Cultural Networks. The value of getting together

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CULTURAL NETWORKS. THE VALUE OF GETTING TOGETHER

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the value of networks for culture, drawing from Organizational Theory literature and the pragmatic approach to values found in Dekker and Morea (2023). Uniquely situated within Cultural Economics, the study addresses the following research question: What is the value of networks for culture, and how do creators organize cultural networks? It delves into sub-questions concerning the justification and institutionalization of cultural activities and values. By studying the case of the Reset! network, a member of the European Networks of Creative and Cultural Organizations that gathers independent cultural and media initiatives, several distinct features of cultural networks were revealed. Firstly, the coordination logic of the cultural network is based on shared ideals and experiences rather than pecuniary considerations. Instead of organizing around a particular art practice, the cultural network organizes around a shared social and political imagination that is embodied in independent practice. Secondly, through discursive practices, the practices of independence are valorized among the members and policymakers. The network is justified through its political value. However, the members recognize other values as more important. For them, the network has value in itself, valuing the connection with the other members and the sense of community. The value of discussions is also recognized. Conversations with other members allow for value discovery and transformation, indicating that values are dynamic, a view that aligns with Dekker and Morea's (2023) perspective. This research contributes to the scholarly field of Cultural Economics by providing a framework for studying cultural networks as a basis for further studies, shedding light on the dynamic nature of values, and revealing the potential role of cultural networks in the process of realizing the values of culture, a role that should be further explored within the literature. This study is largely exploratory, and it was conducted by employing a qualitative method. The main research strategy used was semi-structured interviews, complemented by direct observation and archival data. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis using a mix of inductive and deductive coding.

Keywords: cultural networks, cultural organizations, values, independence, pragmatism

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1. Introduction

The concept of the network can be used to explain just about any contemporary social phenomenon; Castells (2000) goes so far as to argue that we live in a network society. It is, however, the function of networks in the economy that has been especially fascinating for academic scholars (Smith-Doerr & Powell, 2010). From migration to international trade, a wide range of phenomena are said to be shaped by networks. Networks are regarded as advantageous because they grant access to resources and information through links, allow for the rapid and personalized transmission of information, and facilitate referrals (Burt, 1992).

Powell (1990) conceptualized networks as a form of economic organization position between the market and the state, allowing for informal and flexible organizational arrangements based on personal relationships and trust. This way of organizing is especially noticeable in the cultural and creative industries such as film and music that "rely, to a considerable extent, on stable and enduring networks based on loyalties and friendships cemented over time" (Smith-Doerr & Powell, 2010, p. 385).

Sociologist Howard Becker (1984) also recognized networks in his seminal work on *Art Worlds*. The author was less concerned about explaining the economic organization of arts and rather focused on its social aspect. Debunking the romantic myth of the solitary artistic genius, he recognized how, for an artwork to come into being, numerous individuals must collaborate. Art Worlds are thus formed around certain art forms taking the shape of cooperative networks that coordinate their efforts based on established conventions.

Whether one considers the networks in regards to social or economic organization of the arts, it seems that networks matter for culture. However, within the field of Cultural Economics, networks have been scarcely explored, the literature solely addressing "network effects" in the context of multi-sided platforms (Bacache-Beauvallet & Bourreau, 2020) or applying the concept of social networks to defining the creative industries (Potts et al., 2008). It is thus the purpose of this thesis to introduce the peculiar subject of networks to the scholarly field of Cultural Economics from a different perspective, making an inquiry

about the relationship between networks and values. This approach draws upon the literature of scholars such as Dekker and Morea (2023) and Arjo Klamer (2003; 2017; 2021), who are concerned with the way individuals can realize their values through artistic practices, or in other words, realize what matters to them. Of utmost importance for this case is the perspective of Dekker and Morea (2023), who regard the value of arts as realized through social practices. It follows that the values of art cannot be realized in a vacuum but require people to get together. They emphasize how artistic communities, more often than not, operate beyond the governmental or market spheres and take diverse institutional forms, which make the "cultural civil society" (p. vii). These institutional forms are represented in the literature under different names, the most all-encompassing one being the concept of the "artist-run initiative" or ARI (Coffield, 2015), which will be briefly discussed in the literature to provide the reader with an idea of the diverse shapes the cultural civil society can take.

