

Beyond the Beats

Examining the Social, Cultural and Economic Value of the Nightlife of Rotterdam through the Lens
of Club Managers and Frequent Visitors

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ABSTRACT

The nightlife of a city is often a very important contribution to the economy, tourism, social connection, and business climate. Previous studies have examined how value is created in (live) music venues in Rotterdam, therefore this research project focuses on how value is created in nightlife, by juxtaposing both experiences from frequent nightclub visitors and nightclub managers in terms of social, cultural, and economic value creation. The study examines different types of value creation and their aspects, and investigates how these forms of value are created and perceived within Rotterdam's nightlife scene. This is done by answering the research question: *'How do club managers and frequent club visitors experience the economic and social-cultural value of the nightlife in Rotterdam?'*. To answer this question, in-depth interviews with frequent visitors of nightclubs in Rotterdam and expert-interviews with club managers of nightclubs in Rotterdam were conducted, that covered aspects of the social, cultural, and economic value of nightlife. The data that was created through conducting these interviews, was properly analyzed and coded in order to extract themes that form the results of the study. The themes that emerged from the data were: cultural value, economic value, social value, inclusivity, motivations for clubbing, and innovation in nightlife. These themes extensively revealed and described what the nightlife of Rotterdam consists of, how the nightlife of Rotterdam is experienced by frequent club visitors and club managers, and what aspects of social, cultural, and economic value are important for both these units of analysis, and even more specifically, how these forms of value are created. Important findings of this study are about sub-cultures in nightlife and sub-cultures that visit certain nightclubs, the importance of development of musical taste in regard to nightclubs, how club managers think about programming and ticket pricing in relation to profit in contrast to the affordability of the nightlife for club visitors, socializing with people in nightlife, safety, inclusivity vs. exclusion, the identity development of visitors of nightlife, and the importance of governmental influences and audiences in nightlife for innovation in the nightlife sector. This study contributes to the understanding the importance of nightlife to the urban structure of the city of Rotterdam. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of nightlife to social connections, identity development, the feeling of connectedness between people, cultural development in many forms, and many more. Above all, it emphasizes how all forms of value that are examined are interconnected and therefore influence each other, both for club visitors as club managers.

KEYWORDS: *nightlife, social-cultural value, economic value, club managers, frequent club visitors.*

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1. Introduction

This research project aims to research how the nightlife in Rotterdam is experienced by both frequent nightclub visitors as nightclub managers in Rotterdam in regard to social, cultural, and economic value creation. This study explores different types of value creation and its aspects and examines how these forms of value are created and experienced in the nightlife of Rotterdam.

As value creation is a complex concept and is interpreted in various ways, this study aims to illustrate a broader understanding of how both club managers and frequent club visitors experience this concept and its aspects, and subsequently juxtapose these insights. The units of analysis of this study are the club managers and frequent club visitors in Rotterdam. Club managers can be described as the people that are responsible for the club and the events that are held, which in some cases, is the owner. For club managers, value expressed into profits of the club or event might be more interesting (economic value), whereas the visitors might have certain motives to visit clubs or events, that create value for them personally, such as social engagement, which refers to social value (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019). This illustrates how nightlife is valued, is always is reliant on a dynamic process of valuing (van der Hoeven et al., 2022).

This study places these findings side by side and finds patterns in the way value is conveyed and value is perceived, by juxtaposing perspectives from club managers with insights from frequent visitors. Therefore, the study will consist of expert-interviews with club managers as well as in depth-interviews with frequent visitors of different types of clubs in Rotterdam, aiming to get a broad understanding of the nightlife in Rotterdam, how people perceive the nightlife of Rotterdam and to identify new developments and new themes that are important for understanding and improving the nightlife of Rotterdam.

Several studies have already been conducted covering certain aspects of this topic (Lange & Bürkner, 2013; Magni, 2021; Mulder & Hitters, 2021; Whiting, 2021; Schwanen et al., 2022); however, these studies focus on different topics and therefore a similar study has not been conducted with an in-depth insight on values of the nightlife scene. While previous studies rather focus on the economic and social-cultural value of (live) music venues in the broader sense, this study rather zooms in on how club managers and frequent club visitors experience the economic value as well as the social-cultural value of nightlife.

Following on from this gap in earlier research, this research aims to answer the following research question: *'How do club managers and frequent club visitors experience the economic and social-cultural value of the nightlife in Rotterdam?'*. This research question will be answered by using qualitative research methods, consisting of expert- and in-depth interviews. The respondents for these interviews are selected by following criteria, with the objective to create a diverse sample, which leads to a broader understanding of the nightlife in Rotterdam.

1.1 Societal relevance

This study is socially relevant, as it covers elements which are an important part of the urban structure of Rotterdam, and extracts insights and needs from stakeholders in the nightlife of Rotterdam, which can be useful for improving elements in the nightlife of Rotterdam. A well-organized nightlife - and especially club nights - contribute to the economy, tourism, social connection, and a good business climate (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019). Furthermore, commercial nightlife is very important for (re-)shaping the experience of tourists, visitors, and other segments of the local population in regard to the city (Nofre, 2021), therefore, the findings from this study can identify strengths and weaknesses in the nightlife scene, which can ultimately lead to interventions and improvements to enhance the creation of value. Subsequently, understanding the importance of these factors can contribute to the overall experience of nightlife, and can also inspire important stakeholders, such as the City Council, to further develop and promote the nightlife of Rotterdam.

1.2 Academic relevance

This study is academically relevant, as it covers a gap in the research. As indicated above, several studies have been conducted about value creation and motivations to visit (live) music events (Lange & Bürckner, 2013; Magni, 2021; Mulder & Hitters, 2021; Whiting, 2021; Schwanen et al., 2022);, however, this combination of concepts and units of analysis in the research question will generate a new understanding of value creation in relation to nightlife. Nightlife is significantly different from other sectors, such as live music and festivals, however, it is rarely discussed in the academic field. Therefore, it should receive more academic attention. The differences between these scenes are important to identify, as this leads to a deeper understanding of how value is created within these scenes.

To be more precise, there has been a lack of in-depth research about how both club managers and frequent club visitors experience and perceive the economic and social and cultural value that is associated with nightlife in general, as well as the specific nightlife scene in Rotterdam. This study aims to cover this research gap by diving into the perspectives of both units of analysis: the individuals responsible for managing clubs and the individuals who frequently attend these venues. By exploring the experiences of these visitors and managers, this study aims to explore the dynamics of value creation within the context of nightlife. This study is expected to contribute useful insights into the understanding of nightlife and how value is created within nightlife.

1.3 Chapter outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters, in which the first chapter gives a brief overview on what the study is about and creates a better understanding on why the concepts are relevant to study. The second chapter dives deeper into the theories that already exist and studies that have already been done in regard to this topic, in order to create a deeper understanding of the concepts that are being researched in this study. Subsequently, the third chapter explains how the research was designed, how the data was collected, how the participants for this study were picked and how the data was analyzed. The fourth chapter presents the results that were found in the study, containing themes such as cultural value, economic value, social value, inclusivity, motivations for clubbing, and innovation in nightlife. Finally, the research question is answered in chapter 5, which is the conclusion of the study. This chapter summarizes the results in a comprehensive way, while also presenting limitations and ideas for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

This section dives deeper into the theories and concepts that form the basis of this research. It contains the most important findings that create the foundation for this study. The topics discussed in this section are the nightlife of Rotterdam, value creation in terms of economic, social and cultural value, and motivations for visiting nightlife.

2.1 Nightlife in Rotterdam

A nightlife is crucial to the development of a city. A nightlife that consists of a good variation of restaurants, cafes and clubs is perceived as an important part of a city, especially when it comes to the urban economy as well as the image of the city. Therefore, many cities have been developing their possibilities in regard to nightlife (Van Aalst & Van Liempt, 2011). Furthermore, a well-developed nightlife contributes to the economy, tourism, social connectedness, and business climate of a city. Moreover, a city is perceived as livelier and more attractive for people to visit (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019). Van Vugt (2018) states that the possibility to participate in cultural activities leads to a greater feeling of safety, satisfaction, confidence, and trust in the community. Getting familiar with and exploring different types of music genres often happens through nightlife activities, often already at a young age (Van Vugt, 2018).

2.1.1 The development of nightlife in Rotterdam

As for the last couple of years, the number of clubs and venues for going out have been decreasing significantly in The Netherlands, and therefore, also in Rotterdam. Looking at the development between 2008 and 2017, the number of discotheques has decreased from 312 to 174 in The Netherlands, which is a decline of -44%. For Rotterdam, the number of sixteen clubs dropped to nine clubs, in the period between 2008 and 2017. An explanation for this decline in clubs could be that big cities often have alternatives for clubs, such as cafes and (live) music venues. Also, back in the days it was more common to go out in a club the whole weekend, whereas now, the study found that this is less common, in the whole country. Both the alternatives for clubs and other societal developments, lead to a decline in the number of clubs (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019).

A shift has taken place in the last couple of years in regard to nightlife and what kind of needs this fulfils. The focus rather lies on the 'experience' of a venue, where visitors want to be entertained and have high standards. Besides that, hotel- and cocktail bars have been getting more popular. Finally, the expenses of young people could also be an explanation for the decline in visitors of clubs, as young people tend to spend more money on bigger events or their mobile phone, rather than a weekly night in a club (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019).

On March 29th, 2023, a lecture about The Nighttown was held at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. This lecture put emphasis on how nightlife has changed in Rotterdam and why it is important to study this shift. Important insights on this lecture were that the loss of certain nightclubs not only shapes the appearance of the city, but also shapes communities and cultural exchange.

The Nighttown was a pop venue and dance club at the West-Kruiskade in Rotterdam, which hosted legendary acts such as Nirvana, Amy Winehouse and Ice Cube, while also hosting club nights with music genres such as EDM, hip-hop, rock, and more (Erasmus University, 2023). As stated before, over the years the number of nightclubs has been declined, and besides that, needs of visitors have changed.

2.1.2 COVID-19 and nightlife

The COVID-19 had a significant impact on nightlife. During the COVID-19 pandemic, strict measures were implemented by the Dutch government, which led to the closure of bars, restaurants, and nightclubs. In the summer of 2020, everything was re-opened, however, a second wave of COVID-19 led to the implementation of new restrictions in the fall. When nightlife began to reopen, there were certain limitations to it, such as a limited number of people, a proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test result (Rijksoverheid, 2020). Even though nightlife is now opened without restrictions, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of changes in nightlife.

In 2021, students from the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam conducted a study about the nightlife in Rotterdam before the pandemic, during the pandemic, and after the pandemic. The insights of this study were used by the municipality of Rotterdam to create a vision on the policy of nightlife in 2021 (Mulder, 2021). Important findings from this study were that the Witte de Withkwartier and the Schieblok area were the most popular areas of going out before the pandemic. During the pandemic, the nightlife is very much missed and important values that describe what is particularly missed are relaxation and escapism. The closure of these nightlife venues also had consequences for people mentally, as people mention to feel sad, lonely, and depressed (Mulder, 2021). Furthermore, COVID-19 led to great financial losses in the creative industry and showed us how vulnerable the networks in the music industry are (van der Hoeven et al., 2022).

2.1.3 Regulations in nightlife

According to Koren (2023), there are two prominent approaches when it comes to studying social inequalities in audience participation in urban nightlife. The first approach, known as the *experiential approach*, focuses on the perspectives of consumers and club visitors. This approach is about the social, cultural, and political significance of clubbing in relation to mainstream society. This approach examines youth identities, subcultural meanings, and the experiences of marginalized groups, including queer communities. The second approach, referred to as the *urbanist approach*,

focuses on policy, urban regeneration, and protests. It investigates how nighttime urban spaces are influenced by political debates surrounding quality of life and urban rights. This approach examines government-led regulation, such as licensing, zoning laws, and urban redevelopment, as well as self-regulation by club organizers (Koren, 2023).

