acknowledged that House music came from the warehouse parties in Chicago where the genre had retreated too (McLeod, 2001). In the disco era, the DJ had emerged as a new sort of pop artists and consequently became an important figure in the development of the genre as House music. The DJ's mixed extended versions of music on 12-inch singles on two turntables and a mixer to sustain the dancing (McLeod, 2001). This mixing of several records could construct whole new compositions that went beyond what was playable on the singular records. One particular DJ, Frankie Knuckles (who passed away in 2014), had moved from playing records to creating music and started pressing rhythm tracks on 12-inch singles to enhance the music while DJ-ing in the beginning of the 1980's (McLeod, 2001). Many DJ's followed and the difference between mixing records and creating music started to blur (McLeod, 2001).

This development of DJs producing music happened simultaneously with the advanced developments in electronic and computer technology (McLeod, 2001). Some technological innovations in instruments, such as the synthesiser, already created that pulsing

sound associated with for example Euro-disco, but it were specific technological advancements that really facilitated the birth of that House music sound (McLeod, 2001; Montano, 2010). 'I Feel Love' by Donna Summer is an example of that sound. Sequencers, samplers and especially drum machines and synthesisers from Roland (such as the Roland TR-808 drum unit and the Roland TB-303 bass synthesiser) were considered as cheap instruments that gave House music a more electronic sound at that time (Montano, 2010). This Roland TB-303 bass synthesiser created a specific sound when filtered all the way up to the higher frequencies, which created a subgenre within House music called 'Acid house'. This illustrates how technological innovations became central in the development of electronic dance music and how the emergence of many subgenres within electronic dance music since the origin of House music has resulted from Disco (McLeod, 2001; Montano, 2010).

Many of the DJs in electronic dance music have been considered as innovative artists and the genre has been understood as the result of the avant-garde in music (Ferreira, 2008; McLeod, 2001). Not only DJs have disseminated this image, but also researchers have classified it this way, and both even deem certain subgenres of electronic dance music as 'Intelligent dance music', glorifying and propagating the technical and musical complexity of the music (Ferreira, 2008). Electronic dance music consist elements of art-music similar to music genres such as classical music, but there are also distinctions between high and low forms within electronic dance music similar to any other cultural product (Butler, 2014). The many subgenres within electronic dance music may sound similar to outsiders but are distinct for insiders and did not only result from technological and musical innovation, but also from subcultures with corresponding symbols that could be understood as specific niche (or local) markets (Lange and Bürkner, 2013; McLeod, 2001). However, electronic dance music as a whole can definitely be considered as a popular music genre and is created and consumed globally (Butler, 2014; Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Montano, 2010). This entails that we can expect that the production and performing in electronic dance music is almost completely funded through the market and relying less on public funding (Snowball, 2011).

Within electronic dance music, Butler (2006) defined three modes of interaction: the recordings artists (or producer), the performing artists (or the DJ) and the performing audience (or the dancers). Although each role is distinct from one another, an individual could embody different roles on different occasions (Butler, 2014). I will now explain these three roles to explore how these roles relate to restricted production in the underground of electronic dance music.

2.3 The performing artist (or DJ)

2.3.1 The liveliness of mixing records

When an electronic dance music artist is performing there is a wide range of recorded material that is used, for example vinyl records, CD's, pre-set drum machines, synthesisers and even constructed loops stored on a laptop (Butler, 2014, Lange and Bürkner, 2013). Thus, electronic dance music artists could construct music live with all kinds of digital instruments (including software run on computers) but also make use of complete pre-composed and pre-recorded music of other artists. The latter is the oldest and most familiar approach in performing and known as the DJ set (Butler, 2014). It makes use of pre-recorded music or sounds that are comparable to performing artists of other music genres or performances in other cultural industries that also make use of any type of pre-recorded music (Butler, 2014; Thornton, 1995). Up to this day, a DJ could perform and charge fees while solely playing the music of other artists. During an event DJs could alternate, implicating that the total experience of the performance(s) can be indefinite in duration, meaning that the event could last more than three days without breaks or rest and thus transcending individual human capabilities to attend the complete event (Butler, 2014; Ferreira, 2008). However, the human involvement is essential, meaning that the DJ creates new music (known as the 'third record') by mixing music and interacting with the audience to create a certain atmosphere and unique experience (Butler, 2014; Ferreira, 2008; Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Thornton, 1995). This interaction with the audience creates a liveliness that is similar to constructing music live with instruments (Thornton, 1995).

2.3.2 The economic advantage of the DJ

As mentioned before, the performing artist in electronic dance music has its history in the 1970's, when the DJ started to replace performances of bands for economical reasons (Thornton, 1995). This replacement is in line with the well-known 'cost disease' theory of the performing arts developed by Baumol and Bowen (1966). The rising marginal costs from labour in the performing arts either result in an increase of price or an artistic deficit (Baumol and Bowen, 1966; Towse, 2010). The artistic deficit could bring along different cultural products that are cheaper to produce or different in experience and quality (Abbing, 2002). Although playing records is a different experience than live played music by a band, it could be argued that the performers were probably less costly in those days than a multi-headed band that also needed to recover the costs of rehearsing. DJs thus replaced live performance of bands as a different cultural product and created other by-products as well. DJs mixed

copies of the same vinyl record to prolong the music, which resulted in the birth of 12-inch vinyl records containing an extended mix of the recorded music (Thornton, 1995). DJ-ing was not merely playing other people's music, but selecting, combining and manipulating records to create new compositions, which is still considered fundamental in this practice today (Butler, 2014). It requires skills, timing and taste to adjust the speed of the records that are played on the turntables and to let them run simultaneously to create a new experience (Butler, 2014, McLeod, 2001).

2.3.3 The influence of digitalization and technological innovation on performing

The search for and purchase of music is one other essential feature of performing as a DJ that has remained the same throughout the years, although the format has changed due to technological innovations and digitalization (Montano, 2010; Thornton, 1995). Not only did technological innovations and digitalization influence the sound and production of electronic dance music, it also influenced the equipment of a DJ that is used to perform with (Montano, 2001). Music used to be solely available on vinyl records, but the format has evolved over a couple of decades and is now also available on other physical formats (as for example the CD or cassette) or digital formats. These changes in formats created the ability for DJs to carry more music with them to performances than possible with physical vinyl records, increasing the diversity and variety of the DJ set (Montano, 2010). Additionally, the digitalization of music has made the search for and purchase of music significantly easier, because DJs would not need to spend hours anymore in their local record shop searching for the perfect record. (Butler, 2014; Montano, 2010). They have gained access to music that is created far beyond their own geographic location or before this moment in time, is not prone to the physical scarcity of vinyl and are part of obscure and fairly unknown niche markets, resulting in the reduction of search costs and the increased ease of expanding their catalogue (Anderson, 2006; Montano, 2010; Towse, 2010). Lastly, the digital equivalents of the turntable to play these formats, such as the Pioneer CDJ, include a far wider variety of features than its predecessor (such as looping music, pitching and cueing) (Montano, 2010). According to Montano (2010), this development made it easier to DJ and shifted the emphasis on skill and timing to the ability to operate such machines properly. However, DJs still seem to favour vinyl record in their DJ sets and seem to emphasize the importance of the record shopping process (Butler, 2014; Montano, 2010). Its use may represent the distinction between a restrictive and a heteronomous domain.

After all the preparations in arranging and collecting pre-recorded music and sounds, the electronic dance music artists will perform with an audience at a venue (or a festival or online streaming, that are similar in the essence). Here DJs could gather feedback from an expert audience to newly created products (of other artists or of themselves if they produce as well) and exploit the reputation of the venue to increase their own (international) reputation (Lange and Bürkner, 2013). Additionally, the DJs have their own reputation that could also attract the audience to the venue. Here, the most important revenue stream of the performing artists is generated (Grote, 2014; Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Montano, 2010; Towse, 2010). Lange and Bürkner (2013) state that local artists are paid somewhere between fifty and three hundred euros per event, if they are paid at all, but that artists with a higher international reputation could charge fees that are similar to pop stars, earning several thousand euros per events. However, some venues or festivals sometimes demand a certain exclusivity for a performance in their booking contract, meaning that the artist is not allowed to have other performances in a city or country for a particular period, which influences the ability to generate revenue from performing.

Technological innovation and digitalization has influenced the practices of performing artists in electronic dance music and given DJs an economical advantage over other performing artists. This already provides an interesting perspective on the difference between electronic dance music and other music genres or even other cultural industries. Additionally, the importance of the ability to generate certain amount of revenue already arises, which will have an influence on the restricted production within electronic dance music as will be further elaborated later. But first, the second role individuals could embody in electronic dance music must be explained.

2.4 The recording artist (or producer)

2.4.1 From mixing to producing records

As stated before, individuals can embody several distinct roles within electronic dance music simultaneously. To understand how restricted production may occur in electronic dance music, we first must understand the second role an individual could embody within this industry, namely the role of the recording artists or producer. When DJs started mixing vinyl records and then recording these newly created compositions, they actually started to take on this different mode of interaction: producing (McLeod, 2001). This accelerated with the development of electronic instruments as mentioned before (Montano, 2010). Most of the first

used instruments were actually overproduced drum machines and synthesizers that were available for reduced prices at pawnshops and were mostly used because they were cheap alternatives of expensive recording studios. The distinctive sounds that are created by these instruments, as for example the Roland TR-808 drum unit and the Roland TB-303 bass synthesiser, created many subgenres of which some became inseparable of the specific sounds created by these machines (Montano, 2010; Thornton, 1995). Most of these subgenres are also inseparable of the place they originated from: the dance floor. This means that most producers take in mind how their created music will be consumed on the dance floor while they are producing it (Ferreira, 2008). Thus most electronic dance music is specifically designed for body movement and the interaction of the performing artists with the dancing audience (Butler, 2014). It stresses the importance of the exchange between the performing artist and the producing artist.

2.4.2 Reduced sales of recorded music

Producers could distribute music to peers in the scene, leaving them solely for DJs to play. However, they could also release their music commercially and use physical or digital formats for its distribution (Lange and Bürkner, 2013). According to Lange and Bürkner (2013), most of these releases do not achieve any commercial success. Generally in the music industry it is almost a given fact that only one in eight records released is able to recover the costs of production (Caves, 2003; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst, 2007). Producers are commercially less significant than the performing artists because consumers of electronic dance music favour events over sound carriers (or streaming platforms), meaning that DJs generally are able to generate far more revenue than producers (Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Towse, 2010). Although this seems standard in electronic dance music, a similar state of affairs has been noticed in the entire music industry (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021). It used to be that performing and touring was done in order to promote and sell the recorded music, but it has slowly shifted towards releasing music to promote performing and touring. Performing as become more and more important for artists to generate revenue in the music industry generally, and as stated before, artists in electronic dance music also mostly rely on revenue from performing (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021; Lange and Bürkner, 2013).

2.4.3 The (decreased) importance of intermediaries

Record labels are humdrum parties that could potentially enable the artist to reach a bigger audience, which could result in more bookings for performing. In popular music, producing artists and record labels usually have long duration contracts (Caves, 2003). This is because the

record labels need to recover the costs of the losses of other released records, which is often more than 80% of all the records sold (Caves, 2003; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst, 2007). With long duration contracts, a record label can more easily ensure possible profits of releases when the exposure is growing (Caves, 2003; Towse, 2010). Major record labels also want to maintain a good relationship with independent record labels to sign artists from these labels, who have a subcultural credibility in the scenes and could potentially sell well in the future (Hesmondhalg, 1998; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst, 2007). However, the profits of the releases are not shared equally, the artists risk to lose their build-up reputation and credibility in the scenes and the contracts are always more beneficial for the major record labels (especially financially) (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010; Caves, 2003; Hesmondhalg, 1998). Record labels often also demand from artist to make creative adjustments or change their sound to achieve success in the market (Thompson, Jones and Warhurst, 2007). Additionally, the scenes where these artists originated from also do not benefit and will usually even stop existing in its current form, as I will explain later (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010; Thornton, 1995). Opposing the major record labels are traditionally the independent record labels, which are commercial ventures in niche markets (Dowd, 2004; Lange and Bürkner, 2013). According to Lange and Bürkner (2013), independent record labels in electronic dance music are often started and owned by artists themselves to have complete ownership of their own creative products. They ensure that their music style, and that of their record label, is present in the scene, with the option to gain wider recognition outside of that scene in a later stadium. Lange and Bürkner (2013) continue that this is to first establish a solid reputation of themselves, their music and with the use of other artists that join the record label, to second potentially generate profits thereafter. Again, within electronic dance music the main focus is upon reaching an audience with building a solid reputation, which could generate profits from performing. It is therefore more common in electronic dance music to release music on several independent record labels instead of one (major) record label to reach the following of multiple labels and become wider known with a credible reputation within the scene. This strategy has increased importance due to the low-costs of releasing music via the Internet (Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Towse, 2010).

2.4.4 Decreased barriers for market entry

Technological innovation and digitalization did not only facilitated the birth of electronic dance music, the development in the past decades has also gradually decreased the professional standards in music production (Lange and Bürkner, 2013). This entails that

almost everyone has gained the ability to produce music in their own bedroom and are not in the need of expensive studio equipment or recording spaces anymore, but just a laptop and some software (Hesmondhalg, 1998). Additionally, these ‘bedroom producers’ are able to distribute the music themselves on the Internet without the labels and the distributors as intermediaries, enabling themselves to reach as many buyers or listeners as possible (Hesmondhalg, 1998; Lange and Bürkner, 2013). Therefore, the supply of electronic dance music seems to become limitless, increasing the availability of obscure niche markets and subgenres and challenging the possibility to generate profits with releasing music (Anderson, 2006; Lange and Bürkner, 2013). It seems that this shows a rising conflictive tension with the notion of restricted production by Bourdieu (1993), since there is an increased ability to produce in not only mass markets, but also obscure niche markets. The elitist character and economic resources needed for production thus seem to decrease. However, to have a better understanding of this, there must first be an understanding of the last role individuals can embody within electronic dance music: the performing audience or consumer.