Moreover, Dekker and Morea (2023) argue that realizing values through art is a process that consists of four stages: orientation, imagination, realization, and evaluation, each step emphasizing different actors. Even though they consider the importance of peer-to-peer interaction through artistic circles, from the researcher's understanding, their approach refers more to a localized activity centered around specific practices.

However, authors such as Gielen and Lijster (2017) assert that "the cultural field is increasingly characterized by rhizome-like network structures" (p. 3), recognizing how cultural organizations that operate on a local level have increasingly started to connect transnationally with like-minded organizations to pool information, provide mutual support, and share and exchange knowledge.

This is especially visible in the case of the Networks of Creative and Cultural Organizations funded by the European Commission. As of 2021, 37 such cultural networks connect over 4000 members (European Commission, 2021). Moreover, one can find cultural networks outside of an institutional context. For instance, the *International Community Radio Network* is a non-institutional network that seeks to facilitate the connection and provide support between "like-minded community radios with the shared goal of

establishing a more sustainable and long-term future for the field" (Independent Community Radio Network, n.d., para. 1).

This thesis came about from the assumption that gathering through cultural networks might play an important role in the process of realizing values. Therefore, one believed it was crucial to delve further into this inquiry by applying the pragmatic approach to values found in Dekker and Morea (2023) to Powell's (1990) conceptualization of networks and aiming to answer the following research question: *What is the value of networks for culture and how do creators organize cultural networks?*

To delve deeper into this inquiry, the research is further divided into two sub-questions:

(1) How do cultural networks justify the value of their activities and cultural initiatives?
(2) What central values support the making of cultural networks, and how do they become institutionalized

Given this research's novelty and exploratory nature, a qualitative research method following an inductive approach was considered the most appropriate. A case study was chosen as it allowed for a detailed heuristic understanding of the phenomenon in question. The case of the Reset! network was chosen because it is the newest European cultural network, allowing us to witness the process of valuation before the network's values become institutionalized. Secondly, the network brings together "independent" cultural and media initiatives that arguably fit into the cultural civil society (Dekker & Morea, 2023). Operating outside the governmental and market spheres but taking part in a network co-funded by the European Commission, the actors are put in a highly institutionalized context in which they must prove their legitimacy. This enables an understanding of how actors justify their practices within themselves and the broader public. Worth mentioning is that this thesis follows the pragmatic rationale and considers the network a practice rather than an object. Consequently, the unit of analysis is the network as *social practice*.

Semi-structured interviews were the main strategy employed in this research, of which 22 were conducted between the 26th of April and the 20th of October. For this thesis, 17 members of the network, two rounds of coordinators, and three policymakers were

interviewed. Interviews were complemented by direct observation at the network's annual forum and the analysis of archival secondary data in the form of official documents and web posts. The data was analyzed through the strategy of Thematic analysis employing a mix of deductive and inductive coding, which allowed the analysis of the data through a frame that emphasized actions and values but also allowed for complementary themes to emerge.

This study is valuable as it highlights several important aspects of cultural networks. Firstly, in contrast to Powell's (1990) regard of networks, in cultural networks, exchanges do not occur based on pecuniary gains but rather through exchanging ideas and knowledge. This observation is deemed valuable for researchers who wish to engage in a more in-depth study of the ties and dynamics of a cultural network. Secondly, in a European cultural network, the relationships between the members are less important than it is for them to have a "mutual orientation" (Powell, 1990, p. 303). This is aligned with Dekker and Morea's (2023) perspective that asserts that practices embody values. Thus, once part of the network, participants are assumed to share the same values. Coordination does not necessarily require being acquainted beforehand. Thirdly, the network is formally organized around a shared vision of the social and political world that is attributed to independence rather than around a particular social practice, as in the case of the art circles presented by Dekker and Morea (2023) or around the production of artworks as discussed by Becker (1984). Lastly, the cultural network serves as a platform for matchmaking, coordinating, and creating values through its discursive practices. This occurs at two levels: inside the networks, where the values are shaped, and outside, where they are justified. Sometimes, there is tension between the two levels.