As for regulation, two forms are prominent. The first is *government-led regulation*, which is about the actions of local authorities in governing nightlife. These are, for example, about including licensing procedures, zoning regulations, urban renewal initiatives, and the creation of designated nightlife districts. These kinds of processes lead to the sanitization of urban spaces, affecting working-class, racialized, and/or queer clubbers. The second form is *club-led regulation*, where organizers themselves implement regulations. An example of this are door policies, which nightclubs often use to maintain a "trouble-free" environment. Some researchers argue that these policies are profit-driven, as they enhance safety and attract middle-class patrons, while also functioning as a way of excluding certain audiences based on factors that have to do with class, race/ethnicity, and gender. Door policies can also serve as a more subtle form of exclusion, based on subcultural traits, because some clubs strive to create a specific atmosphere or clientele. On the other hand, in certain cases, door policies can enhance a sense of community and create a unique experience, especially in queer-oriented clubs (Koren, 2023).

2.2 Value creation

This section contains theoretical statements that already have been made by previous studies in regard to value creation. The proposition exists that value creation consists of a cultural and economic component (Lange & Bürkner, 2013). These components will be further elaborated within this section of theory. In general, value creation has become more diversified over the past years, as it underwent several cycles of differentiation and fragmentation (Lange & Bürkner, 2013).

2.2.1 Value & value creation

Value refers to the fulfillment of customers' needs or in economic terms, the willingness to pay for something. Furthermore, it can also be defined as "the respective benefit of a product, service, job, or task as perceived by a customer" (Fischer, 2011, p. 11). Value is seen as a subjective term, meaning that different people can give different value to a certain product or service (Fischer, 2011). This refers to the process of valuing (van der Hoeven et al., 2022), which is described later in this paragraph.

Value creation is a term used in economics, finance, and business to describe the process of generating and enhancing value for customers, stakeholders, and shareholders. Value creation occurs when a company can increase the value of its product or service offering beyond the cost of producing or providing it. This can be achieved through a variety of means, including innovation, efficiency

improvements, and differentiation. The perception of a customer's value are usually based on their beliefs about the goods, their personal needs, unique experiences, wants, wishes and expectations (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000).

2.2.2 Valuing as a process

It is important to understand that how nightlife is valued, is reliant on a dynamic process of valuing (van der Hoeven et al., 2022). A club manager has other interests for music in their nightclub, than a city marketer. This explains how multiple actors have different values to satisfy different kinds of interests. Sometimes, values are not shared equally, when one of the actors is investing and the other is capturing the benefits. Therefore, valuing is a process in which multiple actors are seeking for agreement about what values should be created, how these are shared, and how to satisfy each actor's interest (van der Hoeven et al., 2022).

It is important to consider that the distinction between intrinsic value and extrinsic value is made, which is up for discussion. Intrinsic value refers to the idea for something to be valuable in itself, and extrinsic value rather refers to the economic impact or social relevance. However, it is hard to operationalize 'intrinsic value' exactly and "the boundaries between values are porous" (van der Hoeven et al., 2022, p. 219).

2.3 Economic value

Economic value refers to financial benefits and the relevance in monetary terms. Therefore, economic value can also be expressed in 'worth'. Important factors that are included in economic value can be tourism, how much a consumer spends, but also jobs that are generated through the industry. Some people argue that other values are overshadowed by economic values (van der Hoeven et al., 2022). Additionally, Fischer (2011) monetizes the concept of value and defines it as "the amount of money when equivalence arises between the customer's status quo of not having the product but having more money and the new situation of owning the product, but possessing less money" (Fischer, 2011, p. 10). This definition refers to *use value*.

Moreover, *exchange value* is about the monetary amount when the transaction is being made of the exchange of a product from seller to buyer. It is common that the exchange value of a product is less than its actual value. Furthermore, *opportunity cost* refers to the costs that a company or organization must actually realize and deliver the use value of the customer. Opportunity cost consists of all the resources that are necessary for creating this use value, such as capital cost, labor cost and the costs that are made for supplier inputs (Fischer, 2011).

2.3.1 Economic value in nightlife

It has become more common that nightlife entertainment is part of a governmental strategy for stimulating the local economy in a city (Schwanen et al., 2012). The past few years a shift has taken place in the way that money is earned in the music industry. A lot of money has been made in traditional ways, for example by big record labels in the global market. However, consumer tastes have been altered and now rather rely on small events, clubs, independent labels, local scenes and Internet communities (Lange & Bürkner, 2013). This also means that players in the music industry must rely more on revenues from these types of activities, such as concerts and other live events. Live music even surpassed recorded music, in terms of economic values. Given these developments, it has become very important for music industry players to create the best value possible from these live music events. One phenomenon inhibits this ability, which is described by Magni (2022) as *underpricing* (Magni, 2022). Sometimes tickets are re-sold, which leads to producers and artists miss out on certain value, which is worsened by a tendency to sell underpriced tickets (Magni, 2022).

Furthermore, well-known modes of value creation have become blurrier due to digitalization, co-production, and services of production that consumers use. This phenomenon is labeled by economists as “value shops” and “value networks” (Lange & Bürkner, 2013).

2.3.2 Value proposition (Business Model)

A value proposition is a statement that explains the unique value that a product or service offers to its customers, and how it solves their needs or fulfills their desires. It is a key component of a business model, as it defines the value that a company aims to deliver to its customers and distinguishes it from competitors. It explains a reason why customers would prefer one company over another. The value proposition is a set of benefits that a company can offer to its customers. This can be expressed into quantitative (e.g., prices, speed of service) or qualitative (e.g., customer experience) values. The Business Model Canvas is a tool used by entrepreneurs and managers to visualize and design business models, in which the value proposition is one of its nine building blocks (Osterwalder et al., 2010).

The canvas is a structured framework for identifying and analyzing the key components of a business model, and helps to clarify the relationships and dependencies between them. The “business model describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers and captures value” (Osterwalder et al., 2010, p. 14).

2.3.3 Value capturing

Value capture is described in different ways by different authors, such as value realization, value dispersion or value distribution. Value capture refers to the “share of the pie” that is received by

the respective parties. It is dependent on the bargaining power of such a party how much value it is able to capture. A strong bargaining position contributes to the success of a firm, as this means that they can capture a large share of the created value. In contrast to that, a weak bargaining position will not be able to capture any value that is created, even if they have contributed to it (Fischer, 2011). Bowman & Ambrosini (2000) argue that value capture is determined by bargaining relationships between the buyers and sellers. The bargaining power of the customer is determined and enhanced by the presence of viable substitutes, in combination with low switching costs, as this reduces the ability of the buyer to capture value in the form of a high price (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000).

2.3.4 Bourdieu's Theory of Capital

Bourdieu's Theory of Capital provides a useful framework for understanding how economic value is created and distributed in society. According to Bourdieu (1977), there are three primary forms of capital: economic, cultural, and social. Economic capital refers to the material stuff that individuals or organizations possess, for example money, property, and investments. Cultural capital refers to the symbolic resources that individuals or groups have, such as education, knowledge, and cultural tastes. Social capital is about to the social connections and relationships that individuals or groups have, such as networks and social norms (Bourdieu, 1977).

In Bourdieu's Theory of Capital, economic value is closely linked to economic capital. However, economic capital is not the only form of capital that influences economic value. Cultural and social capital can also play a significant role in creating economic value. Bourdieu's Theory of Capital shows how economic value is created and distributed in organizations. While economic capital is an important factor, cultural and social capital also play significant roles in shaping economic outcomes (Bourdieu, 1977). Looking at nightlife in terms of Bourdieu's Theory of Capital, we can expect that economic value is created by the deliberate actions of club managers in order to successfully convert social and cultural capital into economic profits. Club managers can create the pre-conditions in the nightclub that allow for the emergence of social value.

2.4 Social & cultural value

Another important factor of value creation is the social and cultural aspect. In this section, there is made a distinction between social values and cultural values, which are usually less measurable than economic values (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019). Also, social and cultural capital lead to revenue for live music venues (Whiting, 2021).

Social-cultural value for nightlife refers to the non-economic benefits that individuals and society derive from participating in nightlife activities, such as socializing, entertainment, and cultural experiences. Furthermore, nightlife can provide opportunities for socialization, identity development, public engagement, and more (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019).

2.4.1 Social value

According to Van der Hoeven & Hitters (2019), who did a study on social and cultural values attributed to live music ecologies, social value consists of three different dimensions: social capital, public engagement, and identity. Social capital refers to live music enhancing a sense of belonging and allowing people to connect with each other. Public engagement is about how music organizations impact cities and people that live there. Finally, identity refers to how live music venues can be important for a sense of identity and cultural pride of a city, street or neighborhood (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019). Additionally, Whiting (2021) argues that besides the economic values, music venues also serve as meeting spaces to socialize and get a sense of belonging (Whiting, 2021), which also refers to social values.

Furthermore, social values can be explained as the contribution to “social relationships between people, a sense of belonging and collective identity” (Van der Hoeven et al., 2021, p. 219). Besides that, nightlife contributes to social wellbeing of people, and crucial to the social and cultural life of European cities. Moreover, it serves as a source of memories for many people in the world (Nofre, 2021).

2.4.1.1 Identity development in nightlife

Van der Hoeven & Hitters (2019) highlight the range of positive effects live music can have for its environment. Among other effects, a sense of identity and belonging is an important effect. A music venue can characterize a neighborhood or street. These ‘legendary’ venues are often known for not only their aesthetic qualities, but also their artistic legacy. Therefore, they hold a special place in the cultural heritage of a city (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019).

In terms of personal identity, Chatterton & Hollands (2002) argue that traditional social structures of identity for young adults have weakened, which leads to a growing importance for consumption, leisure, and popular culture, especially in urban centers. These elements are central the identity development of young people, as they contribute to their self-expression and connection. The engagement with these elements plays a big role in the shaping of the sense of self and belonging of young adults (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002).

2.4.2 Cultural value

As for cultural values, Van der Hoeven & Hitters (2019) distinguish three dimensions: musical creativity, talent development and cultural vibrancy. Musical creativity refers to the intrinsic value of live music, talent development is about how music venues offer a space for people to develop their skills and talents, and lastly, cultural vibrancy is about the connection of music to the cultural ecology and how it contributes to the cultural sector (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019).

Additionally, Nofre (2021) argues that the cultural heritage and social networks associated with nightlife are essential for the maintenance of the identity and vibrancy of a city. Recognizing the societal and cultural significance of nightlife venues and implementing measures to protect and sustain them can contribute to a more balanced and sustainable development that respects the needs and aspirations of both local residents and visitors (Nofre, 2021).

2.4.2.1 Inclusivity and exclusion in nightlife

When it comes to cultural value in nightlife, inclusivity is an important factor. Nightclubs provide a space in which young professionals from diverse backgrounds can gather, socialize, and establish personal and professional connections. The diverse nature of nightclub attendees can cause racial tensions to emerge, which reflects the broader racial dynamics within a city (May & Goldsmith, 2018). To illustrate this, May & Goldsmith (2018) did a study on whether white individuals receive advantages based on their white/light-skinned privilege when gaining access to nightclubs. Within this study, it becomes clear that there have been several reports that have shown how racial discrimination occurs in urban nightclubs. Sources such as CNN, Chicago Tribune, New York Times, and National Public Radio have reported on the alleged use of dress codes as a method to deny nightclub access to specific racial and ethnic groups, by disguising discrimination as dress code violations. These reports have consistently highlighted incidents where nightclub bouncers reject African American and Latino patrons based on their clothing, while simultaneously granting access to similarly dressed white patrons (May & Goldsmith, 2018).