2.5 The performing audience (or consumer)

2.5.1 The roles of the DJ

Butler (2014) ascribes another role individuals within electronic could embody besides being a performing artist, producing artist or both, namely that of the performing audience. The consumers of electronic dance music are people that attend events or listen to the music outside of the venues and festivals or at their homes. According to Butler (2014), the participation of the audience at events is necessary for a successful performance of the performing artist. The special atmosphere or vibe that makes events turn into vibrant and lively experiences only manifests itself when the audience and the DJ collectively contribute to this. DJs react to the response of the audience through their choice in records in order to give the consumers “what they need rather than what they want” (Thornton, 1995, p. 104). According to Thornton (1995), the DJ takes on an ‘educative role’ while performing, by selecting records that are unexpected by the audience at that particular moment or maybe even completely unfamiliar. Contrarily, the audience could also call for recognition and wants to hear the music they love and enjoy (Hesmondhalg, 1998). The DJ would need to shift to more familiar and popular music to satisfy this need. Here, the performing artists give the audience what they want to hear, taking on a ‘giving role’ as I would like to call it. There is a

distinction between these two roles that could influence the perceived authenticity of the performing artists as I will explain later and will be researched in this thesis as well.

2.5.2 Subcultural consumption and behaviour

The club facilitates the collective creation of the performing artist and the consumers, therefore gaining a central role in artistic, social and economic activities (Lange and Bürkner, 2013). Local clubs are protagonists in changes of the musical scenes and trends, and events are opportunities to see what is relevant and hip (Grote, 2014; Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Lena and Peterson, 2008). According to Thornton (1995) these changes are depending on subcultural shifts and distinctions and entail more than solely the music itself. The complex social communities or scenes consisting of the performing artists, producing artists and the consumers are subcultures with appurtenant electronic dance music subgenres that could be considered economically as niche markets. Consumers create a feeling of belonging by being with people who are similar to themselves and consume similar subgenres in electronic dance music to construct this collective feeling. It takes a considerable amount of cultural capital to enter these subcultures, to be involved and to appreciate the experience of the electronic dance music (Collins, 2004; McLeod, 2001). One example of this subcultural behaviour is the similarity of clothing and attitude in the line of the Berghain, one of the most prestigious club in Berlin. The enormous queue at the door solely consists of completely silent people dressed in black and paired in couples (although they came as a group). It is as if they need to pass an exam to enter the building (Thornton, 1995). This subcultural behaviour is observable at many other venues and clubs in of course different forms and gradations.

People define themselves with their cultural consumption and are able to distinguish themselves from other people (Moore, 2005; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst, 2007; Thornton, 1995). Usually, subcultures in electronic dance music scenes describe their own crowd as diversified and mixed, while they classify the other scenes to which they do not belong as homogeneous. The cultural capital is used to maintaining the defined boundaries between the subcultural groups (McLeod, 2001). However, Thornton (1995) also states that subcultures are not homogeneous groups of people and that it is almost impossible to really identify distinctions. Each event and venues could have different audiences that are not comparable to any other similar event or venue, which could again influence the role of the DJ. Not only could people belong to several subcultures and consume various genres of electronic dance music, there is also a fast trending system in which certain fashions go out of style quickly.

According to McLeod (2001) the fast and continuous development of subgenre naming in electronic dance music is not only an effect of the innovations in the music, but has also become a gatekeeping device that is mainly used by clubs and record labels. The effect of this defining and gatekeeping is that consumer behaviour is accelerated. Electronic dance music is purchased and quickly disposed “before their life expectancy has been expended” (McLeod, 2001, p. 69). This aspect also affects the performance of the DJ, who becomes more depended on new music to stay relevant in the scene. DJs need to live up to the expectations of the scene and its audience by adapting to the cycle of trends while maintaining their reputation (Lange and Bürkner, 2013). Additionally, it could affect producing artists in decreasing the ability to levitate on successful products. Individuals can thus embody the role of the DJ, the producer and the consumer and it has come to light that these roles also influence each other. To understand the occurrence of restricted production in electronic dance music and to see how this influences the practices of the performing and producing artists within electronic dance, there must first be a demarcation of the amount of consumers that are reached with electronic dance music.

2.6 The development of (sub)genres

2.6.1 The developments and differences between subgenres of electronic dance music

To understand restricted production within the context of electronic dance music, there must be an understanding of the opposed large-scale production and mass consumption.

(Sub)genres can be explained and classified by the (social) context of subcultures or scenes in which they originate from and are maintained (Lena and Peterson, 2008). In electronic dance music the local subcultures (that revolve around gatekeepers such as venues or clubs and record labels) are deemed important in this process as I explained before. However, electronic dance music has also been subject to the increasing globalisation due to technological innovation and digitalisation, which has increased the interaction between artists and consumers, creating scenes and musical developments beyond geographical constraints into global superstructures (Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Montano, 2010). (Sub)genres that exceed this locality (and avant-garde considerations) and increase exponentially in popularity, can be considered industry-based genres (Lena and Peterson, 2008). Although Lena and Peterson (2008) did not study electronic dance music, they state in general that industry-based genres need a large audience to thrive and an increase in potential sales to retain corporate interest. Additionally, half of the genres they researched experienced such an explosive growth and

were eventually deemed to be replaced by a new avant-garde genre and turn into a traditionalist genre or became a scene-based genre again (Lena and Peterson, 2008). Traditionalist genres are artistically defined genres that have iconic performers and could take several years after its industry-based period to manifest (which could sometimes be experienced as a revival). Different to other products, the demand for a cultural good may stay the same or come back and can not be replaced by (a better or cheaper produced) substitute (Kretschmer, Klimis and Choi, 1999).

Similarly, we can argue that electronic dance music is an overarching genre that contains of subgenres, which have gone to the same processes as described by Lena and Peterson (2008). Some subgenres, as for example House, Jungle and Techno, have originated as scene-based (or even avant-garde like) subgenres, as explained before. These have developed into mainstream and popular subgenres supported by major record labels (Lena and Peterson, 2008; Montano, 2010). These subgenres of electronic dance music have eventually developed into traditionalists genres with key performers, such as Larry Heard, Jeff Mills, Carl Craig, Juan Atkins, Derrick May and Frankie Knuckles (who passed away in 2014) to name a few, and musical material that is deemed as 'classic'. Dance is another subgenre that has actually emerged as an industry-based subgenre and is currently the most popular and mass consumed subgenre of electronic dance music. This subgenre consists of the DJs (and producers) that are deemed as the best DJs of the world according to DJ Mag (one of the leading magazines in electronic dance music), who can fill entire football stadiums with audiences around the globe and charge extreme superstar fees. Some of these artists are Martin Garrix, David Guetta, Armin van Buuren and Steve Aoki, combined having many millions of estimated net worth. Dance, or related popular electronic dance music, is sometimes also referred to as EDM, which stand for electronic dance music, making it a very confusing term for a subgenre of electronic dance music. However, it is an important distinction, since individuals that operate in other subgenres refer to EDM to oppose the mass consumption that revolves around this subgenre. This thesis will refer to EDM as this subgenre instead of how others sometimes use this term to describe electronic dance music as a whole. Other subgenres, such as Drum and Bass, Breakbeat and Dubstep have peaked as popular and mass consumed music genres, but eventually retained themselves being scene-based genres again without developing into a traditionalist genre. Taking into consideration the rapid development of subgenres in electronic dance music and the uncertainty of the current state of the genres, it can be argued that it is difficult to stay relevant as an artists,

even when the whole genre thrives or when one is considered a key performer or producer. It does not guarantee an audience that is large enough to generate an income.

2.6.2 When (sub)genres of electronic dance music become mainstream

When the mainstream media discovers a subgenre of electronic dance music and it becomes an industry-based and mass consumed genre as explained before, it usually means the end of that genre in the scene (Kretschmer, Klimis and Choi, 1999; McLeod, 2001; Menger, 2014; Moore, 2005). Consumers and artists no longer control and associate with the culture they expressed or produced after it is commercialized and has become available to a mass market (Moore, 2005). However, it is very hard to describe what is actually considered as mainstream and thus hard to determine when a genre has become mainstream. There are many scenes and genres within electronic dance music, and people inside a particular scene seem to always describe themselves against the mainstream without clearly defining what this entails (Thornton, 1995). Additionally, major record labels no longer solely focus upon reaching the masses, but also operate within niche markets by orienting on differentiated styles or even producing these themselves (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010, Dowd, 2004). Therefore, subcultures can no longer be completely understood as against the mainstream nor outside of the music industry, according to Bader and Scharenberg (2010). There are currently scene-based DJs signing at major record companies like Universal Music or Columbia Records and thus the distinction between scenes (or subcultures) and the mainstream seems to vanish within electronic dance music.

2.7 Quality assessment in music and the underground

2.7.1 The quality assessment in music

Restricted production seems to oppose large-scale production and mass consumption, where cultural products in the first realm seems to be valued differently than cultural products in the other realm according to Bourdieu (1993). Similarly, the differences between scenes and the mainstream seems to be determined mostly by the amount of consumers and whether or not a cultural good is picked up by dominant firms in the industry. To increase this complexity even further, the value of a cultural good is determined socially (Abbing, 2002; Klamer, 2017; Kretschmer, Klimis and Choi, 1999; Menger, 2014). Within cultural economics, we can think of consumers as being autonomous rational agents that select a product solely on its attributes, but we also see that people let their choice be determined by others and so each market also

experiences strong network effects (Potts et al., 2008). Musical works tend to be judged on aesthetic criteria alone, but the quality is also depending on what other people think before and even after consumption (Kretschmer, Klimis and Choi, 1999; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst, 2007). This has been explained by theories as information cascades or herding behaviour, which are self-enforcing mechanism (Kretschmer, Klimis and Choi, 1999). Adler (1985) explained that people are better off consuming cultural goods that is consumed by others than getting involved in the process of discovering cultural goods with the supposedly highest quality, which takes more time and a high amount of cultural capital. We thus can not state that the most consumed cultural goods are also the ones of supposedly the highest quality. Additionally, quality and success do not have to correspond or even succeed each other (Abbing, 2022). Thus, even though the quality is high, many might not consume the cultural good when this is quality acknowledged.

2.7.2 The importance of authenticity, credibility and originality

In musical studies it has been found that authenticity has become the most important value that is used to assess the quality of music, but the concept is rarely analysed and continuously mystified (Abbing, 2002; Thornton, 1995). People thus tend to state that authentic artists produce music that is perceived as better or more beautiful than music of artists that are considered less authentic. There are many different understandings of what is perceived as authentic in the music industry, but it is a cultural value generated from economic, social and cultural conditions. Different definitions of authenticity also bring along different implications. According to Abbing (2019), a person is being expressively authentic when one is being true to oneself, which implies a sense of autonomy. Another form of authenticity is nominal authenticity, where the created work must be genuine, conforms the artist's intention, the work is historically informed or conforms the dominant artistic tradition (Abbing, 2019). A relatively nominal form of authentic music can originate locally and be connected to specific subcultures, but also globally produced and consumed (Abbing, 2019; Bader and Scharenberg, 2010). Thornton (1995) also states that there is a dichotomous distinction to be made: authenticity perceived by the consumer of electronic dance music and authenticity of the artists and the music itself. The authenticity perceived by the consumer is constructed by the subcultural. A social construct assesses the authenticity of a particular genre and is associated by a way of living to distinguish from other people. An artist could also represent or embody this and therefore gain authenticity. According to Hesmondhalg (1999), credibility is also considered to be part of this sense of authenticity, although its precise definition is

unclear. The environment in which an artist produced a record can also contribute to this perceived form of authenticity and could even increase in cultural value when the consumption exceeds far beyond its production (Thornton, 1995). However, artists themselves generally perceive authenticity rather like originality, focussing more on the cultural product produced and the skills needed for performances (Montano, 2010; Thornton, 1995). From previous research, the definition of authenticity has not become perfectly clear and its meaning has also changed over time within the context of electronic dance music.

According to Thornton (1995), several musical phenomena, related to the use of the vinyl records, have been deemed as authentic overtime. First, authenticity was ascribed to live performances (mainly bands) between the fifties and eighties. When recorded audio became the main source of sound, records were not viewed as imitative, but had undergone a mystification as unique art objects and gained authenticity. Thereafter, the same happened with technological innovations in musical instruments, which were first viewed as artificial, but later deemed as authentic when it was absorbed into culture. When the vinyl record became dominant in nightlife, DJs did not have the authenticity that revolved around live music performances, but the liveliness of performing music live was replaced by the atmosphere and energy that was, and still is, created by the DJ and the audience (Thornton, 1995). It has shifted the meaning of authenticity again.

There have been more changes in electronic dance music of which we can wonder whether it has affected the authenticity of its artists. As stated before, the digital replacement of the turntable and so the replacement of DJ-ing with vinyl records by digital audio files has affected the essential skills necessary for DJ-ing, such as cue-ing and auditory beat-matching, which has been perceived as less authentic by both peers and consumers (Montano, 2010). Some DJs view the use of vinyl in performing as the only authentic way to DJ and even proclaim this through the microphone towards their audiences during sets. However, it can also be argued that this new digital form of DJ-ing requires different skills that could be just as difficult, but are not yet deemed as authentic yet (Montano, 2010). According to Butler (2014), performing artists are consciously trying to increase their legibility by visually displaying their practices towards the audiences as well, so that they see that the artist is putting effort in the performance.

Not only performing artists have the ability to lose their authenticity, producing artists could also lose their ascribed authenticity. When they make a hit single and reach a large audience their authenticity decreases in the eyes of their peers and audiences (Hesmondhalg, 1998; McLeod, 2001; Moore, 2005). Similarly, it can be argued that if performing artists

would only play commercially successful music that is already familiar with the audience, they would also lose their authenticity. Performing artists are then valued less because there has been less labour spent to find the perfect record (Montano, 2010). The giving role of the performer, as described before, might thus be considered less authentic. Hesmondhalg (1998) also states that when artists gain economic capital in a short period of time, they are considered less credible (and so authentic, although the exact relation and difference between the two terms is yet to determine). Additionally, artists would then lose the authenticity that is ascribed to them by the subculture they represent (McLeod, 2001; Moore, 2005). Thus for both the producing artists as for the performing artists, the ascribed authenticity can increase or decrease. By trying to reach a wider audience beyond their initial scope, artists are ascribed a process of ‘selling out’ (Thornton, 1995; McLeod, 2001; Moore, 2005). It refers to selling outside of the initial market of the artist, which entails a sense of losing possession and belonging (Thornton, 1995). The term is used and ascribed to artists in the music industry as a defend mechanism to secure the subcultural capital when exposed commercially and to a larger audience (Moore, 2005). However, as stated before, major record labels are no longer only focussed upon the masses and now also focus upon reaching these niche markets, signing artists operating and releasing in these scenes (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010; Dowd, 2004). It therefore becomes harder to distinguish the inside from the outside and the scenes from the mainstream. These labels therefore benefit from releasing few of many artists instead of many from a few artists, as described in the long tail theory from Anderson (2006). Consequently this affects the authenticity of the performing artists and producing artists, making it harder to maintain reputations for those who operate in these scenes and are connected or not connected to these labels. It is therefore interesting to research the importance of authenticity for artists in electronic dance music to see how this confirms or contradicts the before mentioned literature regarding authenticity.