Regarding the values of the network, the political value is regarded as being the most important by the coordinators and the policymakers. In the case of the members, although some recognize it and value it, many consider other values to hold more significance. Instead, they deem the network valuable, cherishing the act of getting together and the sense of community. Moreover, the network can lead to value discovery and transformation through the discussion it sparks between the members. As such, networks can be considered an additional element in the process of realizing values, as discussed by Dekker

and Morea (2023), and therefore represent an important avenue for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Independent Artistic Practice: A Literature Review

The discussion should begin with a simple question: What is an "independent cultural organization"? The term "independent" is recurrently used to point out initiatives that function under a different institutional logic than the one of the state or of the market. They choose to do so either because of necessity or because of wanting to oppose a dominant system, or perhaps both motives are true. The initiatives that share this characteristic are very diverse in their aims and organizational forms (Dekker & Morea, 2023). They can include grassroots organizations, artist collectives, cooperatives, communes, institutions, spaces run by artists, 'independent,' 'alternative,' 'DIY,' and 'not-for-profit' organizations, which can be referred to by the umbrella term "artist-run initiatives" or ARIs (Coffield, 2015).

To the researcher's knowledge, the literature that explicitly uses the notion of independent cultural organizations is scarce. However, one study was found that conducted quantitative research on 1537 textual self-representations of "independent and alternative art spaces from all around the world" (Vorobeva, 2022, p. 419). The author's findings shed light on specific traits that self-titled independent art organizations have in common. Such organizations have a non-commercial quality and are portrayed as operating outside the logic of the market and the influence of state institutions. Focusing on experimentation and innovation, they can re-think conventional art practices, reason why they are thought to have the potential to drive social change (Vorobeva, 2022). Moreover, they endorse collaborative work, foster creativity, and promote the diffusion of knowledge and ideas. Research activities also play an important role in the activities of independent art spaces, being concerned with the role of the arts within society. Independent art spaces often refer to themselves as "platforms" (p. 427) or "incubators" (p. 428) that provide an open space for artists to perform their activities while also providing the necessary equipment and support to facilitate them. Vorobeva (2022) also notices the aim of independent art spaces to create a link between the local community and the global art world, being interested in facilitating "cross-cultural dialogue" (p. 428).

Although not directly employing the term ‘‘independent cultural organizations,” other instances of literature that concern independent endeavors in different cultural fields stress the positioning of independent art practice as relational to the market or the public sector. For example, in the case of the music industry, independent production is regarded as an attempt to decentralize the music industry and, thus, to provide an alternative to the mainstream music business, an attempt that is frequently limited as many initiatives eventually find themselves having to cooperate and integrate with the major labels in order to survive (Hesmondalgh, 1996).

2.1.1. What are ARIs?

One usually encounters the terms “artist-run” or “artist-led” in the context of visual arts (e.g., Sharon, 1979; Coffield, 2015; Schofield, 2021), where they are broadly defined as “anything run by and for the artists” (Coffield, 2015, p. 10). In the case of this thesis, the organizations researched encompass independent radios, media outlets, festivals, and so on. Unlike visual arts, which are part of the “core creative arts,” such organizations are considered part of the “wider cultural industries” (Thorsby, 2008, p. 150). Does that mean that the attributes related to ARIs are still applicable? Schofield (2021) tends to agree. He argues that the term should be expanded to include

> organisations similar in approach, size and scope to existing artist-led examples, but which are not necessarily led by an artist/artist-, but most importantly anyone that identifies as a practitioner, operating mainly in the second economy, that contributes to production to self-organized artistic practices (p. 236).

Moreover, Coffield (2015) recognizes the variety of “forms and structures” (p. 14) that ARIs can encompass, mentioning the likes of Detterer and Nannucci (2012, as cited by Coffield, 2015) who, in their documentation of “Artist-run spaces” refer to organizations such as “ radio station, a couple of magazines, a publisher, consulting services, artists’ networking and live art on the internet, as well as numerous galleries and spaces for contemporary, performance, installation, site-specific, experimental, media, video art, new music, radical architecture and ‘body and sound sculptures” (p. 14). It thus seems that the

organizations researched within this thesis can fit within the artist-run, artist-led framework, and thus, a review of the practices associated with is deemed important.