Furthermore, existing research has demonstrated that equality is not evenly distributed when it comes to accessing and enjoying urban nightlife. Various forms of exclusion, influenced by factors such as sexuality, gender, income, and race, continue to play a significant role in determining who can participate in nightlife activities and access public spaces during nighttime hours (Acuto et al., 2021).

This is confirmed by Nofre (2021), who argues that the commercial nightlife in Europe exhibited a great presence of inequalities, that were often related to factors such as social class, race, age, sexual orientation, financial constraints, transportation availability, disability, access, ethnic and national origin, and cultural and religious backgrounds, or a combination of these factors (Nofre, 2021).

To emphasize this, Chatterton & Hollands (2002) argue that various factors such as financial constraints, geographical marginalization, racial discrimination, and feelings of disenfranchisement also contribute to the restriction of certain groups of young people to leisure activities. These types of barriers often prevent these young people from accessing the vibrant nightlife that is offered in city centers. Economic constraints can be high prices in urban nightlife, or geographical marginalization, as some neighborhoods or areas do not offer adequate transportation to access the city-center (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002).

2.5 Motivations for nightlife

Motivations often refer to internal factors that have to do with arousing, directing and integrating the behaviour of a person (Li & Petrick, 2005). It is important to investigate people's motivations for attending events, as this helps monitoring the satisfaction as well as understanding the decision-making processes of visitors. Li & Petrick (2005) have compared several studies on Festival and Event Motivation. This study shows a clear overview on several factors that have been found as the most important motivations for visiting festivals and events, for example: stimulus seeking, social content, excitement, escape, togetherness, event attraction, novelty/uniqueness, variety, cultural exploration, external group socialization, known-group socialization, meeting or observing new people, nostalgia (Li & Petrick, 2005).

Additionally, Mulder & Hitters (2021) did a study on motivations for live music attendance. In this study, they distinguish general festivals, music festivals, pop concerts, and live music in general. In general, they propose that festival motivations should encompass six key aspects: cultural exploration, seeking new experiences or returning to familiar ones, finding balance through rest and relaxation, or escaping from routine, engaging in socialization with known groups, interacting with new people and the larger community, and fostering family togetherness (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). Moreover, understanding why people rather hear live music than recorder music is explained by motivations such as: "joy, sampling without commitment, hero worship, uninhibited behaviour, social and ritual (Mulder & Hitters, 2021, p. 360)". Mulder & Hitters (2021) clustered the motivations that were found for attending live music, and categorized them into four groups: "personal (intrinsic) motivations, social motivations, artistic motivations and motivations related to the setting or environment of the live music event (Mulder & Hitters, 2021, p. 360)". These studies are useful for understanding the motivations club visitors might have. However, these existing studies do not specify the motivations of nightclub visitors, so there may be other motivations that have not been captured in previous research.

3. Method

This section explains the methodology for this study. This research has a qualitative approach, in which interviews is the main method: expert-interviews as well as in-depth interviews. By juxtaposing the values of visitors with the values of managers, it becomes visible what the messages from the club managers are, how they want to create a unique experience and more importantly, what their perception is on why visitors visit their club. By consequently asking visitors what values they think are important in nightlife, these insights can be compared in order to answer the research question that is posed for this study, which is: *'How do nightclub managers and frequent nightclub visitors experience the economic and social-cultural value of the nightlife in Rotterdam?'*. This study fits with a qualitative approach, as for this study, it is important to gain knowledge about phenomena from the perspective of insiders (Lapan et al., 2012).

3.1 Expert interviews

A part of the insights is gathered during this study, through conducting expert-interviews with club managers. The term club managers, in this case, is defined as the people in nightclubs that are responsible for the nightclub and events that are held, which in a few cases, is the owner of the nightclub. Conducting expert interviews is useful for this study, as they serve practical insider knowledge. Furthermore, expert interviews help the research quickly obtain results, and more specifically, good results. Besides that, conducting an interview with an expert can consequently lead to an expansion in the access for the researcher in the field that is being studied, as experts may indicate additional potential interviewees (Bogner et al., 2009).

To ensure the credibility and validity of the expert interviews, selection criteria are applied. Club managers with substantial experience and knowledge in the nightclub industry are chosen as interviewees. Their expertise is verified through a combination of factors, such as their professional background and reputation within the industry. By using expert-interviews in the research methodology, this study is able to gather credible and diverse insights. The addition of interviews with experts, i.e. club managers, provides a deeper understanding of the topic.

The number of expert interviews that is conducted is limited, as the focus for this study lies on value creation for frequent visitors of nightclubs in Rotterdam, which will be discussed in the next paragraph. Therefore, this study contains three expert interviews. The topic list for the club managers consists of questions that cover the important concepts that are mentioned in the research question, such as value creation, how the managers perceive nightlife, what value they want to contribute with their nightclub, and other questions regarding economic, social, and cultural value. The topic list for the expert interviews can be found in Appendix A. The table below (Table 1) entails the details of the participants of the expert interviews.

	Gender	Age	Organization	Duration
Expert-interview 1	Male	32	Annabel	00:45:17
Expert-interview 2	Male	34	Superdisco	00:45:03
Expert-interview 3	Male	48	Bird	00:48:02

Table 1: Expert-interviews details

3.2 In-depth interviews

The focus of this study is to gain insights about how value is perceived and experienced by frequent nightclub visitors in Rotterdam. Therefore, eight in-depth interviews are carried out with eight frequent visitors of nightclubs in Rotterdam. Interviews can be a good method to understand themes of the daily lives, expressed from the subject's own perspective (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

In this study, interviews are used to capture the viewpoints and experiences of the participants regarding their experiences in the nightlife scene in Rotterdam and how these experiences contribute to the creation of value. Both the economic and social-cultural aspects of value creation are explored and questioned during these interviews. The interviews are designed as semi-structured interviews, which offers more flexibility, while still ensuring that the most important themes and topics are addressed. The semi-structured format is useful, as it allows deeper exploration of the participants' experiences, opinions, and insights while still maintaining consistency across interviews. Moreover, it enables the interviewer to ask follow-up questions, ask for more details, and encourage participants to share their personal perspectives on value creation in the context of nightlife. These interviews have lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The topic list for the visitor interviews can be found in Appendix B. The table below shows the details of the people that participated in the interviews.

	Gender	Age	Duration
Visitor interview 1	Female	20	00:47:05
Visitor interview 2	Male	27	00:47:04
Visitor interview 3	Male	27	00:48:14
Visitor interview 4	Female	22	00:45:24
Visitor interview 5	Female	20	00:58:09
Visitor interview 6	Female	24	00:46:08

Visitor interview 7	Female	24	00:45:50
Visitor interview 8	Female	21	00:46:24

Table 2: Visitor interviews details

3.3 Sample and sampling method

As discussed earlier, this study will have two units of analysis, as there are two groups that will be interviewed: the experts (club managers) and the frequent visitors of clubs in Rotterdam. Therefore, this section will describe the sampling method for both groups.

As for the experts, the sampling method that will be used is purposive sampling. This method aims to select people based on the knowledge of this population. The experts are selected by the judgment of which experts will be most useful or representative (Babbie, 2014). A selection of nightclubs in Rotterdam has been made, in which the representatives of these nightclubs are approached by the researcher. The researcher has a few of these representatives/managers in her own network, which makes it easier to be able to speak with them. There has been reached out to five to six club managers, which eventually led to three appointments for an interview. As a few of the club managers were very busy, or did not get the time to respond, the process for finding participants for the expert-interviews did not go as easily as expected, and therefore there was a little bit of a delay in the schedule for collecting the data and conducting the interviews. However, it still resulted in three expert-interviews with representatives from Annabel, Superdisco and Bird. These are three nightclubs in Rotterdam. Annabel is a nightclub that offers both club nights and concerts, Superdisco only offers club nights and Bird also offers club nights and concerts. The expert interviews gave an insight into the work processes of the representatives of these nightclubs, as well as their perception on how visitors experience their nightclub and how the club managers perceive nightlife in Rotterdam in general. These expert interviews led to the collection of a lot of useful data, on different (sub-)cultures in nightlife, different music genres in nightlife, different types of events in nightlife, and more. As purposive sampling was used to select the club managers, the researcher knew some of the managers personally, as well as some other people that work in the scene that could deliver the contact information from the managers in order to set up an interview.

The frequent visitors are selected by using convenience sampling as well as purposive sampling. Convenience sampling refers to relying on available subjects (Babbie, 2014). However, purposive sampling is used in order to select a reliable sample in which people are selected that are not similar to the researcher and differ from each other in aspects such as musical taste as well as preference for a certain nightclub, gender, ethnicity, and age. Ages will range between 18-30 years old. For this study, it is important to define what a frequent visitor is exactly. Frequent visitors should at least be visiting nightlife venues (more specifically, clubs) in Rotterdam three to four times a

month. Selecting and finding people for the visitor interviews was an easy process, as the researcher knows a lot of people that visit the nightlife of Rotterdam. Also, the researcher posted a story on Instagram, asking whether people would want to conduct an interview with the researcher. This was helpful, and besides that, it led to a more diverse sample, as very diverse types of people wanted to participate. This led to eight in-depth interviews with topics that were extracted from the theoretical framework and fit with the concepts being researched in the research question.

3.4 Data collection

The data of both the expert- as well as the in depth-interviews is collected through conducting the interviews with both the experts and visitors and recording these interviews. All the interviews were held in a face-to-face setting. The interviewees all gave permission for recording the interview beforehand. Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed. The transcripts contain every word that has been said during the interviews, both from interviewer as the interviewee, as well as the timestamps of the interview. This interview data laid the foundation for the data analysis, which is elaborated more detailed in the next paragraph.

3.5 Data analysis

The data of both the expert- as well as the in depth-interviews have been analyzed through thematic analysis. It is seen as the method that lays the foundation for qualitative analysis and is a useful and flexible tool to provide rich, detailed, yet complex data. It is usually used to report experiences, meanings, and the reality of participants of the study. Furthermore, it identifies, analyses and reports patterns within the collected data, by themes that emerge (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These emerged themes describe a certain phenomenon. The identification of these themes is done through reading and re-reading the data. These patterns of themes subsequently emerge in the categories for the analysis, which are established through the coding process (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The initial operationalization of these codes is shown in the next paragraph.

Thematic analysis can be done both inductively, where new theories are generated from the data, as deductively, where theory is tested (Van den Bulck et al., 2019). This study has a hybrid approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), which means it has both inductive as deductive characteristics. It is inductive, as it aims to gain insights on value creation in nightlife of Rotterdam derived from data that is about experiences from stakeholders in this nightlife (data-driven). On the other hand, it is deductive, because theory is tested (deductive analysis) through the interview questions (theory-driven). For analyzing the data, the transcripts of the conducted interviews were processed into Atlas.ti, which is a software for qualitative data, which allowed the researcher to apply codes to the collected data. The initial operationalization gave a good example on possible codes, in

which some of them could already be applied to the data. The coding process started with open coding, in which codes were given to the data. Everything that seemed important was highlighted. In most of the cases, a code was created in the Code Manager, which consists of all the codes. The codes were created and made up while reading the interview data. These codes could subsequently be grouped under one category or theme, which gave a better view on the patterns in the data, and especially the frequency of the codes in the interview data. Some parts in the data were only quoted. Through re-reading the data, some quotes showed a pattern which emerged in another code or category. Also, some codes were found very often, and subsequently emerged as new theme, as it consisted of even more sub-codes. This coding process gave an overview on the different themes that are discussed in the Results section.

3.6 Operationalization

The table below (Table 3) provides possible codes and the operationalization that was initially made in the proposal for this study. It provides a few categories and possible codes that could be added to the categories, that was derived from theories that were discussed in the initial theoretical framework. As this study has a hybrid approach, which is discussed in the previous paragraph, experiences from the stakeholders in nightlife are gathered through the interviews, and this subsequently led to new categories and new codes.