2.7.3 The underground in electronic dance music

This brings us to the concept of the underground. It is a term that ironically became popular in the 1990s. In the context of hip-hop music, it was used when it was not connected to major record labels (Oware, 2014). Oware (2014) continues with stating that artists, who made music that was considered as underground, were not limited in what one could make and say in their music. They were considered artistically innovative and question the skills and integrity of the mainstream artists (Oware, 2014). According to Thornton (1995), consumers refer to the underground when they speak of something subcultural. It goes beyond trends,

fashions or styles and consists of authenticity. Like the subcultural, it is again opposed against the mainstream (or the mass-produced and mass consumed) and it takes subcultural capital to understand the highly relative system that ascribes this authenticity (Collins, 2004; Moore, 2005; Thornton, 1995). Limited access gives the underground its avant-garde and elitist character, similar as described by Bourdieu, which is also excluding people (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010).

The underground thus seems to coincide with the idea of restricted production of Bourdieu (1993), opposing the mass or commercial consumption but including more individuals than solely elitist artists (Oware, 2014). The opposed mainstream is described as this popular art form and large market with mass or commercial production and consumption (Abbing, 2022; Dowd, 2004; Oware, 2014). Thornton (1995) explains that some position mainstream as the dominant culture, while others describe it as a mass culture. Abbing (2022), although he himself states that his definition of the mainstream is rather vague, explains that mainstream art is a popular art form that is also often predictable and undemanding (or easy to consume). Additionally, it could be imitating or be in the style of other art and genres. On the contrary, mainstream music could also be complex, of a technical high-level and meaningful (Abbing, 2022). Like the quality of cultural goods, we could wonder if the status of underground is assessed socially as well. We can then also question who are the ones that determine this status: the artists, the consumers or maybe other experts (that could consists of other artists) (Abbing, 2002).

Often, consumers want recognition of the music they love and the artists who thrive, but within electronic dance music a star system like that would mean the end of that scene and style, as mentioned before (Hesmondhalg, 1998). Major record companies commodify subgenres that used to be on the periphery of the market (Dowd, 2004). As stated before, with the majors releasing in the niche markets and the difficulty of distinguishing the subcultural from the mainstream and other scenes, there seems no clear explanation of what is meant by the underground and how artists need to produce, perform and communicate to be considered part of this instead of the mainstream. Oware (2014) also concludes for Hip-hop and Rap music that some underground artists seem to operate both in large or mainstream and restricted production simultaneously, blurring the distinction between the two. Generally, underground artists in Hip-hop and Rap are not signed at major record labels, but some artists with platinum status records that are signed there are still considered to represent the subculture properly by fans and even scholars (Oware, 2014). Lange and Bürkner (2013) state that some DJs and producers in electronic dance music have achieved the same, without

explanation how this has been achieved. Underground is thus an often used term of which its meaning seems to blur and lose importance within electronic dance music. Because electronic dance music has evenly been considered to increase in popularity as Hip-hop and Rap music in the past decades, it will therefore be interesting to research how simultaneous operation in restricted domain and mass markets occurs in electronic dance music and to research how this influences different aspects of artists' practices in this industry.

2.8 Economic and artistic aspects of artists' practices

2.8.1 The entrepreneurial nature of modern day artists

Many aspects of how the works of market influences the artists in electronic dance music have already been mentioned in the previous. It seems to affect the notion of restricted production of Bourdieu (1993), which coincides with the meaning of underground in electronic dance music. However, we are not quite sure yet how this influences the artistic and economic practices of artists within electronic dance music and thus how artists act upon this notion of restricted production and underground. According to Scott (2012), artists are entrepreneurs because they create new cultural products with identities (or brands), which needs a certain amount of cultural capital but often not necessarily economic resources. They face a fundamental uncertainty as producers of creative goods, where 'nobody knows' (Caves, 2003; Towse, 2010). This means that the demand for cultural goods is uncertain, just as the reasons of success in this industry (Caves, 2003; Kretschmer, Klimis and Choi, 1999; Menger 1999). Sunk costs can not be recovered and the creative products that are produced from these costs are not (always) reusable, thus producers of cultural goods must generate enough revenue from the successes to cover the losses (Caves, 2003). As mentioned before, this has been of utter importance for music publishers in the music industry, which therefore try to release the music from the most interesting artists to ensure profits. However, this could also be argued for venues or clubs, which would need to program artists that ensure enough tickets to be sold to recover the sunk costs and the losses of other events, known as cross financing. Thereby, the uncertainty of the demand does not only affect the producing artists, but also the performing artists. This does not only affect the strategic decisions of the intermediaries, but also the business models of the artists several ways (Lange and Bürkner, 2013).

According to Lange and Bürkner (2013), the casually accepted ambiguity of the cultural industries has been removed from the centre of entrepreneurship since the 1990s and the technological innovation and digitalisation thereafter changed the traditional production

chain in the music industry. First, large organizations with top-down business models, known as the ‘big five’, dominated the music industry and achieved a high degree of vertical integration (Graham et al., 2004; Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Towse, 2010). Although these large organizations with large market power still exist, the music industry generally shifted to bottom-up business models that entail different methods in value creation (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021; Graham et al., 2004). These are better known as DIY (do it yourself) models. As mentioned before, artists are now able to come in direct contact with the consumers and become less dependent on intermediaries thus increasing the ability for artists to do without them when achieving commercial success (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010; Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021; Graham et al., 2004; Hughes et al., 2016). It changes the model of being an artist from a bohemian lifestyle to an increased focus upon the entrepreneurial and self-managerial side as well (Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Scott, 2012; Hughes et al., 2016). A new generation of musicians consider themselves more as entrepreneurs and view commercial activities inseparable from their artistic practices, which undermines the traditional notion of musicians selling-out (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021; Schediwy, Loots and Bhansing, 2018; Thornton, 1995). According to Everts, Hitters and Berkers (2021), especially early-career musicians adopt this DIY model. However it is quite common among electronic dance music producers to start their own record labels further in their career to gain full control over their own releases with that same DIY model. Self-employment has increasingly become one of the most frequent work statuses in the cultural sector and it entails creating products with a nuanced understanding of the current market and trends to create an identity that is favourable with the demand (Menger, 1999; Scott, 2012). Additionally, it creates a circular career development, in which artists do not only establish careers through intermediaries, as was the industry standard before, but are also depending on the direct relationship with the consumers (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021; Hughes et al., 2016). It gave the consumers and the artists bargaining power that changed the industry as a whole (Lange and Bürkner, 2013).

2.8.2 Importance and deliberate denial of reputation building

Larger firms in the music industry still have the largest possibilities in achieving global publicity. When an artist has a sufficient reputation or ‘buzz’, he or she is able to provoke the interest of the intermediaries that are able to reach that larger audience, connect them with key players in the music industry or initiate interest from other firms and organisations, which is still deemed as an important method of success and generating revenue (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010; Lange and Bürkner, 2013; Scott, 2012). To have a career as an artist in

the music industry, either with the use of these intermediaries or solely with a DIY business model, one needs to build a reputation and stand out (Graham et al., 2004; Hughes et al., 2016; Lange and Bürkner, 2013). Reputation is depending on evaluations of the scenes protagonists, such as other DJs, producers or consumers that are considered trendsetters, and could substantially differ with each genre (Hughes et al., 2016; Lange and Bürkner, 2013). Therefore, reputation is not only limited to the relationship between the producer and the consumer, but constructed within a scene and also depending on other artists and organisations. For example releases on high-profile record labels or performing at high-profile events could provide an equally high-profile status and increase the reputation of the artist (Lange and Bürkner, 2013). Here, again the notion of authenticity could play an important role for this reputation building as well (Thornton, 1995). Lange and Bürkner (2013) further explain that reputation is the result of scene based taste building and will eventually bring along expectations of the delivery of certain cultural products, symbols or events that support that taste. Symbols are recharged with social interactions and feelings of solidarity (Collins, 2004). Once a reputation is established, one could explore such a reputation and utilize it for economic success (Lange and Bürkner, 2013).

However, within electronic dance music there are many artists that avoid this opportunity by deliberately ending well-established reputations in the scene. Producers and DJs tend to change names and logo's once these have become established or even popular (McLeod, 2001; Thornton, 1995). According to Thornton (1995), these artists avoid being perceived by the consumer as musicians that sell-out. Apparently, it is difficult for artists that have well-established names to charge very high fees while also staying connected to the subculture they originated from (McLeod, 2001). Therefore, it has become a common practice for DJs and producers to maintain several artistic pseudonyms, especially by artists that are very popular (Hesmondhalg, 1998; Thornton, 1995). Thus artists partly avoid the mainstream by adopting artistic pseudonyms, but therefore gain again success in the subcultural scenes. Since it is not clear when an artists is considered mainstream or niche, one could argue that exploiting these synonyms is also a way of creating a successful reputation that could eventually also provide economic return. It is adopting a consumer-centred business model to adapt to the demand, with for example a change of name that could supply cultural goods for that demand (Bernstein, 2014).

2.8.3 The absence of monetary reward for many suppliers

Lastly, it should be noted that not every artists within electronic dance music is able to benefit economically from a well-established reputation. There are many artists in any sector of art production that do not gain economic return on their production and need other paid work to maintain their artistic practices (Abbing, 2002; Menger, 1999). Additionally, there is an oversupply of artists and the art for the sake of art argument keeps attracting new producers (Abbing, 2002; Menger, 1999). This oversupply is enhanced by the long tailed distribution of supply due to the technological innovations that enabled low cost distribution of reproducible cultural goods, as ascribed by Anderson (2006). Many are pleased with music as a semi-profession (Everts, Hitters and Berkers, 2021; Miller, 2018;). Their commitments and achievements in producing cultural goods are not matched with the monetary return of economic exchange and these artists are motivated by obtaining symbolic capital and produce art for the sake of art (Bourdieu, 1993; Menger, 1999). They operate with an artistic logic, where art is seen as an abstract quality that does not need any external legitimation and contributes to the greater good (Abbing, 2002; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). Again, Bourdieu ascribed the ability to solely produce art for the sake of art to elite artists that have the economic capabilities to produce cultural goods with this motivation (Bourdieu, 1990; Oware, 2014). However, according to Abbing (2002) and Oware (2014), any individual producing cultural goods could contain this artistic logic and create art solely for the sake of art. Additionally, there is an oversupply of artists while this art for the sake of art argument keeps attracting new producers (Abbing, 2002; Menger, 1999). This logic seems to be against any commercial behaviour, which generally means artists that create art for a self-interest that goes beyond artistic interest (as for example economic interest) (Abbing, 2002). Except for when they are devoted for many years, then it seems to be acceptable to also gain (even high) monetary rewards. According to Abbing (2002), artists can not entirely be selflessly devoted to the arts, because gaining symbolic value or internal reward would already not be selfless. We could thus wonder whether artist that produce art for the sake of art are actually that much different from artists whom they oppose too and whom they perceive as commercial.

Artists experience an inner drive or a sense of calling to maintain their practice (Abbing, 2002; Menger, 1999). This could even change or reverse the notion of success, meaning that when artists experience economic failure from their practices that this is interpreted as a sign of artistic success (Menger, 1999; Scott, 2012). It is here where the artistic logic opposes the economic logic and that value motivated behaviour becomes salient over a cost and benefit analysis (Collins, 2004; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). Artists tend to

deny economic logics to maintain a high status or their perceived authenticity and the mystique mythology surrounding the art (Abbing, 2002). In other cultural sectors, it could even damage one's reputation when revenue is generated through the market. However, for electronic music this might be different, because this industry is already expected to be funded solely through the market. Abbing (2022) also states that artists and consumers in serious arts could also hope that the success, whether it is economical or symbolic, follows quality and that it is considered painful when success does not derive from the perceived quality of the produced work. However, this seems to be less applicable in popular music (Abbing, 2022). It will be interesting to understand how producers and performers in electronic dance music perceive success and how much of this is economically or artistically.

3 Methodology

3.1 Exploratory research

The question this research will try to answer is: how do the values of restricted production in the underground scenes of electronic dance music influence the economic and artistic aspects of artists' practices? To answer this question, there are several sub questions that need to be answered: 1. how does restricted production occur in electronic dance music, 2. what does the underground entail in electronic dance music 3. how do artists value economic and artistic logics for their practices in electronic dance music and 4. what influence do other stakeholders in the market of electronic dance music (e.g. consumers, peers and intermediaries) have on the practices of artists? Since these questions try to understand how people value certain concepts and why people incorporate their perception of these concepts in their daily practices within a particular industry, qualitative research is the most suitable approach for this research (Bryman, 2012). This research seeks an idiographic explanation and has an inductive process to answer these questions and add to the existing literature regarding restricted production, electronic dance music and the entrepreneurial aspects of artistic practices (Babbie, 2016; Bryman, 2012). First the research design will be clarified. Then the operationalization of the research question and sub questions will be discussed and possible expectations will be posed. Thirdly, the data sample and the characteristics of the respondents will be described. Lastly, the validity and reliability will be elaborated on.

3.2 Research design

To answer the research question, this qualitative research will make use semi-structured interviews to collect primary data, which enable to go in-depth on particular topics while also being able to explore answers or remarks that were not expected in advance which could provide more insides on the matter (Babbie, 2016; Bryman, 2012). The interview guide was constructed from the relevant research that has been presented in the theoretical framework and can be found (both in English and in Dutch) in the appendix (Appendix A). The influence of the context of particular aspects could also be explored and understood with this research method, which provides a broader perspective entailing details that could supplement existing theory. The gathered interviews were recorded, anonymized and completely transcribed and fragments have been initial coded, axial coded and categorized in computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti. It has been chosen to analyse fragment, since artistic and entrepreneurial decisions or opinions relied on the context in which these originated. The analysis in this program, including the codebook and the code tree, can be

found in the appendix (Appendix G and Appendix H). The transcribed and coded interviews (Appendix E) and the informed consents (Appendix F) are only shared with the thesis supervisor and the second reader to insure confidentiality and to anonymize the interviewees. In these documents and the result section, these respondents are referred to as respondent 1, 2, 3 et cetera. Besides interviewees, other prejudicial information regarding other organisations or individuals has also been anonymized in the result section.