That being said, Coffield (2015) distances herself from generalizations made by previous studies that place ARIs within strictly divided typologies. She, instead, discusses three ‘‘strands of meaning” (p. 44) found in the literature that regard ARI practices as (1) alternatives, (2) DIY and grassroots practice, and (3) collectives and cooperatives. This approach does not impose any strict categorization that implies ‘‘common features, characteristic or form” (p. 46) but rather offers an account of previous debates and existing notions of values within the practices of the ARIs. Coffield’s (2015) discussion on the ‘‘strands of meaning” offers the reader a guideline, an introduction to the world of ARIs without imposing strict boundaries on the various practices they engage in and their related meanings.

The ARIs are often described as being engaged in *alternative* practices. Alternative practices can be regarded as fundamentally relational; thus, through them, certain lacks, injustices, and concerns can be highlighted and are employed by different generations of artists to address the challenges they face in their related context (Coffield, 2015)

Grassroots and *DIY* represent the second ‘‘strand of meaning” discussed by Coffield (2015). Both terms imply self-initiated action but in slightly different ways (Coffield, 2015). The DIY practice is seen as a style or an ethos, and it refers to an autonomous, self-sufficient practice. It can be regarded as a social and political movement in which artists rebel against the norms and conventions of the cultural mainstream by using lo-fi aesthetics and basic methods and technologies.

The term *grassroots* suggests a bottom-up movement. The term is also relational in regards to ‘‘positioning and scale” (Coffield, 2015, p. 49) in the sense that it directly contrasts top-down approaches. In the context of ARIs, ‘‘grassroots” refers to local and emergent practices, contrasting the ones that exist within already established institutions. They are regarded as central to the art scene and considered a ‘‘more democratic structure for art practices and their social functions, capable of constructing a new, bottom-up, and more just world” (Hanru, 2009 as cited by Coffield, 2015, p. 49). However, the

understanding that grassroots practice focuses solely on contributing to social aims can be constricting as one that implies the instrumentalization of their practice (Potts, 2010).

The idea of the *collective* as an organization was first theorized by Rothschild-Whitt (1979). He defines "collectivist organizations" as "organizations that self-consciously reject the norms of the rational-bureaucracy and identify themselves as alternative institutions" (p. 509). In the context of ARIs, the term "collective" refers to groups of artists who collaborate to produce artworks and share authorship. In the case of ARIs, collective action is not only seen as a structure for creating art but also as an organizational strategy to challenge the myth of the individual (Charnley, 2011).

The term *cooperative* is similarly associated with shared artistic practice but is adopted and interpreted differently. Cooperatives have the purpose "to achieve a better deal, better organization, and better future for its members" (Byrne, 2022, p.2). This is accomplished through intervening in a specific market "in the interests of members and the community of members" (Byrne, 2022, p. 2) with the aim of transforming that marketplace. Byrne (2022) argues that cooperatives operate and sustain themselves by integrating the dualisms between civil society and the market.

2.1.2. The Art World(s) of ARIs

These practices and modes of organization rely on collectivity. For instance, "grassroots" practices are often regarded in the literature as highly localized, community-led organizations linked to participatory forms of art (Crisman, 2022; Zilberstein, 2019). In the case of DIY practices, although the term sometimes suggests individual amateur practice, if the work is to be diffused to a wider audience, the practitioner must rely to some extent on a support system or network (Stratchan, 2007).

Howard Becker (1984) refers to these cooperative networks as "art worlds". Art worlds are sustained by cooperative links that allow for the pooling of the resources necessary for the production of art. The members of an "art world" are able to coordinate their activities by following certain conventions. These conventions are based on shared understandings reflected "in common practice and in frequently used artifacts" (Becker,

1984, p. 34). When a convention is novel and has not been established yet, or is simply not widely acknowledged, individuals who are interested in it and the ones who share their interest act collectively to diffuse the convention. Thus, they can ‘‘make that art world possible and characterize its existence” (p. 67). In other words, they can institutionalize the respective conventions.

Arguably, the individuals who engage in these practices are continuously trying to create new art worlds or change the conventions of the ones in which they are perceived as peripheral. As Becker (2008) argues, ‘‘they might find it necessary, desirable, or useful to join organizations which promote their interests” (p. 67). Thus, having found others who share their understanding of what ‘‘art” is supposed to be, individuals can act collectively. In the case of ARIs, that often happens in the form of networks (Crane, 2015), artist collectives, or co-operatives (Coffield, 2015).