Code	Examples
Social values	<i>nice place, good vibes, nice people, connecting with people, meeting new people, meeting people from abroad, feeling of unity/togetherness, sense of belonging, feeling connected to others</i>
Cultural values	<i>good music, exploring new music genres, influences of fashion, exploring music genres from other countries, exploring new art, meeting people from abroad, inclusive atmosphere, openness to others</i>
Economic values	<i>ticket pricing, supply and demand, pricing of drinks, loans of employees and artists</i>
Motivations for attending clubs	<i>meeting new people, exploring new music, relaxation, entertainment, enjoyment, exploring new art, work</i>
Motivations for not attending clubs	<i>too expensive, too crowded, not busy at all, too loud, no people to go with, lack of interesting events in the neighbourhood</i>

Table 3: Initial operationalization

3.7 Reliability and validity

For this study, it is important to consider the reliability and validity. According to Thiel (2007), reliability refers to the accuracy and consistency of the concepts that are measured during the study. There are two different types of reliability. Firstly, internal reliability refers to the verifiability of the study. This is ensured by the topic lists of the interviews that have been composed before conducting the interviews, which resulted in the coverage of the same topics. Additionally, the interviews are all transcribed, which makes the results of the study verifiable. External reliability, on the other hand, refers to the replicability of the study as a whole. This study is externally reliable, as the respondents are selected carefully, and the research design and methodology are clearly described, allowing researchers to potentially replicate this study.

However, the positionality of the researcher may have had an effect on the reliability, given that the researcher is a very frequent visitor of the nightlife in Rotterdam, and generally has a positive attitude towards nightlife. In order to prevent this researcher bias, the results of this study have been presented to independent people, that are not connected to this research in any way, which enhances the intercoder reliability. These people indicated that the results show a good interpretation of the nightlife of Rotterdam.

On the other hand, validity refers to the accuracy of the interpretations and conclusions that are drawn from the collected data (Thiel, 2007). To ensure the (internal) validity of this study, the interview topic lists have been based on existing theories and knowledge that has been described in the theoretical framework, ensuring that this study addresses relevant aspects of the concepts researched. As for external validity, there have been made efforts to select a diverse range of respondents for the interviews, with different perspectives and experiences in regard to the nightlife of Rotterdam, therefore, the findings can be generalized to a broader population.

3.8 Ethics

As for ethical considerations, all respondents gave verbal consent for recording the interviews and were all fully informed about the purpose and procedures of this study. The recordings have all been deleted after the transcription of the interviews. As this study does not contain vulnerable information, this topic will not be able to cause ethical issues.

4. Results

This chapter offers an in-depth analysis of the results that have been obtained through the in-depth and expert-interviews conducted and the thematic analysis that was subsequently applied to the collected data. The themes that are explored in this section have emerged through a coding process of the data that was gathered. Each theme and their subcategories will be thoroughly explained and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework, that has been composed earlier during this study. Furthermore, value creation for club managers as well as club visitors will be juxtaposed in this section. The themes that will be explained in this section are: cultural value, economic value, social value, inclusivity, motivations for clubbing, and innovation in nightlife. These themes have been identified as crucial components in understanding the perception and experience of value creation within the context of nightclub visits in Rotterdam. Furthermore, Appendix D provides an overview of the coding process and results, which serves as a reference and input for the analysis presented in this section. The coding overview provides a summary of the identified codes, sub-codes and the corresponding illustrative quotes from the data.

4.1 Cultural value

One of the most important themes that emerged from the theory as well as the interview data is ‘cultural value’. As this concept is also processed into the research question and therefore in the theoretical framework, it soon became clear that this concept consists of various important elements that are applicable to nightlife in Rotterdam. As for cultural values, the theory referred to cultural value as the intrinsic value of live music, talent development and cultural vibrancy (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019). In practice, it became visible that cultural values in relation to nightlife are similar, however, there were additional cultural values that could be extracted from the data, in which some of them were already determined in the initial operationalization.

Most prominently discussed in the interviews, are the sub-cultures that the nightlife of Rotterdam consists of. The sub-cultures were mentioned by the club managers as well as visitors as different groups that follow certain music trends, or belong to a certain group in society, such as ‘students’ or the ‘LGBTQ+ community’. These groups are often distinguished and referred to as that certain nightclubs belong to certain (sub-)cultures, often in a stereotyping way. One of the participants (frequent club visitor) explained her perception:

Annabel is very student. Ski-Hut is very student. Coconuts is very student. Then you have 1nul8, Café in the City, Oysterclub. I think a little more for a little arrogant people. They just want to be seen. Cornelis too, by the way. Show a little bit how handsome you are. How much money you have. Status. Just very much so. And then you have Villa Thalia, for

example. Then again, I think for a little bit of immigrants. A bit Moroccan, Turkish. Also, girls who fall for those types (visitor 1, female, 20 years old).

The theme that refers to sub-cultures is very important, as it is often spoken of in relation to the concept of 'inclusivity' or 'inclusive atmosphere', which eventually originated in a separate theme, which will be discussed later in this section. As inclusivity is often referred to as an important part of the nightlife scene in Rotterdam, it also is up for discussion, as the majority of the respondents think nightlife in Rotterdam is not that inclusive, meaning not every nightclub is for everyone, however, they argue that everyone does have a spot which they should feel comfortable at: "I also understand that there are certain clubs for certain groups. Because obviously, you have different norms and values (visitor 1, female, 20 years old)."

This refers to the nightclubs serving as a spot for specific sub-cultures that want to come there or feel safe there. As the club manager of Annabel states: "Anyone can come, no matter what. But I don't think everyone feels equally comfortable here. That's something we want to work on, but it's very difficult (club manager 1, male, 32 years old)". Many respondents argue that an inclusive atmosphere does contribute to a 'good vibe' (social value) in a nightclub. This applies to both club managers and club visitors, however, sometimes nightclubs must draw a line, in regard to the policy they have at the door. As inclusivity is a complex concept, it is a separate theme, which will be elaborated more thoroughly later.

The theoretical framework already pointed out that music is an important aspect when it comes to cultural value, and the practical findings confirm this. Both the music itself at nightclubs as well as the exploration of new music genres are important categories extracted from the interview data. Club managers are aware that they should offer a consistent music offer, as people then know what to expect when visiting the nightclub, on the other hand club visitors like to be informed about what kind of music will be played. However, visitors argue that there are two types of main reasons to go to a nightclub, as it is to socialize with their friends or for good music (or both), and whenever they are not enjoying the music, they will still enjoy the evening because of their friends, illustrating that it is sort of interdependent. This part will be further explained in the paragraph of social value. Furthermore, club managers argue that people from Rotterdam are quite 'superficial', and therefore rather like 'simple' music and 'simple' events:

They don't need much, I think. You then try to, at least, we then try to educate them to some extent. In quotation marks though. Occasionally a DJ in Annabel also just plays some Amapiano, or something like that, which a lot of people, I think, who come into Annabel wouldn't otherwise be exposed to (club manager 1, male, 32 years old).

This is also linked to aspects of economic value, which will be discussed later. As visiting nightclubs, for many visitors, serves for the exploration of new music, it also serves for the exploration for new art in general, in terms of decoration, new spaces, new events, new concepts or new deejays, for example. Fashion influences also play a role in this exploration, as people feel more likely to wear extravagant type of clothing and are often inspired by others to do so as well. Furthermore, it is also seen as a motivation for clubbing in general: getting dressed and going out. Another big aspect that relates to music and art in nightlife, is the role of trends, hypes, and developments, as people speak about the development of music genres over the past few years, as well as new trends and hypes that are currently visible in nightlife: “The music is also now, in terms of entertainment music, the club music is very much developing now. For this new generation (visitor 3, male, 27 years old)”. Apart from musical developments, there is spoken a lot about the new generation in nightlife, in which most of the visitors experience people to be very young in nightclubs right now. These developments are more thoroughly described by club managers, as they have been in their role for multiple years, and therefore have followed these developments very closely.

4.2 Economic value

During the interviews conducted with club managers and club visitors in Rotterdam, the economic value of the nightlife came across very frequently and therefore is a significant theme. Both club managers and club visitors expressed their perspectives on this aspect. The theoretical framework employed in this study emphasizes the concept of valuing as a dynamic process. Understanding how nightlife is valued necessitates an exploration of the dynamic nature of this process (van der Hoeven et al., 2022). It became evident that economic value holds different meanings for club managers compared to club visitors, highlighting the varying perspectives within the nightlife ecosystem. On the one hand, for club managers, economic value is intricately linked to the financial aspects of running a nightclub. It encompasses considerations such as profit, promotion, and loans. Club managers rather view economic value through the lens of their business, focusing on factors that contribute to the financial success of the nightclub. On the other hand, club visitors perceive economic value in a different light. For them, it relates to the perceived worth and benefits they derive from their experiences in the nightlife scene. Factors such as ticket pricing, pricing of drinks, and the overall affordability or expensiveness of the night out play a big role in shaping their perception of economic value.

Given these differences in value, the most important category in regard to economic value is the expensiveness or affordability of the nightlife in general. From a club managers perspective, the nightclub should have enough people that want to visit the nightclub, but also about making it affordable for the visitor:

Yes, so especially that enough people come. So, if we're going to charge 20 euros at the door, then we know there's just not going to be 1200 people coming. Because that's just too much money. You have quite a lot of regular visitors who come here, not every week, but every other week or so. If you must pay 15 or 20 euros every time, then at a certain moment it will go fast, because they are all students of course (club manager 1, male, 32 years old).

This also refers to the subtheme of profit, which is also part of economic value. Expensiveness and profit are often used in relation to the nightlife situation after COVID-19. As the theory made clear that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on nightlife in general, most of the visitors mention this impact in the form of increasing prices, especially when it comes to ticket pricing for nightlife events and drinks in nightclubs. This is confirmed by club managers, who agree on the fact that they had to catch up with the big losses they faced during the pandemic: “And after COVID, it’s just, this is what we’re doing. Making money (club manager 2, male, 34 years old).” Gaining profit for the nightclub is also dependent on the fee of event organizers, which often means that the nightclub itself gets the bar profit, and the event organizer gets the profit that is made by the tickets that are sold: “In the essence, the deal is very simple. If an external party is here, they get the ticket sales, and we get the bar revenue (club manager 1, male, 32 years old).” Some nightclubs also rather focus on their own club nights, as this means they don’t have to share the revenue with the event organization. However, some strong concepts/events tend to get more people to the club, which is also profitable in terms of selling more drinks, for example. As people frequently discuss the expensiveness or affordability of Rotterdam’s nightlife, they also argue that even though it might be more expensive, they are still willing to go. This, however, is dependent on what kind of party it is, as most of the respondents are willing to pay more for festivals, as well as club nights that are more extensive, in terms of decoration and line-up:

I was at Cloud 8 the other night, which I think was 27 euros. For a club night, I think that's really too much. But I think that now with all the high prices, you can ask 15 euros max in a Rotterdam club. And for those 15 euros, I expect something special to happen (visitor 3, male, 27 years old).

Most respondents state to be more selective due to the affordability of Rotterdam’s nightlife, and therefore argue that more than 15 euros for a nightclub event, is too expensive, which results in not attending the event or finding a substitute.

4.3 Social value

Another significant theme that was expressed in different kinds of ways through the interview data, is the social value of the nightlife in Rotterdam. This theme describes the significance of socializing in general, with friends as well as new people, the feeling of connectedness with others, having fun, a safe environment, identity development, and more. Most prominently discussed was the urge to get know new people in nightlife and socializing with new people:

It's just to get to know people. I always really enjoy that. And of course, if you're single, to kind of see how you're in the market. It's good for your self-confidence. I enjoy dancing, I enjoy socializing. I really want to quit smoking, but still, I always like going out as well. Smoking a cigarette with people and chatting. About all the standard conversations, how are you, what do you do for work. I really enjoy those moments (visitor 1, female, 20 years old).