3.3 Operationalization

Answering the sub questions enable to answer the research question, but there must be a clear demarcation of the relevant concepts that are addressed in this research. The theoretical framework has already elaborated extensively on several concepts and many aspects of the practices of artists. Additionally, the exploratory nature of this research also enables to verify and develop concepts further to contribute to this existing theory. However, some important concepts are now further demarcated and operationalized. From this operationalization and the theoretical framework resulted the interview guide that is meant to structure the interviews and is added in the appendix (Appendix A), which first starts with introductory questions and from then gets more in-depth on specific topics as the interview progresses.

The first important concept that needs further elaboration is restricted production. This notion of Bourdieu (1993) has been found in practice among an elitist group in the visual arts by Abbing (2002, 2022) and beyond an elitist group in hip-hop and rap music by Oware (2014). Therefore the scope of this research goes beyond individuals that have the financially ability to deliberate refrain from reaching mass markets. Restricted production entails authentic production and gaining symbolic value. However, this research questions whether large-scale production and reaching large-markets could also be included in this concept of restricted production similarly to the research of Oware (2014) regarding hip-hop and rap music. This has not been observed yet in electronic dance music while several aspects of the term restricted production has come forward in theory already, as for example particular working methods in performing and deliberate changing name and reputation to not be viewed as a sell-out.

Another important concept is underground. From theory comes that the underground scene is connected to sub cultures and posed against what is considered as mainstream (Collins, 2004; Moore, 2005; Thornton, 1995). However, this dynamic seems to have changed in the music industry over the recent years and resulting in a more difficult determination and demarcation. Artists need to constantly reconstruct their understanding of art to justify their

practices to themselves and to others (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). This can be used in defining the concept of the underground and to understand how a particular notion can influence the economic and artistic aspects of artists' practices. To gain an understanding of what underground means in electronic dance music, this research will first need to ask what the respondents understand by underground to conjunctively construct its meaning. In general, music that is deemed as underground also seems to be associated to the notion of originality, credibility or most importantly authenticity, which are three considerably important terms in assessing the quality of the artists and music (Abbing, 2002; Kretschmer, Klimis and Choi, 1999; Menger, 2014; Thompson, Jones and Warhurst, 2007; Thornton, 1995). The definitions and importance of these terms also have to be explained by the respondents so that they can contribute to constructing the meaning of underground in electronic dance music.

Lastly, the practices of artists need to be operationalized. The practices of artists have been categorized in a similar way as Eikhof and Haunschild (2007) have drawn this from Bourdieu's framework that individual practices are driven by specific logics. Similar to how Eikhof and Haunschild (2007) have chosen to focus upon the economic and artistic logics of practices and their influence on creative production in the world of theatre, this research will also merely focus upon these two logics in the music industry. Additionally, Everts, Hitters and Berkers (2021) have created an overview of activities and categorised these as creative, managerial, business and technical activities, which is added in the Appendix (Appendix C). For this research producing electronic dance music is treated similar as Everts, Hitters and Berkers (2021) treat song writing and thus as a creative activity. Behaviour that arise in the interview will be brought into relationship with the categorisation of Everts, Hitters and Berkers (2021) and the economic and artistic logics of Eikhof and Haunschild (2007) in which the creative activities are mostly driven by artistic logics and the other three categories mostly by economic logic. This could compliment, contradict or differ from each other, which will give more detailed information on the works of the two logics and how these come into practice for artists in the electronic dance music industry.

3.4 Data sample

The population of this research are artists in the underground scene of electronic dance music. These are artists that DJ, produce or do both at the same time in this genre of music. The units of analysis are individuals that operate in these scenes. To research the inherent tension in Bourdieu's restricted production, it is important to research people that are in the position to

experience the contradictory choices between the economic and artistic aspects of their practices. For this research it has been chosen to include both individuals whose income is completely depending on artistic practices and individuals that need other sources of income to maintain their practices, because it seeks to know whether financial considerations have an influence on several other concepts. A purposive (non-probability) sampling method is suitable for this research, since it has a limited sample size and acquires specific respondents and conditions that are appropriate in representing the population of this research (Babbie, 2016; Bryman, 2012). This method was used to come in contact with individuals that were expected to provide the most useful insight regarding the balance between entrepreneurial and artistic decisions in the underground scene of electronic dance music. Additionally, a snowballing technique was used to reach more individuals and to overcome the reticence of the music industry, as I will explain later (Scott, 2012).

The introduction of this thesis described the case of French DJ Jeremy Underground, which serves as a starting point in determining the scope within the broad genre that is electronic dance music. Cunningham and Tolonen (2019) have shown how pre-existing knowledge regarding a particular scene and its actors can enhance the ability to reach the appropriate samples for research that revolve around scenes. Similarly, my own activity and knowledge regarding this scene of Jeremy Underground will serve as the starting point of the purposive targeting of the sampling method. Although electronic dance music has become a global industry, this research has limited the sample to European artists because of potential complexity regarding the possible influence of different political, sociological and economical culture. The music industry is a restraining field that is reticent regarding the nature of sales, incomes and reputations (Scott, 2012). To gather relevant information and insights from individuals in this industry that also have experience with the DIY music production, the purposive sampling seems to be the best method according to Scott (2012). Scott (2012) also argues that a snowballing technique for gathering interviewees could overcome the reticence of the music industry and could enable to gather sensitive information regarding reputations or incomes and sales, which were expected to be important factors for entrepreneurial and artistic decisions.

In total over twenty individuals have been requested for an interview (Appendix B) of which several did not respond and a few declined due to time constraints. Nine individuals agreed to be interviewed and the interviews were conducted between the fifth of May and the twenty-seventh of May. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom due to the governmental restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and the ability to conduct

interviews internationally. The total duration of the interviews conducted lasted a little over 673 minutes (or 11 hours and 13 minutes) in total. A detailed table of the sample characteristics is in the appendix (Appendix D). The sample consisted only of male respondents, which reflects the increasingly debated underrepresentation of women in electronic dance music. The sample also unfortunately does not contain any artist who was only producer or only DJ. Additionally, only two individuals were not able to generate an income with their artistic practices. Another remarkable aspect was the variety in the duration of their artistic career. And finally, some of the respondents were (also) part of a DJ and producing duo, which stimulated depth and nuances during the interviews because one respondent could correct the other, but there were hardly any disagreements or remarks that could be considered as an interesting difference with the solo DJs and producers.

3.5 Validity and reliability

According to Bryman (2012), the external validity of qualitative research can be problematic due to case studies and samples. To enhance the external validity of this research, it has been tried to have an extensive sample by focussing solely on artists instead of other individuals within electronic dance music. However, therefore other populations within electronic dance music have not been observed within this research. According to Bryman (2012), (external) reliability is also important in qualitative research. The research procedure must be elaborated in great detail, which enhances the ability to replicate the research. For this research to be replicated in another field of electronic dance music or within another cultural industry, the procedure of this research has been tried to present as extensive and detailed as possible. As will become clear in this research, it is however expected that some concepts will differ in other contexts, even within electronic dance music alone. It will therefore be interesting to repeat this research with other data samples that represent other populations in different subgenres of electronic dance music. The internal reliability has been enhanced in this research since some respondents were a DJ and producer duo. As stated before, the lack of disagreements or other conflictive remarks between the individuals of the duo's confirms a certain degree of internal reliability.

4. Results

This section contains the analysis of the collected empirical data. The results will be mainly categorized under the four sub questions of this research, except for the influence of other stakeholders in the industry on the practices of artists. This will be explained throughout. First the observations regarding restricted production will be set out. Then the meaning of the underground will be evaluated. Thirdly, the importance of a reputation will be explained. Lastly, the tension between economic and artistic logics in electronic dance music will be explained. The first three also prepare for the fourth.

4.1 The values of restricted production

Multiple facets of restricted production have been observed during the interviews. The inherent motivation for production is considerable one of the most important values of this term by Bourdieu. And as expected from theory, all respondents deemed their motivation to create and play music that feels right for them and lies within their own musical interests as most important. They all indicated that they are motivated to create music because they specifically enjoy that subgenre of music themselves and because they enjoy the production process of creating this music. In that sense these artists create for the sake of their art. If it were economically possible, all respondents indicated they would spend all their time in the studio. Another observation of this art for the sake of art motivation is the disappointment two respondents described explicitly when a released song did not get the feedback they believed it deserved. The other way around might be considered as producing a product with an heteronomous character, where one is not enthusiastic about a produced song that receives massive attention, positive feedback and economic success. Only one respondent experienced this, but explained that he lost enthusiasm about the produced music because one specific well-received song was released one and a half year after it was created and he had already further developed his own sound and interest into something else.

However, this does not exclude that this motivation could not be observable in other subgenres of electronic dance music. Three respondents explicitly stated that for example producers of the subgenre EDM could have the same motivation to produce their music as the respondents themselves, even when it reaches large audiences and is embedded in a market oriented scene.

“I hear people telling me all this commercial EDM Dance music is so cheap and so easy and I keep telling people: if you think so, do a song like that. [...] I could do

something that sounds remotely like that, but it will be a bad example. [...] If you do not make beats that get your [own] hair stand up, how could you expect anyone else to like [it]?” (Respondent 7)

So according to these respondents, this considerable commercial EDM music that is targeted for mass consumption and even influenced by marketing or production teams could also be created autonomously and with the same inherent motivation for the sake of art as the people have that were interviewed for this research. One of these respondents explained that his friends are ghost producers for EDM artists and even they “comfortable look at themselves in the mirror, that is who they are and I am proud of that”¹ (Respondent 5). Thus an art for the sake of art motivation therefore not only seem to indicate a restricted field of production, but it does bring up another important facet of restricted production that does seem to make a difference.

From theory came that authenticity would be deemed as an important aspect of assessing the quality of music. In line with Bourdieu, music produced in a restrictive field was expected to be considered more authentic than commercially oriented music. And indeed, all respondents indicated they found authenticity important in their practices. It did not mean representing some sort of subculture, but confirmed the notion of authenticity by Thornton in the sense of originality and some sort of individuality. According to one respondent this originality may still include a homage to already created music in the past and thus does not necessarily need to include something completely new or innovative. Rather authenticity was perceived as something unique and again motivated from within. It was also not observed that it is necessary to only use old techniques or equipment or act upon certain knowledge about the history of electronic dance music to be considered authentic. However, music and their artists need to be genuine to be considered authentic. This confirms the idea of Abbing (2019) that authenticity, in expressive form, is being true to oneself. Again, this seems to be more a mind-set than actual behaviour. Three of the nine respondents used the same example of an artist called Peggy Gou, who has been accused of not producing her own music, to contradict this notion of authenticity. This example also showed how it is hard to know whether someone’s intentions are genuine, since the respondents could only base their opinion on the behaviour of this artist instead of her actual mind-set. Authenticity was also difficult for the

¹ Original quote in Dutch: zichzelf heel chill in de spiegel aankijken, dat is gewoon wie ze zijn, daar ben ik alleen maar trots op.

² Original quote in Dutch: Je moet het ook niet groter maken dan het is. [Maar] het is ook

respondents to completely explain and will be revisited again when discussing the results regarding the underground in electronic dance music.

Other aspects of electronic dance music were expected from the theory to be deemed as authentic, as for example the use of vinyl. However, none of the respondents found that the use of vinyl is more valuable than the use of digital music and equipment that enable DJ's to perform with digital music. All respondents stated that these are just different formats that require different skills. However, vinyl was generally considered as more difficult to use in DJ sets than digital formats. Additionally, almost all respondents stated that DJ-ing in general is not so difficult while at the same time they stated that most of the consumers do not seem to possess the knowledge to understand any differences in the difficulties of particular techniques or equipment at all:

“You do not have to approach it more complicated than it is. It is not like you are watching an orchestra that practiced many hours. No, it is just someone that mixes on track to one another. [However], it is an art to mix two vinyl records. That is not easy. I have also practiced a long time to be able to do that. But again, we should not make it more complicated, in the end it is partying.”² (Respondent 2)

Vinyl is more difficult to use because the records are never exactly at the same speed so they need constant adjustments in the mix. Additionally, the DJs could only use their hearing to observe whether the records are mixed correctly, while digital mixing also allows visual clues on the equipment to know whether the speed of the tracks are similar or playing at the same bar at the same time. Besides these technicalities, most respondents stated that vinyl is considered to be something for the lovers and the purists. This description seems to entail some considerations regarding the history of electronic dance music. While most of the respondents use vinyl in DJ sets or releases music on vinyl, only one of the nine respondents might be considered as a purist because he was the only one that explicitly refrains from using digital music formats for DJ sets and for listening at home. He was bothered with the fast pace of how digital music is released and consumed, which also came forward from theory. The main argument from this respondent to buy, listen and mix vinyl records is that the label that

² Original quote in Dutch: Je moet het ook niet groter maken dan het is. [Maar] het is ook wel de kunst om twee vinyl platen aan elkaar te draaien. Dat is niet makkelijk, daar heb ik ook lang over gedaan om dat echt goed te leren. Maar nogmaals, moet het niet mooier maken dan het is, want het is gewoon uiteindelijk gewoon party maken.

releases the music will probably consider the tracks multiple times before investing at least two thousand euro's in it before releasing it. This assures some sort of quality control, which is less necessary with the digitally released music that has lower production costs.