To avoid the theoretical ambiguity of the notion of independent cultural organizations, this section touched upon the concept of artist-run or artist-led initiatives instead. That is, because the terms provide a starting point of reference for the reader to understand a broad variety of organizational forms and practices associated with non-institutionalized art production. These organizational forms and their subsequent practices are rooted in contestation. They emerge and function to oppose and create different realities than the ones provided by the status quo, fitting well within the sphere of “the cultural civil society” introduced by Dekker and Morea (2023), which the authors define as “the collection of social practices in which the arts are practiced, and values are realized, which exists next to markets and public art organizations” (p. vii). The framework they propose allows zooming in on the question of values and practices, which is central to the scope of this research. As such, the following section will provide an overview of the matter of values and their application within this thesis.

2.2. Valuing Practices and Experiences: the worth of “getting together”

The scholarly field of cultural economics is often concerned with explaining what the value of the arts and culture is (Angelini & Castellani, 2019). Many authors in the field

recognize two distinct but interrelated systems of valuation, namely cultural value and economic value. It is, thus, of no surprise that tensions tend to occur in social practice (Hutter & Throsby, 2007). Most authors conceptualize economic value following the logic of neoclassical economics, in which the full depiction of value is attributed to price and market exchange (Abbing, 2008; Hutter & Throsby, 2007). On the other hand, the conceptualization of cultural value differs from author to author. For instance, Throsby (2001) separates cultural value into multiple dimensions such as aesthetic, social, symbolic, and historical, arguing that these dimensions can only be measured according to scales that cannot be translated into pecuniary terms. Hutter and Frey (2005) suggest that cultural value is a socially constructed measure. They argue that "cultural value finds expression through mutual collective judgment" (Hutter & Frey, 2005, p. 36). It is through media such as "audience applause, expert reviews, prizes, or length of text dedicated in print and media" (Hutter & Frey, 2005, p. 36) that this judgment is conveyed. They thus stress the value of "focal points" (p. 36) or "paradigms of excellence" (p. 37) that represent outstanding and unique moments in performances. Such moments allow individuals to coordinate with each other, no matter how their personal tastes may vary, granting them "connection value" (Hutter & Frey, 2005, p. 36).

Dekker (2015) acknowledges the merits and limitations of the two dominant paradigms in cultural economics that inevitably tackle the notion of value, namely "the economy of the arts" (p.310) that approaches the academic field by applying the tools and methods of neoclassical economic theory to the arts and culture sector. As described in the previous paragraph, such a paradigm equates the value of culture with price. The second existing paradigm he refers to is "art and commerce" (Dekker, 2015, p. 310), an approach that enquires about the relative value of art in society considering the relationship arts have had with commerce throughout history. This approach is seen as rather structural, failing to consider different forms of art and not allowing for individual agency (Dekker, 2015).

The author points out that a third perspective has been emerging that could potentially overcome such limitations. He argues for a value-based approach that adopts an understanding of value "beyond price" and emphasizes understanding the "*process* of

valuation" (Dekker, 2015, p. 320) instead. One important dimension of this process entails analyzing "conflicts over competing justifications of value" (Dekker, 2015, p. 319). This new paradigm builds upon the economic theory proposed by Beckert and Aspers (2011) which endorses a subjective theory of value and is concerned with how individuals make decisions when facing uncertainty about quality in markets. As this theory is central to this research it will be extensively dealt with in the following sections.

However, for now, it is worth introducing the three potential avenues for future research proposed by Dekker (2015) as the focus of this study, and the following sections are strongly influenced by his suggestions and are an attempt to bring a valuable contribution to the field of cultural economics by researching the valuation processes in a different mode of economic organization, namely the network. The first suggestion the author makes is looking at "valuation regimes" (p. 322). Through the "valuation regimes" framework, one can analyze the institutional arrangements that structure markets for cultural goods. "Valuation regimes" or "coordination regimes" represent an "adjustment between products, judgment devices, and the consumers" (Karpik, 2010, p. 96) that organize the diffusion of knowledge into markets (Dekker, 2015). In other words, they represent patterns or broader categories of evaluative criteria that have become institutionalized and are used as reference points according to which individuals can justify their values. Secondly, the author points out the relevance of understanding how the coordination of exchange is facilitated by conventions and valuation practices which he argues consist of an important object of study. Here, the researcher is nudged to uncover the values associated with the different "valuation regimes" and the way they interact with one another (Dekker, 2015). Lastly, the intersubjective formation of taste is regarded as a relevant area of research. To put it differently, one ought to analyze how certain forms of art come to be valued within various communities and the dynamic process of valuation over time (Dekker, 2015).