Getting to know new people is one of the most frequently mentioned motivations to visit nightclubs. However, a lot of visitors also rather enjoy socializing with their own friends; the one they joined the party with as well as catching up with friends that they meet there. As pointed out in the paragraph about cultural value, socializing (with friends as well as strangers) and good music are the most important reasons to visit a nightclub, and are also dependent on each other: “Sometimes you visit a party, because your friend really wants to go there, or your friends are there. And the other party you might go, because you really like it for the music (visitor 3, male, 27 years old)”. Club managers argue that visitors come to visit their club just to have fun, get to know people, dance, and enjoy the music, which is confirmed by most visitors as their main motivation(s), which will be more elaborately discussed in the section about motivations for visiting nightclubs.

4.3.1 Safety & policy

Safety is an important part of social value, and therefore prominently discussed in the interview data. Safety is expressed in different kinds of ways, as club managers tend to focus on safety in terms of the door policy or ID-check, whereas visitors speak about an (un)safe environment within or outside of a nightclub, pointing out inappropriate situations and aggressive people that they have come across while visiting nightlife in Rotterdam. Club managers argue that door policy often has to do with rejecting people whenever they are too drunk or do not live up to the dress code of the club. Inclusivity plays a big role in this process, which will be elaborated more extensively in the paragraph designated to this theme. Furthermore, club managers state that people that transgress the rules from a nightclub, will be expelled: “On paper, everyone is welcome. But it's zero tolerance the moment you break the rules (club manager 2, male, 34 years old).” Another important connection that is extracted from the data is safety in regard to the LGBTQ+ community, as some respondents argue

that there should be places in which people from this community should feel safe, as this is not the case at any nightclub. This, among other things, has to do with the people that organize the event and what kinds of values they think are important to extract with their event or nightclub:

When you walk into Poing, for example, you see this whole list of what they stand for. You know, that they say "absolutely no racism, no transphobia," whatever. And I think that's something that's incredibly important. Because when I go to a party where I know it's organized by people who aren't into that at all, I feel less safe automatically (visitor 4, female, 22 years old).

This connects to the theory, in which according to Koren (2023), door policies can enhance a sense of community and create a unique experience, especially in queer-oriented clubs (Koren, 2023).

Furthermore, aggression is an important theme when it comes to nightlife and the feeling of a safe environment. Aggression in nightlife is often linked to the new, younger generation that is visiting nightclubs after COVID-19, as they are often described to not know 'the unwritten rules' of going out to a nightclub. Therefore, people tend to describe the people in nightlife after COVID-19 to be more aggressive: "I do think the younger crowd that also goes out now, behave a little bit more selfish or aggressive (visitor 6, female, 24 years old)." Club managers confirm this notion. One of the club managers stated:

I think a lot of kids 18, 19, 20 just haven't been out or have been out very little, they just need to be re-educated. You just see... Those first few months it was really bad. A lot of people puking and drinking way too much. It's like going to a school party, every time. In the beginning, we saw bottles of booze everywhere on the parking lot: wine, Bacardi, Passoa, whatever. So those kids really need to be educated (club manager 1, male, 32 years old).

As this illustrates how young people tend to behave in nightlife, it is often an explanation for the reason a lot of nightclubs decided to increase the age limit to 21+ or 23+, as they do not want people to attend the nightclub that make it an unpleasant environment to be in, as well as they do not want people to misbehave, according to club managers. This connects to the needs of visitors to be in a safe environment when going out, and also the motivations to not attend a nightclub. This will be further elaborated in the section about motivations.

In contrast to unsafe situations, frequent visitors of nightlife argue that visiting nightlife very often creates the feeling of 'home', as they get familiar with people that work in nightlife, such as security guards and people that work in the nightclub, as well as people that visit nightlife often too:

I think, at some point, if you just go out in Rotterdam often, you just know people. And then you know the security guards. And because of that I always have the feeling of ‘if something happens now, it's okay’ (visitor 4, female, 22 years old).

This feeling of home is also a motivation to attend a nightclub, in combination with the accessibility of a nightclub. Nightclubs generally like to be accessible to different types of people, as stated by club managers.

4.3.2 Identity development

Another important subtheme of social value that emerged from the data, is the development of their identity that people have faced throughout the years of going out and attending nightclubs. This topic has also been discussed in the theoretical framework, pointing out identity development in regard to live music venues. The data showed that the identity development of young people in regard to nightlife, is different to identity development for live music venues. In this case, this theme describes the journey that people faced through visiting Rotterdam’s nightlife, and how many experiences in nightlife have shaped certain aspects of their lives. Statements made about identity development in the interviews, often have to do with growing older in general. Visitors frequently describe they are aware of getting older and how this affects the way they experience nightlife. When they were younger, nightlife used to be more exciting in a sense of that it was new, and they had not seen it before. It was usually kind of ‘cool’ to belong to the older people that went out to nightclubs:

It all started with me working in the hospitality industry and all my colleagues going to nightclubs. They were also a bit older, so we really enjoyed going out with them. We all really liked those guys too, so we liked to go out with them. And what was the reason? I don't really know. I think the reason was to be a little rebellious. Because of course, all that was not allowed. And then we went out until very late. Where you just had to go back to school the next day, and all that (visitor 7, female, 24 years old).

Growing older is often mentioned by visitors, as well as the consequences that growing older has in regard to nightlife. It makes people more selective in what nightclubs and what types of events they want to visit, what kind of music they want to hear, and what kind of audience they want to surround themselves with. Furthermore, they got more aware of the consumption of alcohol, in terms of being more aware of their limit and being more selective about when they will be having a drink, considering feeling hungover the next day. A quote from the data that illustrates being more selective:

I think the biggest difference is that now I know better which parties I really want to go to. It used to really be like, ‘we're going everywhere’, but now I kind of know like, okay, that's not my crowd, or something (visitor 6, female, 24 years old).

Moreover, visitors tend to be more aware of the way they behave in nightclubs and more aware of the behavior of others:

When I used to be thirteen in Thalia, I'd be more likely to go on stage and dance crazy than I am now. And I also feel like people are paying attention more now. That you must keep your status a little more and can't go barfing in the middle of the club or things like that (visitor 1, female, 20 years old).

Overall, growing older has its consequences for the way visitors behave, and their overall experience and interpretation of nightlife.

4.4 Inclusivity

Inclusivity is a crucial theme in understanding how visitors and club managers perceive the nightlife in Rotterdam. The theme originated, as it was frequently mentioned in the data, when referring to the cultural value of nightlife, but due to its prominence it is regarded as a separate theme. Inclusivity is a very subjective and complex concept, as there are different levels in which inclusivity expresses itself in nightlife, as well as people that interpret the term inclusivity in various types of ways. The types of inclusivity found in the data refer to (target) audiences/sub-cultures, dress code, ethnic backgrounds, gender, generations or age groups, and the LGBTQ+ community.

The theoretical framework already pointed out that existing research has demonstrated that equality is not evenly distributed when it comes to accessing and enjoying urban nightlife. Various forms of exclusion, influenced by factors such as sexuality, gender, income, and race, continue to play a significant role in determining who can participate in nightlife activities and access public spaces during nighttime hours (Acuto et al., 2021).

Inclusivity in regard to age groups refers to the policy nightclubs apply relating to age limits. As described in the previous paragraph, there are certain nightclubs as well as event organizers that increased the age limit to 21+ or 23+. By raising the age limit to 21+ or 23+, these establishments aim to for example create a more age-appropriate environment, enhance safety measures, and offer experiences that are aligned with the preferences and expectations of their target audience, looking from the perspective of club managers. Visitors often argue people to be very young and therefore they think this increased age limit is a positive development. Furthermore, visitors describe the environment to be stricter now in terms of ID-checks and age limits, stating that it was easier to get into a nightclub as a 15- or 16-year-old, back in the days.

As for inclusivity regarding gender in nightlife, respondents often refer to how women are more likely to be admitted to a nightclub rather than a man, especially in group form. Moreover, sometimes events or nightclubs let men pay for entrance and women get in for free or apply a different age limit for men than for women. A quotation from the data that illustrates this matter:

As a boy, you always have something disadvantageous. Women get in everywhere usually. For men, it's different. If you come with a group of 3 or 4, you often don't get in. Nowadays you have to go out with a woman, whereas you come just to score those women, so I find that a bit striking (visitor 3, male, 27 years old).

Club managers argue that there is an equal chance for everyone to enter the club, as long as people are not too drunk or 'acting annoying at the door'.

If someone is too drunk, then you can't enter. Or if you arrive with 20 annoying guys, then you can't enter either. But you want to be there for everybody. We're not very strict on that. But if you arrive in your tracksuit with a cap on, then we can't let you enter (club manager 1, male, 32 years old).

As discussed earlier, inclusivity is a complex term as club managers argue that they are inclusive, in the sense of that everyone is welcome in the nightclub, but they are aware that not everyone feels as welcome as the other:

I can very well imagine that if you're a trans woman that you don't necessarily feel comfortable here. Rotterdam is also actually a somewhat dumb city, in quotation marks. People just aren't there yet, and the venue is so big. Occasionally you just have shitty people inside (club manager 1, male, 32 years old).

Furthermore, visitors argue that clubs and event organizers pay more attention to including more female deejays in their line-ups.

The LGBTQ+ community also originated as a sub-theme of inclusivity in nightlife. As the LGBTQ+ community is a specific target group or sub-culture, there are certain clubs and events organized to offer a safe space to this community: "Because I'm bi myself, I just really have phases where I only date women. Then I really enjoy being in that queer scene. That's why I'm super often at Ferry as well (visitor 4, female, 22 years old)". Additionally, a quote from the data that illustrates the division between LGBTQ+ nightclubs and more general nightclubs is: "I do think you know that at certain places you just have more certain kinds of people. I see the queer community much less likely to go to regular parties (visitor 4, female, 22 years old)". These quotes also refer to the notion that clubs like to be inclusive, but people will still be divided into certain groups, as they have different needs, interests, norms, and values.

The LGBTQ+ community was pointed out explicitly in many interviews, however, there are other groups in society that are targeted by nightclubs, as well as different audiences that like to visit

certain types of nightclubs. This refers to sub-cultures as well as target audiences. Nightclubs often have target audiences, as they target certain types of people with their club nights. On the other hand, visitors belong to a certain sub-culture, and therefore are more likely to visit a nightclub in which their sub-culture is represented:

The culture is just.... It is obviously created by the people walking around there. And then again that also depends on the music, and the DJs and the staff. Yeah, I also think the owners. What kind of people they are. And what kind of space they create. And thus, the culture that can arise there (visitor 5, female, 20 years old).

The term inclusivity is often used in relation to the ethnic background of people in nightlife. The theoretical framework pointed out that the diverse nature of nightclub attendees can cause racial tensions to emerge, reflecting the broader racial dynamics within a city (May & Goldsmith, 2018). Several respondents argue that people from specific ethnic backgrounds are more easily discriminated and treated differently than other people. One of the respondents shares his experience: “Being black is a disadvantage when visiting clubs. You always get looked at from head to toe. Extra searched. Or if anything is going on, people are more likely to think you did it, rather than other people (visitor 3, male, 27 years old)”. Club managers do not point out this matter, when speaking about inclusivity.

As discussed earlier, the dress code of a nightclub is an important consideration for club managers and therefore one of the main reasons people cannot enter certain nightclubs. Most of the respondents think this makes sense, as some clothing is too casual for a nightclub, or some events or nightclubs just have a certain appearance that fits with a certain type of style.