One other respondent indicated that he uses solely digital mixes for radio shows, because he would then play the newest music he receives as promos because he thinks that the consumers of electronic dance music want that. For performing, he would rather use vinyl records because he would probably be able to play records that nobody ever heard before. According to him it also represents more authenticity and also ensures some quality because he “would not fucking buy a record unless it is brilliant” (Respondent 3). His use of digital music indicates again the fast pace of electronic dance music consumption, while his use of vinyl indicates a different quality ascribed to this format. But as mentioned before, none of the respondents valued vinyl records over digitally released music. One of the two respondents who did not mix with vinyl in their DJ sets was still willing to learn with mixing vinyl because of some of the before mentioned reasons. The other one compared the use of vinyl with other older methods used by artists in other cultural industries:

“It is not where it is all about for me with DJ-ing. [...] If I would want to write a story, then I would not necessarily use a quill pen. I could as well be typing. I think it is impressive if you use a quill pen, difficult. [...] I don't care [...] eventually I think the product is most important.”³ (Respondent 8)

From theory came that technological innovation and digitalisation in the electronic dance music industry allows for reaching the widest audience as possible in producing music. All respondents indicated that they agree with intermediaries for the digital distribution of their music besides releasing it on vinyl records. This includes not only other record labels, but also their own record label if they owned one. Apparently, the digital distribution of electronic dance music is needed to recoup the costs of the vinyl production. In that sense, the vinyl sales only recover the production costs of manufacturing the record while the digital sales could enable to cover the cost of the music production (or studio time), although none of the respondents said they could completely live of producing music. Even though not all

³ Original quote in Dutch: Het is niet waar voor mij draaien echt om gaat of zo. [...] Nou als ik een verhaal wil schrijven dan ga ik ook niet met een ganzenveer of zo per se schrijven. Dan kan ik net zo goed typen toch? Ik vind het knap als je met de ganzenveer kunt gebruiken, moeilijk. [...] Maakt mij niet veel uit [...] uiteindelijk vind ik het product het belangrijkste.

respondents consume music digitally, use digital music while performing or are able to recover their music production costs with digital releases, they all see the monetary benefit in uploading the music to streaming platforms or enable paid for downloads. The one respondent who only buys vinyl explained this by stating the following about a record label:

“Of course they put money in and if they want to recoup it, it is cool for us if they do digital. That is all fine. We just do not do digital only, that is the thing, like, we do not release a record that is only digital, because then I myself can not even play it.”

(Respondent 7)

Thus, the acceptance to distribute music digitally to recoup the costs of vinyl production indicates that all respondents do not want others or themselves to lose money on their music production, but also provides the ability to go far beyond that point. One other respondent also explained that intermediary platforms such as Spotify enable to generate more income than necessarily to just recoup the costs. However, this respondent indicated that you need to be quite lucky to reach a large and continues amount of streams. Although for this respondent the digitally distributed songs are still considered as authentic, this way of distributing felt considerably commercial and heteronomous. Additionally, the ability to reach more people than the restricted amount of the vinyl presses and using intermediary platforms benefits the other role of the artist in electronic dance music, namely the performing role, as I will explain later.

The ability to distribute music digitally already exposes the problem of deliberately restricting production in a strict sense: how many people may be reached to still consider it as autonomously instead of heteronomously motivated? As one respondent explained it:

“Of course someone could say that they are happy with solely making music. But if you spend nights in the studio and it will not come out, yeah, then I do not believe you get as much out of it as if you would preform live or that it indeed reaches an audience”⁴ (Respondent 6)

⁴ Original quote in Dutch: Natuurlijk je kan zeggen, ik word gelukkig van alleen het muziek maken, maar als je nachten lang in je studio zit en het komt niet naar buiten, ja, dan geloof ik niet helemaal dat je daar net zoveel uithaalt als date je inderdaad live kan spelen of dat er publiek is die dat hoort.

All respondents indicated that they always want to reach an audience with their cultural product and this reach is always outside of their own realm. We could therefore wonder whether production is not always motivated by some sort of external feedback that would follow from exposing the created product to an audience. According to one respondent, this feedback is also addictive in some sense:

“You have received a certain kind of attention. [...] This is also sort of addictive, you know, it gives you a right to exist as an artist [...], I matter you know. I am not so to say throwing away all those years that I have put in it.”⁵ (Respondent 4)

This emphasizes again that these artists are always motivated by external factors, even when it is solely (hopefully positive) feedback from a certain audience. It thus questions, maybe in a philosophical way, whether it is possible to be completely autonomous in producing cultural products. However, this is only one side of reaching an audience. The other side would be meaning to reach as many people as possible with produced music. Two of the nine respondents explicitly stated that they saw no problem in reaching the largest amount of audience they could. Again, this seems to be able by the reproductive nature of the product and the digitalisation of the distribution and consumption. One of these two further explained that it could even go beyond their own niche:

“Eventually you want to have a lot of reach. Period. It does not matter for me personally whether some 8 year old on TikTok likes our song or a very cool Berlin Barista. When someone gets happy from the song that I make, it is fine for me.”⁶
(Respondent 8)

However, none of the respondents indicated that they were willing to artistically change the music to reach a larger audience. Two respondents even stated that they changed projects that were nearly finished, because these tracks felt a bit too commercial. This implied that these

⁵ Original quote in Dutch: Je hebt een bepaald soort aandacht gekregen. [...] Dat is eigenlijk ook een soort van verslavend, weet je wel, het geeft je bestaansrecht als artiest [...], ik doe ergens toe weet je wel. Ik gooit niet zeg maar al die jaren weg die ik erin heb gestopt.

⁶ Original quote in Dutch: Je wil uiteindelijk gewoon heel veel bereik hebben. Punt. [...] Mij maakt het persoonlijk niet uit of iemand van 8 jaar op TikTok ons liedje leuk vind, of dat een hele coole Berlijnse barista. Als iemand blij wordt van het liedje dat ik maak vind ik het prima.

tracks would be liked more easily with a broader audience because they were less surprising or contained more obvious and often used arrangements and sounds. The willingness to chance their music contrarily indicates a deliberate refrainment of reaching a larger market and therefore seems to coincide with the notion of restricted production. Two other respondents also mentioned that they perceive the music they produce already as more commercial in comparison to the music they listen to or play in DJ sets, because it is less difficult and therefore more accessible and open for a wider audience. Another respondent stated that he would still use more often used sounds and effects, like for example a noise sweep in a build-up before a drop, as long as he felt comfortable with it and only if he feels like he wants to use that in his music.

Lastly, there didn't seem to be a discrepancy between the feedback on the music from regular consumers or from peers in the industry. All respondents agreed that the feedback differs but both are important. Feedback from artists is a more educated opinion than the feedback of the audience, because they listen to the music with the knowledge on how it is created (and so with an other ear as was often mentioned). This feedback however, was not valued more than the feedback of other consumers. One respondent in particular explained that both sorts of feedback could make you grow as an artist. This equivalent importance indicates that all respondents do not necessarily produce music for other producers or like-minded individuals, which seems to contradict with the motivation to produce solely for symbolic capital received from other producers in the realm of restricted production by Bourdieu.

To conclude this part, within the field of electronic dance music, there are certain criteria that evaluate the music produced or the way artists perform by peers, because these people have certain knowledge on how the cultural product is produced. However, this evaluation and feedback is not considered more valuable than the feedback from the public at large, nor do the artists seem to thrive only for the recognition from either one. This is contradictory with the restricted field as described by Bourdieu. However, this does not entail that they change their music or DJ sets accordingly to reach a broader audience. Artists are aware of these evaluating criteria and sometimes even make contrary decisions, as long as it resonates with their own interests in the music. In that sense, authenticity, another value of Bourdieu's notion of restricted production, was indeed deemed as highly important. The authenticity of artists and music may also be evaluated by other artists, but this will be explained later.

4.2 The meaning of underground

From theory it was expected that the understanding of underground would coincide with the meaning of restricted production. Some aspects of the two terms indeed seem to correlate as I will explain, but in general it appeared to be difficult to describe the underground in electronic dance music. Two respondents explicitly stated that their produced music could be categorised as a subgenre of electronic dance music that is often also named as underground music. However, both respondents would not describe themselves as underground, while three respondents doubted to consider themselves underground even though they would definitely not consider themselves mainstream. The sole reason for seven of the nine the respondents to not state that they were underground artists, was because they were able to generate an income. They wondered whether you could call anything or anyone underground if the artist makes any money of producing or performing. “The term underground actually stands for an enormous amount of music, which actually also contains commerce”⁷ (Respondent 4). True underground music in a very strict sense would only be described as: unknown to any audience and without generating any sorts of monetary reward. “Underground probably sadly nowadays means poor” (Respondent 3). Any monetary return would immediately deny an underground status. Some aspects that could be associated with the term as it was used in the 1990s are however still relevant today:

“Underground means not caring about the money, underground means authentic, underground means in it for life, underground means it does not matter what you look like, who you are, underground means it does not matter who you are and what you do, how you do it, so the way you conduct yourself, you know, respect, politeness, manners. Not thinking you are bigger than the music.” (Respondent 3)

All other respondents would most likely agree with the attitude described in this statement. The main difference with the strict sense of the term seems to be the change in importance of the monetary aspect. It is not a certain respect regarding the history of the music that has changed or the use of particular techniques and equipment, but any monetary return would make an artist considerable less underground. In that sense some respondents even questioned if underground still exists in electronic dance music today. However, this explanation of the term implicitly stresses again the authenticity of the music and the artists that created it

⁷ Original quote in Dutch: De term underground staat eigenlijk voor een enorme hoeveelheid aan muziek, waar ook heel veel commercie eigenlijk in zit.

similarly to the meaning of restricted production. All respondents indicated the importance of authenticity also in the context of underground. Some respondents stated explicitly that a sense of authenticity gets lost when music and artists go out of the underground and turn mainstream. This loss of authenticity is not lost in the music itself, but everything else that surrounds it. It could even be the exact same song that gets released by a larger label that changes the perceived authenticity:

“You could see that again with Liem – If Only. [...] That was really a vinyl only release, 200 presses. [...] That is a white label release and considered as underground. The people of Defected release it again with a new cover and suddenly it is commercial. Then it turns considerable mainstream while it is the exact same song. So the difference is in the people that release the music and everything surrounding that actually.”⁸ (Respondent 5)

One respondent also noticed this phenomenon and described it as a push and pull, meaning that it is common in the underground scene that people want artists to thrive but could also complain when these artists become too well known and earn too much money. The injection of money to make the product reach a larger audience and the monetary intention of the people that enable a commercial growth makes the music less authentic. Some respondents stated that there are always exceptions and it is also not the case that every artist immediately has the opportunity to release their music with these sorts of large labels or perform at festivals and venues with large audiences. This indicates some sort of a scale between the underground and the mainstream, with which most respondents seemed to agree. On the one side of the scale is the underground without any monetary return and on the other side is the mainstream that has economic capital as the sole purpose of producing. Less dichotomous than Bourdieu, but similar to the distinction between a restricted field of production and large-scale production. In between there are steps of monetary rewards and increase in professionalism, but it is hard to determine exactly where one crosses the line from underground to mainstream. This determination is different for every individual partaking in electronic dance music, whether he or she is DJ, producers or consumers, and it also always

⁸ Original quote in Dutch: Je ziet het eigenlijk weer bij Liem – If Only heel goed. [...] Dat was echt zo'n vinyl only release, 200 presses. [...] Dat is gewoon een white label bij wijze van en het is underground. Defected doet een nieuwe cover en die mensen brengen het uit en het is opeens commercieel. En dan is het nog ja, redelijk mainstream aan het worden dus terwijl het hetzelfde nummer is.

depends on context. One respondent referred back to the mind-set and motivation of an artist similarly to Bourdieu's definition of restricted production:

“Underground is thinking about what I like myself and commercial or mainstream is more about thinking what others might like. [...] It is that quote of Frank Zappa: you have to go to the underground and the mainstream will come to you, that is the difference”.⁹ (Respondent 8)

So the underground still opposes the mainstream, but it is not essential to propagate against anything commercial. None of the respondents propagated against anything that gained success and some even applauded it. It is even more likely to be celebrated if another artist is able to generate more success in this sense, than being ignored or considered as an sell-out. This is also because success does not determine the underground status of music of artists:

“Being underground is not the same as being unsuccessful, like if you make a record, you press three hundred and only forty get sold that does not make your record underground. I don't think so. Maybe it was a shit record.” (Respondent 7).

Additionally, no respondent indicated any resentment against sell-outs, which contradicts the theory regarding releasing music in the underground scene for a particular and restricted audience. Even very popular artists were accepted if they have a genuine, honest, real interest and passion similar as underground artists in creating underground music again, especially if it were under a different alias.

Four out of the nine respondents indicated that the difference between music that is considered as underground or mainstream is the degree of accessibility. Not in the sense of being able to listen to the music or attend a performance, but in the ability to derive utility from consumption. Underground music is more likely to be complex than mainstream music, that is also why some respondent stated that they changed their music accordingly as mentioned before, to make it less easy to consume for people that might have a lower understanding of the music. This does confirm the considerable high amount of cultural

⁹ Original quote in Dutch: Underground is ofzo dat je dan veel meer denkt van wat vind ik vet en commercieel of mainstream dat je dan veel meer denkt over wat vindt iemand anders vet. [...] Zoals die quote van Frank Zappa: jij moet naar de underground en de mainstream komt naar jou toe. Dat is het verschil.

capital needed to derive utility from subgenres of electronic dance music that are considered underground as was expected from theory. However, the complexity of the music does not necessarily implicate that only well-educated individuals could derive utility from underground electronic dance music or that a cultural elite solely consumes this music. Additionally, this can not be completely stated in general, because there are also many exceptions in mainstream music and some of the respondents also stated that their own music sometimes is considerable more accessible than other music while still being deemed as underground.

Additionally, it has been observed that when the respondents discussed performing, there was no indication that they intent to educate their audience with their selection of music or make things more complicated. On the other hand, all respondents also did not play anything the audience would demand, only if requests would be within their own interest and selection. This contradicts the expectations from theory that DJs would need to shift between an educative and giving role. One respondent even stated that it is important to not deliberately make things more complicated for the audience while performing:

“If people hear stuff they do not know because of you then it turns into something educative, but I do not think that must be the intention. [...] It is also their weekend, yeah, they are also going out. You can play all this difficult stuff, but you know, not everyone is waiting for that either.”¹⁰ (Respondent 6)

Although there is no explicit focus upon complicated music, underground parties still differ from mainstream discos because there is less focus upon supplying what is demanded by the audience. Three out of the nine respondents stated that artists and audiences of underground parties share the same values that are connected to the concept of underground such as the love for certain unfamiliar subgenres of electronic dance music, room for originality and creative freedom for the performing artists, an ambiance where every individual could express themselves, where there is a high sense of morals like equality and a feeling of togetherness.