The decision to present all suggestions in the context of this thesis is that from the researcher's point of view, the three are interrelated and they describe different layers of the processes of valuation that inevitably influence one another. Moreover, having at least

a grasp of the other dimensions involved allows both the researcher and the reader to conduct a more thorough analysis. That being said, this thesis is rather concerned with the third area of research suggested by Dekker (2015) as it focuses on the valuation process of cultural networks, meaning that one core question this research aims to answer is: "How do members come to value a cultural network?" The following sub-sections aim to provide possible answers to this question by engaging with literature concerned with valuation processes from two perspectives.

2.2.1. Values and action: The process of valorization

Cultural Economics scholars from the likes of Klamer (2003; 2017) and Dekker and Morea (2023) place values at the center of human conduct, following John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy. This paradigm understands human action as purposive and oriented by values. Thus, if one wishes to understand values, one would have to observe people's actions. The authors provide some helpful tools and observations to do so.

To study the process of valuation, Klamer (2003b) distinguishes between "valuation," "evaluation," and "valorization" (p. 199). In my understanding of the text, valuing means having a positive orientation towards something. For instance, you can value listening to folk music and be inclined to do so without reflecting on the action because you already know that the outcome is favorable. Valuing may sometimes occur spontaneously when one has a strong initial reaction to something. In certain cases, people may be put in a difficult situation in which they have to reflect on their valuation. Say, I have just learned that my favorite folk singer released a new album. I will listen to it without thinking twice, as the artist has never disappointed me in the past. Listening to the lyrics, I find them to be very aggressive towards a marginalized community. In this case, I am faced with having to "re-evaluate" my valuation of that artist, and I might turn to another artist. Finally, Klamer (2003b) discusses the "valorization" process in which people can acquire and embrace new values. Put simply, "valorization" entails the process of learning new values. This can occur, on the one hand, when one finds themselves in a different context where they are unfamiliar with the values. On the other hand, social practices embed values and play an

important role in the expression and performance of identity (Dekker & Morea, 2023). Thus, by observing and interacting with individuals participating in a specific practice, one might find it appealing and "aspire" to participate themselves (Dekker & Morea, 2023, p. 39). To do so, one must learn the values entailed by the practice.

Another important dimension of the valorization process occurs when conflicting values clash. This holds true both at an individual level (Dekker & Morea, 2023) and on an interpersonal level (Klamer, 2003). In such cases, decision-making becomes a difficult task that is facilitated by *deliberation* through "verbal exchanges, persuasion, conversing and reading" (Klamer, 2003, p. 204). He goes on to argue that *talk* "makes the process of valorization possible", that is, the "development, enhancement and strengthening" of particular values (Klamer, 2003, p. 204).

Dekker and Morea (2023) regard valuation as "a process directed by the values which individuals seek to realize" (p. 9). In their view, individuals engage in social practices with the hope of realizing their values, and values serve as guideposts for action; they represent *the reason* why people choose to engage in a practice. The authors recognize that people may not always be conscious of their values, and even once they become aware, these values are not necessarily fixed. That is partly because the meaning attributed to values is dependent on the social and cultural environment. Moreover, individuals may come to an understanding that they have made a mistake and that they deem other values as more important. Consequently, they would change the practices they engage with. In turn, social practices can lead to the discovery of new values. Regarding value discovery, the authors find that "values are discovered in the process of realizing them" (Dekker & Morea, 2023, p. 38), meaning that it is only through the attempt to realize values that people can determine what those values imply. "Value aspiration," which refers to the desire to be the sort of person who participates and enjoys a certain practice, plays an important part in the process.