4.5 Motivations for clubbing

Another theme that emerged from the data are ‘motivations for clubbing’, which consists of both positive, neutral, and negative motivations, according to the data from the frequent visitors of nightlife in Rotterdam. In the theory, motivations were categorized into four groups: “personal (intrinsic) motivations, social motivations, artistic motivations and motivations related to the setting or environment of the live music event (Mulder & Hitters, 2021, p. 360)”. The most frequently mentioned motivation for going out is to have fun and for the ‘good vibe’:

Well, mostly the enjoyment. I just really enjoy going there with my friends. Because most of us have busy lives during the day; work, school, and things like that. And if you just go to a club together, it's just fun. And everyone is positive. So mainly to have fun (visitor 8, female, 21 years old).

Club managers generally argue that people visit their nightclub to have fun and enjoy their night, connecting to the theory of Li & Petrick (2005), who argue that excitement is an important motivation of festivals and events (Li & Petrick, 2005). As mentioned before, the exploration of music and other art is also an important motivation for people to go clubbing. Visitors often mention that letting go and forgetting their daily lives for a second is an important motivation, and that good music is important when it comes to visiting nightclubs. Furthermore, a lot of female visitors like to get ready for a night out, in terms of picking an outfit and look for that night. Additionally, visitors argue that in nightlife they can be more expressive when it comes to clothing, connecting to the motivation of cultural exploration (Li & Petrick, 2005). In relation to the motivation of listening to good music in clubs, a few respondents also argue that dancing is their most important motivation to visit nightclubs: “But also that it's a nice setting to drink and dance and listen to music (visitor 7, female, 24 years old)”.

Moreover, another important motivation for people to go out to nightclubs is due to the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs: “But I also just like drinking, too. And at a club it is a bit more normal or more allowed to drink. So, I do think that I really like that as well (visitor 4, female, 22 years old)”. Therefore, visitors also argue that this consumption sometimes leads to situations which would not have occurred if there was no alcohol or drugs involved, which is more prominently a motivation in nightlife, rather than for live music or other events, which is focused on in the theory. The consumption of alcohol and/or drugs also affects the way people interact with each other, according to visitors of nightlife in Rotterdam. In general, visitors describe that it can sometimes lead to aggression and fights, which is argued to be a negative aspect of nightlife in Rotterdam. Aggression is often linked to the younger people that just began with visiting nightlife in Rotterdam, which has been described in the section about safety.

Another disadvantage of nightlife that is frequently described is that places are often very crowded and there are long lines at the door, as well as at the bar:

The lines... Sometimes I really think ‘you just really want to sell out, even though there's just no more room’. First, you wait in a super long line to get in, then you wait very long to get a drink. The Couch is just a super good example of that.... At Superdisco. That's just not normal (visitor 4, female, 22 years old).

Visitors also very frequently mention that nightlife has become too expensive, and that this is sometimes a reason to not attend a nightclub. This has been described in the section of economic value.

4.6 Innovation in nightlife

An important theme that is extracted from the data is ‘innovation in nightlife’, which consists of elements that have to do with the characteristics of the nightlife of Rotterdam, and how club managers and club visitors perceive what kinds of aspects are typical for nightlife in Rotterdam. This theme emerged from interview data that describes a more general view on nightlife, in contrast to the other themes that zoom in on (a) specific aspect(s) of nightlife.

This theme refers to ‘innovation’, as both club managers and frequent visitors argue that Rotterdam sometimes is not innovative or creative at this point of time, when it comes to nightlife practices: “Yeah, in hip-hop stuff, Rotterdam is always pretty good. But just purely when you look at the clubs, it's not really innovative, or anything. Primarily smaller initiatives (club manager 1, male, 32 years old).” Club managers explain that this is partly due to the people that visit Rotterdam’s nightlife. More precisely, club managers argue that innovative or experimental programming generally does not work with people that visit nightlife in Rotterdam. Examples to illustrate this is a club manager from Bird that explains his music taste is more complex and less mainstream than the general music taste of people in Rotterdam: “Because then you just find it very nice yourself, but maybe here is not right audience for that (club manager 3, male, 48 years old)” or “what I always found difficult is that I always want much deeper than the audience wants. That it actually almost always gets a little more ‘flat’ (club manager 3, male, 48 years old)”. All club managers argue people in Rotterdam to be ‘flat’, referring to them as not being appreciative of new or experimental stuff, but rather into mainstream (pop-)music. Club managers as well as visitors often draw the comparison with Amsterdam:

The public opinion, I guess... And especially when you talk to people from Amsterdam, or people from outside the city, is that Rotterdam is kind of a stereotyped urban city now. Or a tacky kind of techno-city. For example, in Amsterdam, when they see a certain lineup, they really say that it is ‘Rotterdam techno’. And the same goes for that urban side. In Rotterdam we are not necessarily very creative. Not very innovative. For 90 percent. You have 10 percent, who do try. But if you're talking about the vast majority, then 90 percent is just flat crap (club manager 2, male, 34 years old).

Club managers argue that sometimes they do want to be innovative and experimental, however, this also affects the profit of a nightclub:

There is a small group that can appreciate innovation. But you are not rewarded for focusing on that. Because the moment you target people who are looking for innovation, as a venue, that's just

a dangerous move. Look, as an event, that's nice. But as a venue, targeting people who are looking for innovation... At some point, you can't keep up (club manager 2, male, 34 years old).

Innovation does not only have to do with experimental and innovative programming, it is also about the general nightlife offer that Rotterdam has. Visitors argue that during weekdays, there is a small range of places to go to during the nighttime. Furthermore, visitors argue that the offer of nightlife is not consistent enough, in terms of events as well as nightclubs to go to. The reference is often made to governmental factors in the city of Rotterdam, as not a lot of venues are permitted to be open during the nighttime. Both visitors and club managers argue that the mayor of Rotterdam and the rules in regard to nightlife are not beneficial for the city of Rotterdam and therefore the nightlife in Rotterdam is not able to grow the way it should:

What I would change? The end times of pubs. If you are really going to preach for the night, then the end times of pubs should be brought forward. Or at least not until three o'clock, because three o'clock is really too late. And also, stop sending nightlife to the outer ring. So, stop saying, 'we have ten more permits, they were in the freezer' and they end up back at Marconi. The center has to be overdeveloped. And you just have to do something there.... You have to give those creative people a place, like Bar once had. You have to give those creative people a place in the center. You shouldn't go outside the center so constantly. You just make downtown a lot more diverse by doing that. Instead of super flat. So, I think those kinds of things give creative people downtown more of an opportunity (club manager 2, male, 34 years old).

This connects to the needs of visitors to have more liveliness in the city centre, as well as more consistency in the nightlife scene. Events and nightclubs are often described to be unpredictable, in the sense of what kinds of people are visiting and how crowded it is going to be. Visitors also frequently discuss inconsistency in the sense of places in Rotterdam disappearing and being replaced with something new, which in some cases, can also be linked to governmental influences:

I feel like, what I hear from a lot of people is that Rotterdam, that because it changes a lot... and because places disappear again and new places arise again, that there is not really a kind of fixed community or so in the places you visit. So, that it can always be a bit indeterminate. And that also because of that... you always have a bit of a random evening, so to speak. You don't really know if it's going to be very busy. It's very unpredictable. And now it's changing again. From which I know, Mono, which is where I come sometimes, and Weelde, those are going to close. So those are also leaving again. And they haven't even been there for a very long time. They've somewhat built up something, and then they have to leave again. And also, the Schieblok, which also consists of Poing, has some kind of renovation plan (visitor 5, female, 20 years old).

Overall, both club managers and visitors argue that there are improvements to be made in the nightlife of Rotterdam. Governmental factors as well as the audiences in Rotterdam's nightlife are important factors that have an effect on how the nightlife of Rotterdam is constructed and how it will develop in the future.

5. Conclusion

This thesis explored how the nightlife of Rotterdam is experienced by club managers and frequent club visitors in regard to social, cultural and economic value. As previous studies have examined social-cultural and economic value creation in regard to (live) music venues, this study exclusively focused on nightlife in Rotterdam and how value is created in terms of economic, social and cultural factors. The research question that was posed for this study is: *'How do club managers and frequent club visitors experience the economic and social-cultural value of the nightlife in Rotterdam?'*. The theoretical framework served as a review of the existing theory on this topic and through in-depth interviews new information was gathered in order to find an answer to this question.

This research consisted of in-depth interviews as well as expert-interviews with frequent club visitors of nightlife in Rotterdam and nightclub managers of clubs in Rotterdam. These interviews generated a lot of useful data in order to answer the research question. The data that was gathered through these interviews were analyzed and translated into several themes that provided the basis of the results. The themes that were extracted from the data are: cultural value, economic value, social value, inclusivity, motivations for clubbing, and innovation in nightlife. These themes all consisted of sub-themes that were crucial for understanding the meaning of the emerged themes.

5.1 Answering the research question

To answer the research question of this study, the results of this study will be summarized and applied to the concepts of the research question as well as interpreted in the light of the theories that have informed this research. Focusing on the experience of economic value of Rotterdam's nightlife through the lens of club managers and club visitors, a lot of differences can be noticed in the way economic value is expressed by both groups. Club managers experience the economic value of nightlife mostly in terms of the financial aspects that have to do with running and programming for a nightclub. Economic aspects that come into play mainly have to do with the profit of the nightclub, loans of people that work in the nightclub, and other factors that contribute to the financial success of the club. Therefore, to club managers, it is very important that enough people visit their nightclub, enough tickets are bought, and enough drinks are sold. To be more specific, enough profit should be made. Club managers often mention that COVID-19 had a big impact in terms of profit, meaning that the focus lies even more on making profit now, than before the pandemic, which is confirmed by Van der Hoeven et al. (2022), who argue that COVID-19 causes great losses in the industry. This relates to the experience of economic value in nightlife for frequent club visitors, as affordability of club nights is often discussed by this group. For club visitors, economic value of nightlife is rather experienced in terms of how expensive a night out is. Club visitors argue that club nights have become more expensive, and mostly discuss economic value in relation to the pricing of tickets and drinks. This makes clear that valuing is a process, and that multiple actors have different values to satisfy different

kinds of interests (van der Hoeven et al., 2022). Furthermore, it relates to social and cultural values being translated into economic value, which is part of Bourdieu's Theory of Capital (Bourdieu, 1977). More specifically, a club manager offers a social and cultural experience to a club visitor and gets economic profit for it in return. Applying Bourdieu's Theory of Capital to nightlife, we can expect that economic value is created by the deliberate actions of club managers in order to successfully convert social and cultural capital into economic profits. Club managers can create the pre-conditions in the nightclub that allow for the emergence of social value.

Social value is much more prominently expressed by club visitors, rather than club managers. As mentioned before, social, and cultural capital can be transformed into revenue (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019). However, social value is often experienced by club visitors in terms of socializing with new people as well as socializing with their own friends. Social value often is related to cultural value, as these often are interdependent on each other or mentioned in combination with each other, for example the combination of socializing with friends and exploring and listening to good music. Additionally, both club managers as well as club visitors experience social value of nightlife in terms of safety and policy. It is essential for club managers to create the pre-conditions in the nightclub in order to allow for the emergence of social value. For club managers, this mainly expresses itself in ID-check and rules and policy at the entrance of the nightclub. It is important to highlight is that inclusivity plays a big role in this process. Especially when it comes to the LGBTQ+ community, as door policies at these kinds of nightclubs can enhance a sense of community and create a unique experience, especially in queer-oriented clubs (Koren, 2023). Furthermore, aggression is something that leads to an unsafe environment, for club visitors, and is often linked to the new generation that visits the nightlife in Rotterdam, by both club managers and club visitors. Moreover, social value can be explained through the identity development of club visitors, as club visitors often have become more aware of their behavior in regard to nightlife over the past years, describing to be more selective of which event or nightclub they want to go to, or which audience they want to surround themselves with. In addition, they describe to be more aware of alcohol consumption and the frequency of going to a nightclub. This process of identity development for nightlife is different from the theory that focused on identity development in live music venues (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019). This is because nightclubs have characteristics that significantly differ from live music venues, and therefore, not all theory from live music venues can be applied to nightlife. This will be further discussed in the discussion.