Another difference between underground and mainstream music could be specific subgenres of electronic dance music, but none of the respondents stated that it is ever bound

¹⁰ Original quote in Dutch: Als mensen shit horen wat ze niet kennen en dat ze dat door jou horen, dan wordt het wel een soort educatief iets, maar ik denk ook niet dat dat de insteek moet zijn. [...] Het is ook hun weekend, ja, zij zijn ook aan het uitgaan. Kan je wel allemaal moeilijke shit gaan draaien, maar ja weet je, zit ook niemand op te wachten.

to a particular subgenre or sound and therefore it can change over time which subgenre is deemed as underground. Additionally, specific sounds of instruments or techniques could be both used in music that is deemed as underground as in music that is considered as mainstream at the same time, as for example the Roland TB-303 bass-synthesizer or sampling from older records. So some subgenres like Goa Trance could be called underground music now, but might be mainstream music at another moment in time. "I think all music was once underground"¹¹ (Respondent 2). This coincides with the development of genres by Lena and Peterson that was discussed in the theory section, but contradicts the old aspect of the term underground "to preserve or create a particular scene, with a kind of rebelling against [the mainstream]"¹² (Respondent 6).

So some values of the underground have remained important, but a hard opposition with what is considered as mainstream has disappeared. A strong standpoint and following of this term also seemed to be more absent than expected from theory for the same reason as was observed with restricted production: are there still individuals out there that produce electronic dance music and perform without the intention of gaining any monetary return at all in a world that has so easily enabled people to create, distribute and reach an audience? All respondents agreed that the term does not entail what it used to do anymore due to developments in the music industry in general. What is currently understood as underground is context depending and has changed into a hard to define concept in the current prosperous state of the electronic dance music industry. As one respondent mentioned: "Does [the term underground] cover the essence now, or should there be a search for another word that captures that feeling?"¹³ (Respondent 4).

4.3 The importance of reputation

From the interviews it became clear that reputation has become incredibly important for modern day artists. However, reputation consists of two different realms that affect each other but remain also distinct. The first realm was ascribed with the term credibility. As was expected from theory, the term credibility was coined several times during the interviews. Three of the nine respondents explicitly used this term, but it was used with a different

¹¹ Originele quote in Dutch: Ik denk dat alle muziek ooit underground is geweest.

¹² Original quote in Dutch: Om een bepaalde underground scene te behouden of te creëren, moet het inderdaad wel een soort afzetten zijn tegen [de mainstream].

¹³ Original quote in Dutch: Ik denk dat de term underground, dekt dat nog wel echt de lading wat het nu is, moet er niet gewoon een heel ander woord voor gezocht worden om echt dat eigenlijke gevoel te dekken?

meaning than in the context of authenticity as were expected from theory. Instead, credibility was used to describe some sort of reputation of an artist among other professionals in the scene. The credibility of an artist is a certain status that is ascribed too by other people within the industry, but which an artist could also consciously build by choosing the right record labels to release music on or by performing at the right gigs. It is thus an observation of the influences of other stakeholders. Similarly to the use of the term underground, credibility is also context depended and could differ for different people and in different scenes within electronic dance music. A credible status could thus also include the same values that are deemed as important in the term underground. However, it is also an important term on its own because it is used to reflect the seriousness and professional attitude of an artist and determines the developments in once career. Also the respondents that did not specifically used the term stated that being able to do certain performances at certain parties or venues spark a certain interest of other promoters and venues and so enables other booking opportunities, while simultaneously other professionals might not be interested anymore because this particular performance is not considered as credible. This is similar and corresponding with releasing music on record labels. Thus artists are valued within the industry and artists can be conscious about this process:

“You are selling yourself, you are a product and you need to determine your own worth at a certain point. If you have a well-received release that runs properly, then you can increase your worth. [...] If you become more known, you need to raise your price accordingly, to hold your worth which so to say makes you more credible.”¹⁴
(Respondent 1)

This respondent was at the start of his career, but other respondents that were active several years also indicated that they still consciously consider the possible effect of every release and performing opportunity on their perceived credibility in the scene. Like always, there were some examples given of artists that were “able to get away with anything without anyone

¹⁴ Original quote in Dutch: Je verkoopt jezelf, je bent een product en je moet jezelf op een gegeven moment op waarde gaan schatten. En als jij een keer een dikke release hebt die goed loopt, dan kan je weer een beetje omhoog. [...] Als jij bekender wordt, moet je ook met je prijs meegroeien, om die waarde vast te houden, om die waarde vast te houden. Dus daardoor wordt je dan meer credible zeg maar.

saying you are commercial”¹⁵ (Respondent 9). This respondent used an artist called Midland as example, who has apparently earned such a credible status that enabled him to make a remix for pop star Dua Lipa that is also played during the Grammy Awards Show without being rejected in the underground scene. The most often indicated reason for artists to have earned such a status is seniority in the music industry and an extensive amount of credible activities (or almost achievements) along their career. On the other hand, there seems to be a certain point where one has established a certain amount of credibility that ensures some professional acceptance from other professionals in the industry. This has especially been observed with the respondents that have several active aliases or changed aliases over the years:

“Look for me, I am a new name again. However, I still have my connections of course. This remained from that time [under a different alias] and this is an advantage for me. I am not new in the scene.”¹⁶ (Respondent 6)

Thus, once an artist establishes a certain credibility, they are able to jump-start another alias without the need of starting all over again. Additionally, one respondent stated that the credibility of new aliases could positively influence the credibility of another active alias that was first considered as slightly too commercial by others in the scene. This is in line with the respondents’ acceptance of very popular artists to make music again in the underground scene under another alias as mentioned before. And so in this sense, credibility can be deemed important in the context of what is underground, but also stands on its own and moderately inheres a professional attitude, career development, price evaluation and so in a sense commercialisation that contradicts the strict meaning of underground.

The ascribed to credibility is thus some sort of reputation among professionals in the scene, but this differs from the reputation of these artists in the realm of the consumers of electronic dance music. Again, this realm of consumers could also consist of prosumers, both artists as amateur bedroom producers and house party DJs, of which one respondent deemed the last as important consumers of the music genre in general. The realm of consumers, the second realm of reputation, was more related to the term popularity. Being popular was also

¹⁵ Original quote in Dutch: Als je dat kan flikken en dat niemand over jou zegt dat je commercieel bent.

¹⁶ Original quote in Dutch: Maar kijk voor mij, ik ben weer een nieuwe naam. Alleen ik heb wel mijn netwerk natuurlijk wel uit die tijd [onder een andere alias] gewoon over gehouden. Daar heb ik denk ik een voorsprong bij. Ik kom niet nieuw in de scene.

deemed as an extremely important aspect of the modern day artist in electronic dance music. To establish this and to maintain a certain popularity, social media has become the industry standard of determining popularity:

“Social media is life, without exaggeration. That is really huge, so important in everything now as an artist.”¹⁷ (Respondent 8)

“You just can’t do it without social media game anymore. [...] How do you want to get work if no one could see you? You used to have the posters, but that is no longer the case. You have no choice [...] because the whole world is on social media.”¹⁸
(Respondent 6)

These statements regarding social media illustrate the important role of it to generate enough popularity that again attracts enough people to listen to the produced music or attend a performance. Seven out of the nine respondents brought forward how this has changed over time and become so important in the industry to market yourself. Popularity among the consumers has also an influence on willingness of other professionals in the industry to release music or book an artist to perform. Now this is not particularly a new phenomenon that only occurs in electronic dance music, but it is interesting to see how popularity amongst consumers, which is perceived differently than the credibility reputation, positively influences the ability to perform or release music and thus generate an income.

“I am certain that there are DJs that are being booked because of their reach on social media. That is a fact. [...] If they have fifty thousand followers more than someone who actually plays better music, it is still more interesting for a promoter because he would than also increase his reach”¹⁹ (Respondent 9)

¹⁷ Original quote in Dutch: Social media is het leven, zonder overdrijving. Het is echt huge, zo belangrijk in alles nu als artiest.

¹⁸ Original quote in Dutch: Je komt er gewoon ook niet meer zonder social media game. [...]. Hoe wil je dan wel aan je werk komen als niemand je kan zien? Eerder had je natuurlijk de posters, maar ja, dat is gewoon niet meer zo, dus je hebt eigenlijk geen keus meer. [...] want de hele wereld zit op social media.

¹⁹ Original quote in Dutch: Ik weet zeker dat er DJs worden geboekt op basis van hun social media bereik. Dat is gewoon zo. [...] Als zij vijftigduizend volgers meer hebben dan iemand die eigenlijk betere muziek draait, dan is dat gewoon interessanter voor promoters, want die heeft dan ook weer meer bereik.

The job of promoters used to be to promote the party where artists would DJ, but their best marketing tool has now become the following of artists. It is the industry side of electronic dance music that use the popularity, aside of the credibility, of the artist to sell their own product. The aforementioned example of Midland was also used as an example by another respondent to illustrate how Midland has created such a credible status that he was able to deliberately neglect any sort of promotion on his social media channels about events where he is booked. “I would like to be like that [...] but it is all flipped around, because it is now a buyers market you know, so I am selling and they are buying” (Respondent 3). This respondent refers to the behaviour of promoters who now buy the reach of the artist, sell the tickets of their event in the market of this artist, by just simply booking this particular artist and asking him or her to promote the event. In that sense, the promoters are not actually the ones that nowadays promote the party, but the artists do with their social media channels. This respondent additionally stated that this also happens with releasing music and remixing requests, where a record label asked him if he would promote the remix he did for a certain release on his social media channels. Remixing has more often been done for marketing reasons, but in this case the record label needed to be ensured that the record would also reach the following of this respondent and so creating the remix alone would not be enough anymore. “Artists have also [become] influencers”²⁰ (Respondent 2).

Eight of the nine respondents indicated artist’s need to stay relevant on social media and create enough popularity to be financially attractive for the industry in electronic dance music. How this popularity is created changed over time since different social media platforms have succeeded each other as the dominant platform in electronic dance music. First Soundcloud became important, then Facebook and eventually Instagram became the leading platform in electronic dance music. Five out of the nine respondents explicitly found this development problematic, because the various platforms had a different approach regarding the actual content shared by its users. Whereas Soundcloud is more focused upon uploading songs and mixtapes, Instagram has way more focus upon visual content. For these five respondents, this visual content approach of this platform has little to do with what it actually is about for musicians: music. It is therefore strange that this social media platform is the dominant platform in the electronic dance music industry, but for that same reason it enabled many people to discover this music genre in general and therefore might have increased in

²⁰ Original quote in Dutch: Artiesten zijn ook gewoon influencers [geworden].

popularity in the recent decade. One of these five respondents, who were not yet able to generate an income with their artistic practices, stated that the visual content can be a nice extension of the whole artistic profile and experience, while the other four respondents who were able to generate an income see it as a difficult, compulsory and time consuming activity. If it were up to them, they would rather neglect this business and managerial task.

Lastly, the increased importance of social media in electronic dance music, at least in the sense to be able to generate an income, also seems to affect the meaning of underground. “Once it is on social media, it is per definition not underground anymore”²¹ (Respondent 2). This is because the intention of social media is to reach an audience of which the size is not defined, but also not limited. Therefore, this could make us wonder whether it is even possible to fit social media as an aspect of art production in a restrictive domain as described by Bourdieu. Contradictory, two respondents stated that underground has also increasingly been used as a marketing term, devaluating its meaning. “Underground is a stamp or a certain thing that you can market [...] to make it sell better” (Respondent 7). Other respondents also stated that you can see an artists becoming mainstream when their visual content on their social media platforms become more professional, higher in quality and diversified. These changes indicate that there is a marketing team behind the content creation and thus that the artists is able to generate enough revenue to pay these external third parties. None of the respondents indicated that they ever experienced any negative effects on their perceived credibility because of their social media activities themselves, but this could still be the case for more popular artists. However, it has become clear that reputation, consisting of both credibility in the industry as popularity among consumers, has undoubtedly become an important aspect of an electronic dance music artist. The influence of other stakeholders on artists is at every aspect of artists’ practices and social media is the measurement tool and driving force behind the economical side of the industry.

4.4 Economic and artistic logics

This part of the results explains how the foregoing influences the economical and artistic aspects of the artists interviewed. Although some activities have already been described and indicated as one of these aspects, it will be analysed more explicitly in this part. The first observation that places the following findings in context is that almost all respondents confirmed the uncertainty of entrepreneurship in a cultural industry as was expected from

²¹ Original quote in Dutch: Zodra het op social media staat, is het gewoon niet meer underground, per definitie.

theory. One respondent explicitly mentioned one particular track that is now considered as his most successful song. When he first released it on his own label, it was pressed on the B-side of the record and gained hardly any attention in the first year of the release. Only after a year the track got suddenly picked up by other DJs, which started to make the track and the artist become successful. The uncertainty also ties in with the fast consumer behaviour of electronic dance music. Music, especially pressed on vinyl, might be released more than twelve months after the music is signed to a record label and dropped into a market that has changed completely regarding style or sound.

Besides this particular example, all respondents also indicated that some traction in the scene, mostly by being played by other DJs, could make a very limited pressed or unknown record instantly very popular and successful, which allows for the artist to grow very fast in their career. The successful way in which the music is perceived by the industry side of electronic dance music could enable certain bookings and thus generate an income as I mentioned before. This also reflects again the unique prosumer aspect of the electronic dance music industry. The two respondents that were not (yet) able to make a living out of their practices indicated that this was indeed the dream: to generate an income with performing and producing electronic dance music.

It may seem as no surprise, but all respondents, instead the one that were not full time active at this moment in time, stated that they really want to make music and perform for most of the time of each day of the year. To be able to do this, it is only logical that they need to generate an income out of their practices. This confirms the idea that cultural production is embedded in economic utilisation, or as one respondent stated it: “money rules the world” (Respondent 4). Only one of the nine respondents indicated a fast career development from the start with accordingly the ability to generate an income. For the other six respondents that were able to generate an income as an artist the transition was more slowly. Four respondents explicitly mentioned a certain decisive moment in which they decided to become financially depending on their artistic practices and quit any other job to dedicate or commit to it full time.

“[Another DJ] said to me: “do not make music your god”, and that was good for me to hear. I have been focussing on it so much, it is so important for me that [without monetary reward] you could go producing with the aim to earn money [...] out of fear

and stress. Of course you never know, maybe the odds are better, but you will lose your authenticity when you do.”²² (Respondent 5)

This respondent expresses the tension between the financial side and artistic side of being an artist in electronic dance music, but also again the uncertainty as described before. Some respondents indicated that the step to be financially reliable on their artistic practices brought along a fear that they would encounter moments where they would need to make artistic compromises. As the respondent in the quote before mentioned, these artistic compromises could be a stressful reaction of being financially tight, although these compromises would not ensure otherwise. Two respondents explicitly mentioned that they struggled financially and learned to live on a smaller budget. Three other respondents stated that they were not necessarily wealthy, but definitely should not complain. However, most of the respondents indicated that it were indeed possible to generate a large income, also within the underground scene of electronic dance music.