Cultural value is mainly experienced by club managers and club visitors through sub-cultures in nightlife, and how certain venues serve for specific sub-cultures in nightlife. On the one hand, club managers describe that everyone is welcome, but they are aware that at their nightclub, some people might feel more welcome due to the sub-culture it speaks to. Club visitors also argue how specific nightclubs serve for a specific audience. Furthermore, cultural value is experienced through music, which was found to be an important cultural aspect in the theory, confirmed by both club managers as

club visitors. Visitors argue that listening to music is one of the main reasons to visit a nightclub, as well as exploring new music genres. Club managers want to offer a consistent program when it comes to music and think that nightclub visitors in Rotterdam are mostly into ‘simple’ music and are frequently argued to be ‘flat’. Additionally, cultural value is experienced through fashion and expression through clothing, by club visitors. Moreover, several trends, hypes and developments are highlighted by both club managers as visitors, when speaking about cultural value; this refers to musical developments and new generation(s) in nightlife, which are both noticed by club managers as well as club visitors.

The most important cultural value is experienced by both club managers as club visitors through various definitions of ‘inclusivity’. Inclusivity therefore emerged as a separate theme, and refers to inclusivity in regard to (target) audiences/sub-cultures, dress code, ethnic backgrounds, gender, generations or age groups, and the LGBTQ+ community. The extent of inclusivity is often argued by both club managers and club visitors. Club managers generally argue that everyone is welcome in their nightclub, however, maybe not everyone feels welcome, due to the audience that the nightclub attracts. On the other hand, club visitors often relate nightclubs to certain audiences or sub-cultures in nightlife, which has been discussed in the previous paragraph. Another important aspect of cultural value has to do with the (exploration of) music and music genres, which is an important motivation for visitors to go to a nightclub, and for club managers, this expresses itself in the programming of DJ’s and offer a consistent offer of music. This also differs from the theory of live music venues, as an important cultural value for live music venues is the opportunity for talent development (Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019), This appears to be less so for nightclubs, as club managers generally argue that it is important to program experienced DJ’s or artists that attract a lot of people to go to their nightclub, which refers back to profit being their main focus, i.e., economic value. This is also in line with the statements made by club managers about innovation in nightlife. As the audience of Rotterdam’s nightlife is described to be ‘flat’, club managers generally argue that being creative, innovative, or experimental affects the profit of nightclub, as the audience in Rotterdam is not big enough for that type of programming. Finally, innovation in nightlife is often constrained by restrictive municipal regulations which is argued by both club managers as well as club visitors to be a disadvantage of the nightlife of Rotterdam.

5.2 Discussion

This study has provided new and relevant information for the nightlife scene of Rotterdam. Since previous studies focused on the economic and social-cultural value of live music venues, this study contributed to more knowledge about the nightlife scene and how value is created with the nightlife scene, focusing on both perspectives from the people that visit the nightlife as people that organize it. This thesis is therefore relevant for researchers that want to further research the value

creation in nightlife of other cities. The existing theory, which is discussed in the theoretical framework, has been helpful for generally understanding the process of valuing (van der Hoeven et al., 2022), how value is captured (Fischer, 2011), and how social-cultural and economic value is created from different points of view and in different settings, mainly in live music venues (van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019). This study rather zoomed in on nightlife and how it is valued, which therefore is a contribution to this existing theory. Furthermore, the theory helped in creating an understanding for what kinds of motivations people have to visit events (Li & Petrick, 2005; Mulder & Hitters, 2021), which were partly similar to the motivations found in this study, however, additional motivations were found that are exclusively applicable to nightlife. Existing theory on exclusion in nightlife (May & Goldsmith, 2018; Nofre, 2021) was confirmed by participants of this study, however, new information was also gathered in regard to the topic on inclusivity, which was found to be a significant theme in nightlife, showing the complexity of this theme and how it manifests itself in nightlife practices. Also, this study found new information on how the nightlife of Rotterdam could be innovated and what kinds of factors constrain the innovation of the nightlife in the city.

The existing theory led to an initial operationalization and the creation of codes that were used to apply to the data. The themes that emerged from this data confirmed theoretical approaches, yet also delivered new insights. This study contributed to the existing theory, in creating a more in-depth knowledge of value creation specifically in the nightlife scene, as other theories rather focused on festivals, concerts and live music venues (Mulder & Hitters, 2021; Van der Hoeven et al., 2021; Van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019; Whiting, 2021). Besides that, it illustrates what the nightlife of Rotterdam is composed of and on the other hand, the limitations that the nightlife of this city has. When starting this research, it became clear that nightlife is only rarely a topic of serious academic research, making it even more relevant to research. As the nightlife sector is very dynamic and therefore has always something going on, it is important to study this sector in its uniqueness. Therefore, the nightlife scene should be receiving more attention in the academic field. This study offers a research design that can be implemented to the nightlife of other cities as well, and a starting point for future research, which is discussed in the next paragraph.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Even though this research revealed valuable new insights and information, there are also limitations to this research. Firstly, thematic analysis tends to be subjective and therefore sometimes is less reliable, as it enables a lot of room for interpretation for the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher of this study visits the nightlife of Rotterdam very frequently. As she is into nightlife and its practices, her experiences with the nightlife of Rotterdam might lead to some topics being more prominently discussed in this study. Furthermore, this study has been conducted within a specific timeframe, and therefore the findings reflect the experiences and perceptions of the participants at this

point of time. Another limitation of the data is that the sample could be more diverse, (i.e., older and younger people than the current participants, more diversity in ethnicity and gender) and a larger sample of participants could be interviewed, in order to gain a broader – and arguably more generalizable - understanding of the different sub-cultures in nightlife and what their process of valuing looks like in regard to the nightlife scene. Also, the nightlife scene is very dynamic and subject to change, these findings may not have captured developments that happened after the phase of data collection.

This study offers room for future research in regard to value creation in nightlife. A suggestion for future research could be a comparative study on how social-cultural and economic value is created in different cities, which can contribute to a better understanding of the factors that help to create value in nightlife settings. Furthermore, as the nightlife scene is very dynamic and changes overtime, a longitudinal study can be executed to see how the nightlife scene in Rotterdam evolves over time, in order to extract challenges and opportunities for value creation in nightlife. Finally, this study can also be applied to other parts of the creative industry, instead of nightlife, to see how value is created within those specific areas of the industry.

Appendices

Appendix A: Topic list expert interviews

Personal information

1. *What is your name?*
2. *What is your age?*
3. *Where do you live?*

About the job / personal preference

4. *What is your job title?*
5. *What are your main responsibilities for this venue?*
6. *What does a day with your job look like?*
7. *How did you get in touch with nightlife and working in nightlife?*
8. *Do you visit (other) nightclubs in Rotterdam often? If yes – which ones and why?*

About the nightclub

9. *What are the most important characteristics of your nightclub?*
10. *What are the most important developments within this nightclub, looking at the past few years?*
11. *What are the most important challenges and developments that you have faced throughout the years?*
12. *How do you think your nightclub contributes to the value of the city of Rotterdam and the people that live here?*

Social-cultural value

13. *What are the most important values that you want to convey with this nightclub?*
14. *What value do you want to give to people?*
15. *What are the most important music genres that fit with your nightclub?*
16. *Why did you make the decision for going in that direction?*
17. *Would you say there is much room for talent development in this nightclub?*
18. *Does this nightclub have a policy at the door? What does it say? How do you instruct people at the door?*
19. *How would you describe the level of inclusivity in this nightclub? Do you let all people enter?*
20. *Do you think nightlife in Rotterdam – in general – is inclusive?*
21. *What kind of sub-culture does your club speak to, do you think?*
22. *What do you think are the most important motivations for people to visit your nightclub?*

Economic value

23. *Have you created a value proposition for this nightclub? / What is the value proposition of this nightclub?*
24. *What are the most important aspects that you take into consideration when booking event organizations or DJ's?*
25. *How do you decide on ticket pricing for this nightclub? What kind of factors do you have to consider when doing this?*
26. *What are the most important economic considerations that you must take into account for this club?*
27. *What are the most important challenges that you face regarding economic value/economic aspects?*
28. *Would you say the economic situation is different after COVID-19?*

About nightlife in Rotterdam

29. *How would you describe the nightlife in Rotterdam? What do you think is typical for the nightlife in Rotterdam?*
30. *How would you describe the people that visit nightlife venues in Rotterdam (in general)?*
31. *How would you describe the people that visit your club?*
32. *How do you think this nightclub contributes to the nightlife in Rotterdam?*
33. *How would you describe nightlife before and after COVID-19?*
34. *What would you change about nightlife in Rotterdam?*

Future view

35. *How do you expect your habits in nightlife will change in the future? (e.g., the frequency or the change in venue)*
36. *How do you expect the nightlife itself in Rotterdam will develop these next few years?*
37. *How do you think next generations will experience nightlife in Rotterdam?*

38. *Is there anything else that might be valuable to add to this interview?*

Appendix B: Topic list visitor interviews

Personal information

1. *What is your name?*
2. *What is your age?*
3. *Where do you live?*
4. *What is your ethnic background?*

Past in nightlife

5. *At what age did you start visiting nightclub(s)?*
6. *Where did you start visiting nightclubs? (city/area)*
7. *What was your most frequent visited nightclub at that time?*
8. *What was your main motivation for visiting a nightclub at that time?*
9. *What is your most valuable experience when looking back at visiting nightclubs back then?*
10. *If you compare your experience with nightclubs then to your experience now, are there many big differences/similarities?*
11. *How has your perception on going out changed the past years?*

Going out now & motives for attending nightclubs in Rotterdam

12. *What is your most frequent visited nightclub at this point of time? If you don't have any, what type of event do you most frequently visit [e.g., music genre];*
13. *What genre of music do you prefer to hear in a nightclub?*
14. *How often do you go to a nightclub per week?*
15. *What is your most important motive for attending a nightclub? And why?*
16. *What are other motivations for you to frequently visit a nightclub?*
17. *How do you think nightlife has changed throughout the year(s) that you are frequently going out in? What is the most important difference?*
18. *What has stayed the same throughout the years in regard to nightlife in Rotterdam?*
19. *To what extent are the values of an organization or venue important to you when visiting a nightclub?*
20. *How do you think nightlife has changed after COVID-19?*
21. *What would you change about nightlife in Rotterdam?*

Motives for not attending nightclubs

22. *What would be (a) disadvantage(s) for visiting nightclub(s) in Rotterdam? Why?*
23. *Do your motives to attend a nightclub level up to this/these disadvantage(s)? Why?*

Social value

24. *To what extent is socializing with other people important to you when visiting nightclubs?*
25. *Does going out enhance your feeling of connectedness and unity with other people? Why (not)?*
26. *In general, would you say that social values are important to you when visiting nightclubs?*
27. *Do you think an organization or venue can do something to enhance this social value?*

Cultural value

28. *To what extent is the music that plays at a nightclub important to you?*
29. *Which role has going out played in your development of musical taste?*
30. *Do you experience cultural differences between the different nightclubs in Rotterdam?*
 - a. *How would you describe that?*
31. *Do you think an inclusive atmosphere is an important characteristic of a nightclub you like to visit?*
 - a. *Why (not)?*
32. *Would you state that nightlife in Rotterdam is inclusive? Why (not)?*
33. *Does clubbing play a role in your development of fashion sense?*
34. *In general, would you say that cultural values are important to you when visiting nightclubs?*