One explanation for the current difficulty to generate an income of artistic practices is because “the market has increasingly become more tensed”²³ (Respondent 9). An effect of this has been an increased professionalization in the whole industry. Business, managerial and technical activities have therefore become more important than solely creative activities, with which the before mentioned time consuming marketing on social media is already such an example. Additionally, electronic dance music is an entertainment industry, which means that performing inherently contains a performative aspect. Although its form could differ for other subgenres, two respondents explicitly mentioned that a DJ needs to have a fun, positive and entertaining appearance because this suits the entertainment aspect of the music. Therefore, it is hard to maintain a business attitude in for example booking negotiations:

“Have you been difficult [in the negotiations] with an organisation, then yes, you are already one nil down before enter the place.”²⁴ (Respondent 6)

²² Original quote in Dutch: [Een andere DJ] zegt van: “do not make music your god”, en dat was iets wat wel goed was voor mij om te horen. Ik ben er zoveel mee bezig geweest en het is zo belangrijk voor me dat je [zonder inkomen] uit een soort angst en een soort stress [...] gaan produceren zodat je weet van daar ga ik meer aan verdienen. Dat weet je nooit natuurlijk, maar je schat je kans groter in. Dan verlies je dus je authenticiteit.

²³ Original quote in Dutch: omdat de markt gewoon steeds meer gespannen is geworden.

²⁴ Original quote in Dutch: Heb jij met een organisatie [in de onderhandelingen] heel moeilijk lopen doen, dan ja, dan sta je al een nul achter als je daar binnen komt.

Besides this reason, it is also a non-creative time consuming activity that most artists would rather hand over to a booking agent for a percentage of the revenue. Same goes for managerial activities in releasing music, which most respondents also hand over to other record labels when they release there instead of on their own label. Both the use of a booking agent or another record label is an observation of professionalization that also influences the perceived credibility of the artists by the industry as mentioned before. However, it contradicts the importance of a DIY (Do It Yourself) approach as was expected from theory. There is of course a spectrum in how much an artist does everything him- or herself, but it remains interesting that handing business, managerial and technical activities over to other parties determines a credible status, which then have financially positive results. Only except for when the creative aspects are handed over to other parties, as with for example the before mentioned Peggy Gou or ghost producers. All respondents indicated that there may be no artistic compromises to establish an income out of music and none of the respondents stated that they ever did.

Contrarily, two respondents explained that they released their music with a large record label, after they had already released this music before on their own smaller record labels. Coincidentally, it is the same record label that offered this re-release opportunity for both respondents and both agreed to do a re-release of their music distributed only on a digital format. One respondent stated that it would give that track the “stage that it deserved [...] because there was not much [market] traction”²⁵ (Respondent 4). For the other respondent it was more considered as a financial decision:

“I licenced it to [the record label] and it was really difficult for me to do that because I felt kind of torn you know? [...] I do not like their kind of business model, [...] when something was really big on the underground they would license it for the digital. [...] So me doing that was a business move and [...] as an artist, you know, I want to make money because I need to survive right, so in that sense it made sense. [But] I don’t want to do anything with them again from an artistic sense.” (Respondent 3)

Both respondents considered their re-release of their music on this record label as a commercial move to reach a wider audience and generate more income, while in both these particular examples the music was not changed in any artistic sense. It stresses therefore again

²⁵ Original quote in Dutch: Heeft toen helemaal niet het podium gehaald dat het eigenlijk zou moeten krijgen [...] omdat die zo weinig tractie [in de markt] kreeg.

the difference and importance of the authenticity of their music and themselves. Other respondents also indicated that they would probably consider to (re-)release their music on this considerable more commercial record label if it were offered to them as well. That demonstrates the economic logic of artists in the electronic dance music industry. Another respondent indicated the same phenomenon with performing:

“You have your passion projects and you have your cash cows. And sometimes you need to turn a blind eye and walk away with a solid invoice. [...] Some booking requests enable you to solely make music for a month without the need to accept any other characterless request. It is just compromising.”²⁶ (Respondent 9)

Other respondents also indicated, like this respondent, that they would stop accepting more booking requests if they were already able to financially make ends meet with the performances that were already planned. On the other hand, some respondents explained that they took jobs on the side if it weren't possible to generate enough income with artistic practices, but still remained focussed upon their artistic career mostly. Both indicate a dominant artistic logic over economic orientated motivations. The dominance of the artistic logic will become even more clear when we deconstruct the practices.

All respondents stated that the main goal of being an artist in electronic dance music is to make electronic dance music. As one respondent explains: “90% of the time you are in the studio, 90% of your revenue comes from performing”²⁷ (Respondent 5). This confirms the expectations from theory that performing in the electronic dance music industry generates far more revenue than with producing activities. Four of the nine respondents explicitly explained that releasing records generates the interest of the industry to be booked and makes one stay relevant. In relation to a few decades ago, it has for that reason become an important aspect of being an electronic dance music artist:

²⁶ Original quote in Dutch: Je hebt je passion projects en je hebt je cash cows en soms moet je gewoon even een oogje dichtknijpen en weglopen met een goede factuur. [...] Sommige boekingen gaan gewoon mogelijk maken dat jij een maand lang alleen maar muziek hoeft te maken en geen andere lullige boekingen hoeft aan te nemen. Het is een beetje schipperen gewoon.

²⁷ Original quote in Dutch: negentig procent van je tijd zit je in de studio, negentig procent van je inkomsten liggen in het draaien.

“For instance in the ‘90s, you could be a producer, be in your bedroom, be an introverted nerd, make beats and if you are good at that, you could have made a living out of that. [...] That is not the case anymore.” (Respondent 7)

Performing has become a textbook example of cross-financing music production in electronic dance music. Although all respondents indicated they rather spend most of their time in the studio because they prefer those activities, they do enjoy the performing as a different aspect of being an artist in electronic dance music. Performing is different, both like producing it still is a creative aspect instead of business, managerial or technical aspects. One is not necessarily valued more than the other, which also applies for peers that for example only produce or only perform. These artists are equally respected and applauded if they are able to so to say make it.

This brings us again to the influences of other stakeholders on the creative and economical aspects of artists. As was seen before already, the respondents indicated that it is important to earn a credible status to achieve financial goals within the industry. Creatively, most respondents indicated that they were indeed inspired by the music or DJ sets of other artists. They take what they like from what they hear to incorporate it in their own creative practices, but not for any economically beneficial reason. None of the respondents stated that they changed their sound accordingly to the changes in trends and fashions in the scene to provide from the possible attention that this new sound might pick up in the industry at a whole or with the consumers. Contrarily to the adaptive behaviour regarding market development in non-creative industries, here we see again the artistic logic dominating. While the electronic dance music industry allows artists to create a new alias, make use of the network they created from another alias and therefore already ensure less financial risks to explore a new trend that could maybe increase their odds to succeed, none of the respondents indicated they would do any of this with economic motivations. Cross-financing is welcomed and therefore is the economic logic in service of the artistic logic.

5. Conclusion and discussion

After an intensive period of research, this thesis now arrives at answering the research question. The sub questions have been answered in the result section, which has been an essential step for answering the research question of this thesis: how do the values of restricted production in the underground scenes of electronic dance music influence the economic and artistic aspects of artists' practices? The values of restricted production are still important for artists today. The context depending beliefs and interests are the artistic starting point of production and performing. Recognition, including gaining symbolic capital, is the most important reward and vital in the motivation for artists to produce cultural goods. Artists value especially (expressive) authenticity as most important value. However, certain techniques, equipment or methods for producing and performing are not relevant anymore for the notion of restricted production. Additionally, the amount of audience reached is not important anymore, nor is there even a specific audience targeted to gain symbolic capital. Technological innovation and digitalisation enabled the possibility that almost anyone could now be able to DJ or produce electronic dance music, is able to distribute his or her music to anyone in the world who has an Internet connection and find any audience through social media platforms. It therefore also goes beyond what is considered as a restricted domain and contradicts the notion of restricted production by Bourdieu. Reaching a larger audience than initially aimed for, and achieving success in that sense, is even applauded by other artists. This contradicts the ideas from Thornton regarding the importance of artists representing subcultures and to prevent selling-out as was expected from theory.

Although the intention is not to produce for economic capital, it is certainly not deliberately denied that it is possible to reach a large audience, achieve financial success and gain monetary reward. In fact, this research has shown that electronic dance music artists are indeed capitalizing their artistic production by taking on a professional approach and attitude. This professionalization entails an increased focus upon the economic practices of artists. Two forms of reputation came forward as vital roles in this professionalization. The first form is credibility, which ascribes the quality of the artist, can be created and changed by releasing music with the right record labels and performing at the right venues, ties in with the aimed for symbolic capital, determines the worth and price of the artist and is therefore mostly assessed in the industry side of music. Popularity is the other form of reputation, which describes the reach among consumers, is mostly determined by (the following on) social media and is also economically interesting for the industry side of music. Both partly indicate the influence and impact of other stakeholders on the practices of artists. The

professionalization and increased importance of economic practices in electronic dance music, including the two forms of reputation, enable the artists to spend more time doing the artistic practices, which is almost always the inherent motivation to produce cultural goods in the first place. Gaining monetary return has become essential for cultural production for individuals that do not have economic capital like the elite bourgeoisie. Therefore, the economic logic is serving the artistic logic and this economic approach is more accepted by modern day artists than is stated in the dichotomy of Bourdieu. This coincides with the ideas of Eikhof and Haunschild, Everts, Hitters and Berker and Schediwy, Loots and Bhansing. It has indeed been more accepted by artists that the cultural and creative industries are embedded in a realm of economic utilisation.

As a last remark regarding the answer of the research question, it came forward from the literature that the notion of underground coincided with the notion of restricted production by Bourdieu and shares the same values such as authenticity and inherent motivation. However, similarly as the notion of restricted production, the notion of underground seems to be less applicable in the modern day electronic dance music industry. The term underground is still often used and some of its values have remained important, but its meaning has lost its weight in this industry. Any monetary return and any audience reached beyond a non-market orientation denies any underground status. However, both the monetary return and the audience reached are now important and inseparable aspects of being an artist as stated before, therefore it is inevitable that the term underground can not manifest within the music industry as it has been before in a more strict sense. Underground scenes can still oppose mainstream markets or mass consumed culture, but does not necessarily propagate against these anymore. This is because it has been accepted that artists deemed as mainstream could also have the same inherent motivation for cultural production, produce for the sake of art, just as underground artists. Additionally, the acceptance of the inevitable economic conditions of partaking in the music industry makes it pointless and contradictory for artists to propagate against anything mainstream or any sort of success. It will therefore be interesting to research this same attitude in the subgenres of electronic dance music that are considered to be more mainstream than researched in this thesis.

This brings us to the limitations to this research. Multiple artists that have recently signed at major record labels have been contacted, but unfortunately did not have an opportunity to be interviewed. It has therefore not been able to observe the inherent motivation in a wider spectrum of the electronic dance music industry due to the time constrains in this research. It will also be interesting to see how the before mentioned

influence is applicable in more popular subgenres of electronic dance music consisting of globally known super stars. Additionally, it will be interesting to see this influence in more unknown or under developed subgenres of electronic dance music that are maybe more unfamiliar or considerable more underground than treated in this research, like for example Speedcore or Goa Trance. It could also be interesting to interview other non-artistically involved stakeholders in this industry to further observe the tension between economic and artistic logics, since this research has only focussed upon the artistic producers. Therefore, this research has observed less importance of subcultural representation in the underground scene as were expected from the literature of Thornton. It might be interesting in further research to include consumers and amateur prosumers of electronic dance music instead of solely professional prosumers. While the method of this research was suitable for exposing the motivations and behaviour of individuals and the industry, increasing the number and the variety of respondents would enable to increase the generality of the conclusions that have been drawn in this thesis. Lastly, this complete research has been done during the global Covid-19 pandemic. It will be interesting to explore how this global Covid-19 pandemic has influenced electronic dance music since the performative, and therefore almost the complete financially profitable aspect of this industry, has been closed almost all over the world for at least a year. This research could in that sense be part of a longitudinal study in which the before, during and after of the global pandemic could be researched and compared.

Finally, the field of electronic dance music has been proven to be innovative, artistically motivated, containing aspects of the performing arts that serve as an exceptional example of prosumption and is slowly accepted as a cultural valuable while also being embedded in the realm of the market. It has not been a much researched cultural industry, but has shown in this thesis to serve as an example for future research regarding the influence of the market on cultural production. *May it remain its cultural value and status that it has earned, thrive as a global industry and receive the acknowledgement that it deserves.*

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underground-talks-saunagate

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Appendix

Appendix A Interview guide

This interview guide has been constructed to serve as a guideline and structure for the in depth interviews of this research. Because of the exploratory and idiographic nature of this research, any other topics that arise during the interview and are not covered by these questions posed in this interview guide will be explored as well. The following questions were used for interviews in English and the questionnaire in Dutch is a translation of this one and has been used for the interviews in Dutch. FU stands for ‘follow up question’ and FE stands for ‘for example’.

Short introduction: Thank you for participating in my research regarding the underground in electronic dance music. This interview will approximately last about an hour. You may decline to answer any question or stop this interview at any time. If you feel any doubts then please share them during our conversation.

Questions regarding the artist and the practices

Introduction: First I would like to ask some questions regarding you and your practices.

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you been active as an artist?
3. What would be the main subgenre of electronic dance music in which you operate?
4. Are you able to generate an income solely of your artistic practices?

FU: How has that changed since you have started?

Questions regarding restricted production

Introduction: Now I would like to ask some questions regarding the methods you use and how many people you tend to reach with your practices.

5. Are you a DJ and producer or solely one of the two?
6. What is the difference between a producing artist and a performing artist in electronic dance music?
7. How do you perceive an artist that is solely a DJ and not a producer (or the other way around)?
8. Do you use particular equipment, material or techniques for DJ-ing or producing?

FU: Does this need specialized skills?

FU: How does this differ from other DJ's and producers?

FU: How has technological innovations influenced your choice regarding this equipment, material or techniques?

9. Is there a certain quality attached to certain equipment, material or techniques in electronic dance music?
10. Are there aspects of being an artist in electronic dance music that you deliberately restrain from?
11. How many people do you try to reach with your practices?
 - FU: Is there a difference between reaching consumers and reaching other artists?
 - FU: Have you deliberately performed or released music for a smaller audience than you could have?

Questions regarding the underground scene

Introduction: Now I would like to ask you some questions regarding underground in electronic dance music.

12. What does underground mean to you?
 - FU: How is this related to what you think is mainstream?
 - FU: How important is it to propagate against mass consumption?
 - FU: How is underground related to a particular sound or genre?
 - FU: Is there a certain quality assessment in this notion of underground?
 - FU: Do you consider yourself underground?
13. Who do you think determines whom and what is underground in the industry?
 - FE: Consumers, venues, peers, magazines, outsiders or others?
14. How do artists need to represent a particular subculture in the underground scene?
15. What does authenticity mean to you?
 - FU: How does this meaning of authenticity play a role in the notion of underground?
 - FU: Is originality important in this notion of authenticity?
 - FU: Does the amount of time an artist is active in the underground scene play a role in this notion of authenticity?
 - FU: Is there a certain quality assessment in this notion of authenticity?

16. Have you experienced how underground subgenres or artists have changed from underground to mainstream?

FU: How has familiarity or popularity played a role in this?

FU: What has been lost in this process?

FU: How familiar or popular may a genre or artist be to be still considered underground?

FU: When is one considered a sell-out?

Questions regarding economic and artistic practices

Introduction: Now I would like to ask you some questions regarding the balance between the creative aspects and economic aspects of being an artist in electronic dance music.

17. How do you balance between artistic choices and monetary reward of your practices?
18. What do you consider as successful in electronic dance music?
FU: How is monetary return important in this notion of success?
FU: How were you able to thrive on music or sets that were considered a success?
19. How important is a certain reputation or popularity for you as an artist?
FU: How does this reputation or popularity affect the ability to generate an income?
20. Have you had multiple aliases as an artist?
FU: How has this played a role for creatively?
FU: How has it influenced your ability to generate an income?
21. In what way do you have a Do-It-Yourself (DYI) method in your practices?

Questions regarding the influence of other stakeholders

Introduction: Finally, I would like to ask you some questions regarding the influences of other people and businesses on the practices of artists in electronic dance music.

22. In how far do you take into account what the scene demands?
FE: How do you balance between playing unfamiliar music in your DJ sets with more popular music for your audience?
FU: Do other DJ's balance this in a similar fashion?

23. How do you cope with the changes of trends and fashions in electronic dance music?

FU: How willing are you to change creatively accordingly to certain trends and fashions?

24. Do the practices of other DJ's and producers affect your practices in electronic dance music?

FU: How depended are you on newly created music or influenced by DJ sets from others?

25. How do venues influence your practices as a DJ?

26. How do record labels influence your practices as a producer?

FU: Have you ever changed musical work due to the demand of record labels?

27. How does your own (independent) record label influence the practices of others?

Questions to round of the interview

28. Is there something we haven't discussed, but what you would like to prose?

29. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

30. How was your experience of this interview?

31. Is there someone you think of that I would need to talk to as well?

Thank you for your time and this interview!

Interview guide in Dutch used for interviewees from the Netherlands

Korte introductie: Alvast bedankt voor het deelnemen in mijn onderzoek naar de underground in elektronische dans muziek. Dit interview zal ongeveer een uur duren. Je hebt het recht om vragen niet te beantwoorden of om op elk moment dit interview te stoppen. Als je enige twijfels voelt, deel dit dan tijdens ons gesprek.

Vragen betreffende de artiest en de praktijken

Introductie: Dan wil ik graag eerst wat vragen stellen over jou en je praktijken.

1. Wat is je naam?
2. Hoe lang ben je al actief als artiest?
3. In welk sub genre van elektronische dans muziek bent je het meest actief?
4. Ben je in staat om een inkomen te genereren met enkel je artistieke praktijken?

FU: Hoe is dat veranderd sinds je begonnen bent?

Vragen betreffende restricted production

Introductie: Nu wil ik je graag wat vragen stellen over de methodes die je gebruikt en de hoeveelheid mensen die je probeert te bereiken met je praktijken.

5. Ben je DJ en producer of slechts een van de twee?
6. Wat is het verschil tussen een artiest die produceert en een artiest die DJ is in elektronische dans muziek?
7. Hoe denk je over een artiest die alleen DJ is en niet produceert (of andersom)?
8. Gebruik je specifieke apparatuur, materiaal of technieken voor het DJ-en of produceren?

FU: Zijn hier speciale skills voor nodig?

FU: Hoe verschilt dit van andere DJs en producers?

FU: Hoe hebben technologische innovaties jouw keuzes beïnvloed voor het gebruiken van deze apparatuur, materiaal of technieken?

9. Wordt er een bepaalde waarde toegeschreven aan bepaalde apparatuur, materiaal of technieken?
10. Zijn er bepaalde aspecten van het artiest zijn in elektronische dans muziek waar je je opzettelijk van weerhoud?
11. Hoeveel mensen probeer je te bereiken met jouw praktijken?

FU: Is er een verschil tussen het bereiken van consumenten en andere artiesten?

FU: Heb je een opzettelijk voor minder mensen opgetreden of muziek gereleased dan je had kunnen doen?

Vragen betreffende de underground scene

Introductie: Nu zou ik graag wat vragen willen stellen over de underground in elektronische dans muziek.

12. Wat betekent underground voor jou?

FU: Hoe is dit gerelateerd aan wat mainstream voor jou betekent?

FU: Hoe belangrijk is het voor jou om te propageren tegen massa consumptie?

FU: Hoe is underground gekoppeld aan een bepaalde genre of geluid?

FU: Is er een bepaalde kwaliteit bepaling in de betekenis van underground?

FU: Beschouw je jezelf als underground?

13. Wie bepaald wie en wat underground is in de industrie?

FE: consumenten, clubs, andere artiesten, magazines, buitenstaanders of andere?

14. Hoe moeten artiesten een bepaalde sub cultuur representeren in de underground scene?

15. Wat betekent authenticiteit voor jou?

FU: Wat voor rol speelt deze betekenis van authenticiteit in die van underground?

FU: Is originaliteit belangrijk in deze betekenis van authenticiteit?

FU: Speelt het mee hoe lang een bepaalde artiest actief is in de underground scene?

FU: Is er een bepaalde kwaliteit bepaling in deze betekenis van authenticiteit?

16. Heb je ervaren hoe underground sub genres of artiesten mainstream zijn geworden?

FU: Hoe heeft bekendheid of populariteit daarbij een rol gespeeld?

FU: Wordt er iets verloren in dat proces?

FU: Hoe bekend or populair mag en genre of artiest zijn om nog steeds als

underground beschouwd te worden?

FU: Wanneer is iemand een sell-out?

Vragen betreffende economische en artistieke praktijken

Introductie: Nu zou ik graag wat vragen willen stellen over de balans tussen creatieve en economische aspecten van het artiest zijn in elektronische dans muziek.

17. Hoe balanceer je tussen artistieke keuzes en het verdienen van geld met jouw praktijken?

18. Wat beschouw jij als een succes in elektronische dans muziek?

FU: Hoe speelt geld verdienen een rol in deze betekenis van succes?

FU: Hoe heb je voorspoed ervaren op bepaalde muziek of sets die als succesvol werden beschouwd?

19. Hoe belangrijk is een bepaalde reputatie of populariteit voor jou als artiest?

FU: Hoe beïnvloedt deze reputatie of populariteit de mogelijkheid om een inkomen te genereren?

20. Heb je meerdere aliassen gehad als artiest?

FU: Hoe heeft dit creatief een rol gespeeld?

FU: Hoe heeft het invloed gehad op de mogelijkheid om een inkomen te genereren?

21. Op welke manier heb je een Do-It-Yourself (DYI) methode in jouw praktijken?

Vragen betreffende de invloed van andere belanghebbende

Introductie: Als laatste zou ik graag wat vragen willen stellen over de invloed van andere mensen en bedrijven op de praktijken van artiesten in elektronische dans muziek.

22. In hoeverre neem je in acht wat de scene van je verlangt?

FE: Hoe balanceer je in DJ sets tussen het draaien van onbekende muziek en muziek dat populairder is bij het publiek?

FU: Doen andere DJs dat op eenzelfde manier?

23. Hoe ga je om met de veranderingen in trends en stijl in elektronische dans muziek?

FU: Hoe welwillend ben je om creatief mee te veranderen?

24. Beïnvloeden de praktijken van andere DJs en producers jouw praktijken in elektronische dans muziek?

FU: Hoe afhankelijk ben je van nieuw gemaakte muziek of invloed door DJ sets van andere?

25. Hoe hebben clubs invloed op jouw praktijken als DJ?

26. Hoe beïnvloeden platenlabels jouw praktijken als producer?

27. Hoe beïnvloed jouw platenlabel de praktijken van andere producers en DJs?

Vragen ter afsluiting van het interview

28. Is er iets wat we niet besproken hebben, maar je wel nog naar voren wilt brengen?

29. Is er iets dat je mij graag wilt vragen?

30. Hoe was je ervaring van dit interview?

31. Is er iemand waarvan jij denkt dat ik die ook zou moeten spreken?

Dankjewel voor je tijd en dit interview!

Appendix B Letter to respondents

Letter to respondents in Dutch

Onderwerp: Verzoek om interview master student Yannick van Wijk

Beste (Name of respondent)

Mijn naam is Yannick van Wijk en ik doe momenteel onderzoek naar de underground scene in elektronische dans muziek voor mijn master Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship aan de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. Voor dit onderzoek ben ik geïnteresseerd in wat underground betekent en hoe DJs en producers zich hiertoe verhouden in relatie tot hun artistieke praktijk. Hiervoor lijkt het mij ontzettend interessant om met u in gesprek te gaan!

Ik hoop dat u geïnteresseerd bent en een mogelijkheid ziet om met mij in gesprek te gaan. Hiervoor zou ik u graag ongeveer een uur willen interviewen. Dit interview zal ook compleet geanonimiseerd worden en nergens gepubliceerd. Met de huidige covid-19 maatregelen zou dit via een medium van uw voorkeur kunnen (Google Hang-outs, Zoom, Skype of Microsoft Teams) of eventueel op een locatie (in Nederland) naar uw keuze op een dag en tijd die u uitkomt. Ik hoop dat u geïnteresseerd bent en de mogelijkheid ziet om met mij in gesprek te gaan.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Yannick van Wijk

Master student Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship

Erasmus University Rotterdam

yannickrobertvanwijk@gmail.com

Letter to respondents in English

Subject: Request for interview master student Yannick van Wijk

Dear (Name of respondent)

My name is Yannick van Wijk and I am researching the underground scene in electronic dance music for my master degree Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. For this research, I am interested in what underground means and how DJs and producers relate to this with their artistic practices. It would be very interesting for me to have a conversation with you regarding this topic!

I hope that you are interested and that you are in the opportunity to have a conversation with me about this. I would like to interview you for this for approximately one hour. This interview will be completely anonymized and will not be published. With the current covid-19 measures this could take place via Google Hang-outs, Zoom, Skype or Microsoft Teams or possibly on a location (in the Netherlands) of your choice on a day and time that suits you best. I hope that you are interested and are in the opportunity to have a conversation with me.

Kind regards,

Yannick van Wijk
Master student Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship
Erasmus University Rotterdam
yannickrobertvanwijk@gmail.com

**Appendix C Categorisation of identified activities from Everts, Hitters and Berkers
(2021) p. 4**

Creative	Managerial	Business	Technical
Art specific technical tasks	Bookings	Accounting	Acquiring and maintaining technical knowledge
Artwork	Communicating	Branding	Distribution
Collaborating	Legal	Business planning and venturing	Maintaining instruments and equipment
Graphic design	Management and organization	Financial tasks	Manufacturing and packaging
Image and fashion	Music licensing	Grant writing	Recording and engineering and mastering
Merchandise and design	Project and time management	Investor relations	Video editing
Performing	Publicity and media relations	Marketing and promotion	Website maintenance
Product development	Strategic thinking and planning	Merchandise	
Rehearsing	Team working and collaboration	Networking	
Song writing		Social media	
Video		Social media – audience interaction	
Website design			

Appendix D Respondent characteristics

Respondent	Profession dimensions	Nationality	Several active aliases	Ability to generate an income from being an artist	Years active as an artist
1	DJ and producer	Dutch	No	No, other sources of income	2015 till present
2	DJ and producer	Dutch	No	Yes	2011 till present
3	DJ and producer	British	No	Not anymore, other sources of income	1994 till present
4	DJ and producer also as duo	Dutch	Yes	Yes	2004 till present
5	DJ and producer as duo	Dutch	Yes	Yes	2011 till present
6	DJ and producer	Dutch	No	Yes	2016 till present
7	DJ and producer also as duo	German	Yes	Yes	1995 till present
8	DJ and producer as duo	Dutch	No	No, other sources of income	2013 till present
9	DJ and producer also as multiple duo's	Dutch	Yes	Yes	2009 till present

Appendix E Transcribed and coded interviews

The transcribed and coded interviews are separated from this thesis to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. These documents are solely accessible for the supervisor and the second reader of this thesis.

Appendix F Informed consents

The informed consents are separated from this thesis to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. These documents are solely accessible for the supervisor and the second reader of this thesis.

Appendix G Codebook

This codebook has been exported from Atlas.ti and was used to code all the transcribed interviews. The codes are presented in alphabetical order.

Codebook Atlas.ti			
Alias	Artistic	Audience reach	Audience Target
Authenticity	Branding and marketing	Business, Managerial and Technical tasks	Career development
Covid-19	Creative tasks	Cultural appropriation	Cultural capital
Deliberate refrainment	Development in Electronic Dance Music	DIY	Drugs
Economic capital	EDM	Equipment, material and techniques: Digital	Equipment, material and techniques: Other
Equipment, material and techniques: Vinyl	Fast consumption	Generate income	Ghost producer
Innovation: creative	Mainstream	Market: Commercial	Market: Niche
Media and journalism	Monetary reward	Motivation	Notion of success
Originality	Other forms of income	Other stakeholders: Consumers	Other stakeholders: Peers
Other stakeholders: Venues and promoters	Other stakeholders: Industry in general	Other stakeholders: Record labels	Performing DJ
Performing Live	Producing music	Production costs	Professionalization
Quality assessment	Reputation: Credibility	Reputation: Popularity	Represent subculture
Residency	Scene	Sell-out	Seniority
Subgenres Electronic Dance Music	Third parties	Trends and fashions	Underground
Years active	Zeitgeist		

Appendix H Code tree

This is the code tree that has been rendered as an Atlas.ti network report.