Economic value

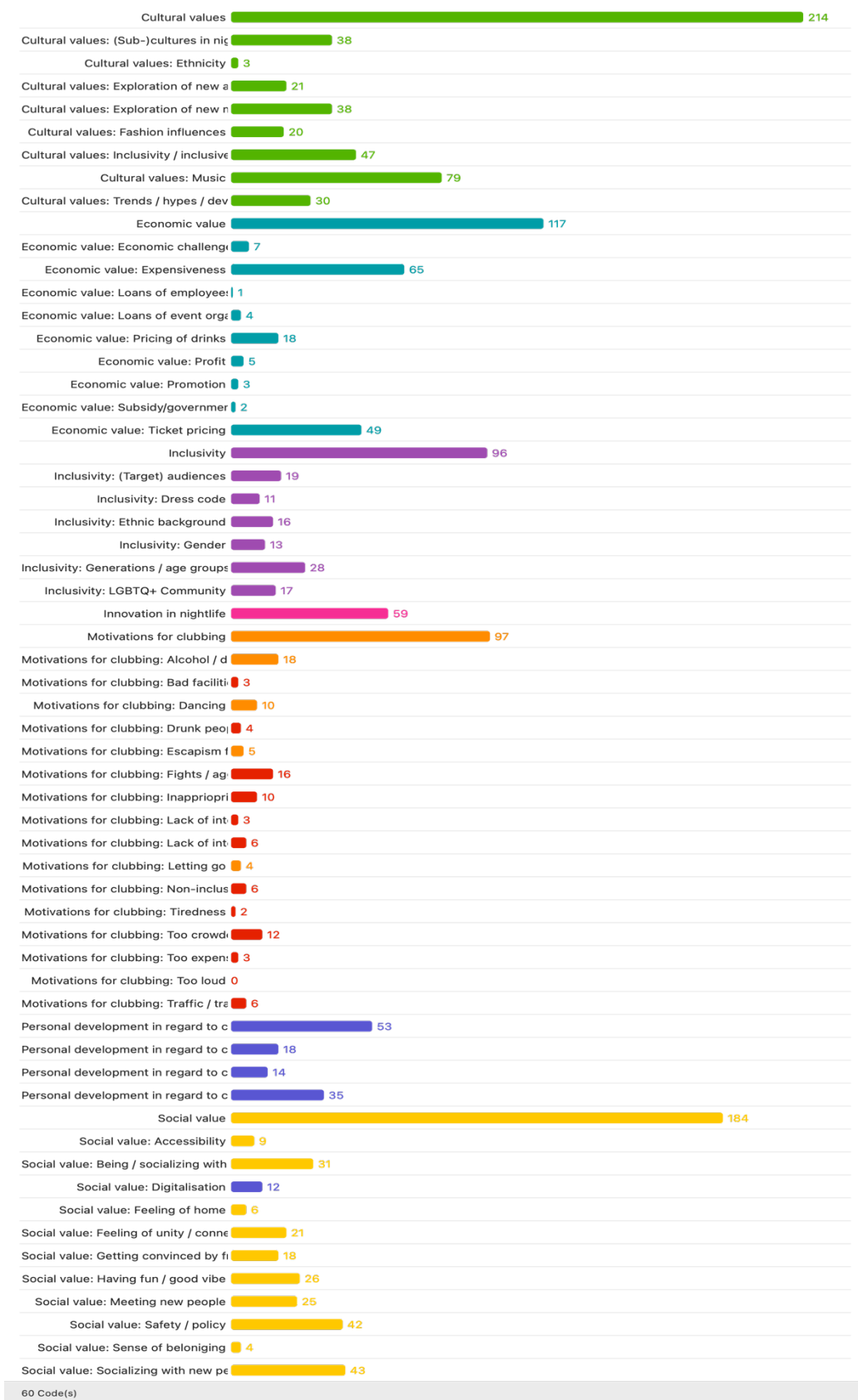
35. *How important is the pricing of a ticket for a nightlife event to you?*
36. *How do you usually find out about an event you like to go to?*
37. *What do you expect to be included in a ticket price when you buy one for a nightlife event?*
(e.g., what kinds of services from the venue)
38. *How has ticket pricing changed if you look back at the previous couple of years?*
39. *Do economic considerations stop you from going to certain nightclub events? (e.g., some services from the nightclub are too expensive, could be a ticket or drinks)*
40. *Would you buy a resold ticket that is more expensive than the actual price if an event was sold-out, but you would really like to go?*

Future view on nightlife

41. *How do you expect your habits in nightlife will change in the future? (e.g., the frequency or the change in venue)*
42. *How do you expect the nightlife itself in Rotterdam will develop these next few years?*
43. *How do you think next generations will experience nightlife in Rotterdam?*

44. Is there anything else that might be valuable to add to this interview?

Appendix C: Coding overview Atlas.ti



Appendix D: Coding frame

Category	Sub-category	Illustrative quote
1: Cultural value	<i>(Sub-)cultures in nightlife</i>	“Annabel is very student. Ski-Hut is very student. Coconuts is very student. Then you have Inul8, Café in the City, Oysterclub. I think a little more for a little arrogant people. They just want to be seen. Cornelis too, by the way. Show a little bit how handsome you are. How much money you have. Status. Just very much so. And then you have Villa Thalia, for example. Then again, I think for a little bit of immigrants. A bit Moroccan, Turkish. Also, girls who fall for those types.”
	<i>Exploration of new art</i>	“But besides that, I like going to Bird. Just certain parties that are just not really tied to one genre, actually. I've seen everything so to speak. So, I like to see some variation. Where there is a line. And the new trends, there's a lot of them coming up again, of course.”
	<i>Exploration of new music (genres)</i>	“Yeah, I think a lot of people have this now, but I think I started listening more afro because of going out, 100%.”
	<i>Fashion influences</i>	“But now it's kind of a noncha. I sometimes regret that I would have to go to a Cafe in the City then.... When I feel like putting on heels and a dress for once. And throw my hair in a big curl. At Munch, it's also true that everyone does their best. But in a noncha way. Then they do come all pretty made up with pretty hair. Or they have spent a long time on their appearance. Very tight bangs or a ponytail. And a little makeup and oversized pants or something. But not really heels or anything. But that's exactly what I like about going out. Getting ready.”
	<i>Inclusivity/inclusive atmosphere</i>	“The main thing is that we just want to be an approachable place for everyone and for everyone to feel welcome and at home here.”
	<i>Music</i>	“I look at where it is, and what kind of music is there. That's the only thing really.”
	<i>Trends/hypes/developments</i>	“There is a new generation that didn't actually have the beginnings of their nightlife. They didn't get into it. It was just there all of a sudden. Like I said, with me it started slowly with school parties. Then you'd go somewhere once. I had a period of probably three, four years when you were really going out. And they didn't have that. They just ... You weren't allowed to go out and now you are. So which means they were also going out a lot less.”
2: Economic value	<i>Economic challenges</i>	“But that was also a money thing. I have to say very honestly. Because sometimes I couldn't necessarily pay DJs, my mission was to just make good DJs then.”
	<i>Expensiveness/affordability</i>	“Well, that everything has become more expensive, of course. And that you really have to pay entrance or guest list everywhere these days. To my feeling, that

		wasn't there before. You just got in. Now you actually always pay 10 or 15 euros to get in in the first place.”
	<i>Loans of event organizers</i>	“Yes, basically the deal is very simple. If an outside party is here, they get the ticket sales and we get the bar revenue.”
	<i>Pricing of drinks</i>	“But drinks have also become more expensive. Everything actually just got more expensive. So that also makes sense. Yeah, everything really just got more expensive.”
	<i>Profit</i>	“And after COVID, It's just, we're doing this. Making money.”
	<i>Ticket pricing</i>	“I was at Cloud 8 the other night, which I think was 27 euros. For a club night, I think that's really too much. But I think that now with all the high prices, you can ask 15 euros max in a Rotterdam club. And for those 15 euros, I expect something special to happen.”
3: Social value	<i>Accessibility</i>	“Approachability. Accessibility. And. Fun. I think those are them.”
	<i>Being/socializing with friends</i>	“But one party you go to more because you go there for your friends. And the other party you tend to go to more because you really like it for the music.”
	<i>Feeling of home</i>	“You obviously know a lot of people now. I do have more often that I recognize the people, so also the guards and the people behind the bar and so on, because I go to the same places regularly now. So you kind of get, you already feel more at home.”
	<i>Feeling of connectedness/unity</i>	“There's just something really beautiful about being in a club with a lot of people. And then just dancing around. There's something magical about that.”
	<i>Getting convinced by friends</i>	“I am sometimes persuaded by my friends to be social and go along anyway.”
	<i>Having fun/good vibe</i>	“But in general, everyone is very happy and cheerful. And feel like chatting with each other.”
	<i>Meeting new people</i>	“I think that way I just got a little more comfortable with.... Just... Being with new people or something. Because maybe before that I was a little more uncomfortable socially.”
	<i>Socializing with new people</i>	“I get a lot of energy from other people. Chatting and laughing with them and things like that.”
	<i>Safety/policy</i>	“Because when I come to a party where I know it's organized by people who aren't involved in that at all, I feel less safe automatically.”

	<i>Identity development</i>	“Yes, you are a little more alert about your own behavior.”
4: Inclusivity	<i>Target audiences</i>	“It has to be something different from what we already have. And has to reach a different audience than the one we already reach ourselves.”
	<i>Dress code</i>	“Yes, I personally always find it very unfair when, for example, certain people don't get in because they have a certain style of clothing. I understand that if you're wearing sweatpants that's not possible. But for example at Munch, guys aren't allowed a purse either.”
	<i>Ethnic background</i>	“Sometimes I still find that at certain clubs, especially on Stadhuisplein, people still make a fuss if you come from a certain background. Because they already have a kind of prejudice of, oh no, you're not allowed in.”
	<i>Gender</i>	“As a boy, you always have something disadvantageous. Women get in everywhere usually. For men, it's different. If you come with a group of 3 or 4, you often don't get in. Nowadays you have to go out with a woman, whereas you come just to score those women, so I find that a bit striking.”
	<i>Generations/age groups</i>	“Yes, it's much younger now. I know I've gotten a little older myself. But it's also... Yeah, everybody feels like they have some catching up to do. So the 17, 18, 19-year-olds are really just everywhere, you might notice that too.”
	<i>LGBTQ+ community</i>	“But. I do tend to look for the clubs where those kinds of queer communities, and so on, are welcome.”
5: Motivations for clubbing (positive and negative)	<i>Alcohol/drugs consumption</i>	“I think people also react very differently if alcohol is involved or not.”
	<i>Dancing</i>	“But also that it's a nice setting to drink and dance and listen to music.”
	<i>Escapism from daily life</i>	“Because I think it's just really nice to just completely let go or something. Just not feeling any discomfort or anything. So the physical, with people and dancing.”
	<i>Fights/agression</i>	“Then if you bump into someone, there could be commotion.”
	<i>Inappropriate/unsafe environment</i>	“But Witte de With, if I then go to De Witte Aap or something, for example. Then I get harassed so much.”
	<i>Too crowded/long lines</i>	“The lines... Sometimes I think: you guys just really want to sell out, even though there's just no room left.”
	<i>Lack of interesting</i>	“Yes, disadvantages to going out now is mainly that

	<i>events/nightclubs</i>	everything just.... You used to be able to go to a Bird or a Superdisco, then you knew it's packed and that it's going to be fun anyway. Then, of course, something could happen that you didn't like a DJ or something. That was the worst thing that could happen. And now it can just happen that suddenly there is no one at all in that club. You can no longer assume that you're going to have a nice evening. And that used to be guaranteed, so to speak.”
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