2.2.2. Realizing the values of art through social practices

Dekker and Morea's (2023) pragmatic approach to values aims to overcome the

frequent instrumentalization of the arts in cultural policies. They argue that the arts are valuable as it facilitates artists and audiences to realize their values. However, as mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, they deem values as dynamic rather than fixed and recognize that realizing the values of the arts is a process. They conceptualize four stages of this process: orientation, imagination, realization, and evaluation.

Value orientation represents the process through which individuals discover the values they aim to realize and the ends of doing so. This process is rather dynamic as one can change their minds and decide to pursue a different value instead and is informed by value "aspiration," which entails that practices embody certain values associated with identity traits that the individual making the choice might strive for.

Imagination is the second step, and it relates to the social process of creating art. Two important elements are put forth here by the authors. Firstly, they introduce the concept of artistic circles, which represent communities that revolve around an artistic practice through which practitioners come together to realize values. Through engaging in conversations and sharing with peers, artistic work gains meaning. Even more, conventions associated with certain art circles grant artists "a language, a medium, a tradition, and also frequently a purpose" (Dekker & Morea, 2023, p. 57). Secondly, the authors recognize that artists' imagination is rarely limited solely to aesthetic possibilities, and it often encompasses an interest in exploring alternative social and political imaginaries.

The third step of the process of realizing values consists of *value realization*. This step is rather focused on how its audience does not merely discover the value of the arts but is active in its co-construction. Dekker and Morea (2023) emphasize how contestation on behalf of audiences can lead to institutions changing their established practices in accordance with their respective values. Lastly, the *evaluation* is concerned with personal reflection.

2.2.3. Valuation and markets

Can one regard economic coordination through the lens of values? To answer this question, one must revisit the discussion on the relationship between economic and

cultural values. It is worth noting beforehand that this perspective takes a different stand on valuation, which is no longer regarded as a process that drives action but as a social phenomenon (Dekker & Morea, 2023).

Cultural economists argue that the tools granted by neoclassical economics are insufficient for the assessment of cultural value. If one were to apply the tools of neoclassical economics for this matter, one would have to look at the market value of those goods, which can be defined as ‘‘the amount of money involved in the selling and buying of artworks” (Abbing, 2008, p. 55). This value is said to derive from consumers ’preferences. Thus, if a product is valued and demanded, that product will be supplied by artists and cultural entrepreneurs seeking to make a profit (Dekker, 2015). However, the nature of cultural goods makes this process difficult. Such goods are considered unique, and thus, assessing their quality is a difficult task for the consumer. For instance, cultural goods are often regarded as experience goods whose utility can be evaluated by the consumer solely after they have ‘‘experienced” it (Hutter, 2011). Therefore, the question of how people choose one product over another when they are uncertain of the quality of the goods they are about to purchase is an issue that neoclassical economics does not cover. To overcome this limitation, scholars have started inquiring about the valuation processes and their relationship to prices and market value (Beckert & Aspers, 2011).

Beckert and Aspers (2011) argue that price and value cannot be fully interpreted as the outcome of isolated markets. They regard the issues of ‘‘ordering” and ‘‘uncertainty” to be the main issues affecting market coordination of the production and distribution of economic goods. Uncertainty arises “from the contingency of the value of products” (p. 5) which makes assessing their quality difficult for the consumer. Ordering regards the evaluation of goods in relation to each other. Values are perceived as scales according to which consumers make judgments. For instance, an object that is assessed on its aesthetic value can be deemed more beautiful or less beautiful than another object. However, objects are rarely valued according to one sole scale. When multiple scales are used there is the possibility of a conflict arising in the valuation process. The authors thus argue:

This lack of common scale is also why it is wrong to subsume the different forms of

> value constituting the worth of an actor, a product, or an organization under the notion of capital, as Bourdieu did, or to reduce these different forms of value to utility as economists do (Beckert & Aspers, 2011, p. 6).

However, these translations can take place when the exchange is deemed legitimate "as being tradable in market terms" (p. 7). In other words, moral values can affect markets. For instance, in the case of the arts, where the economic sphere is often denied, the commercial dimension of the exchange is veiled under the premise of a gift economy that is associated with values such as selflessness and devotion to art which are deemed more appropriate (Abbing, 2008). However, moral values can also increase the economic value of products such as in the case of goods that are produced with a social conscience (Beckert & Aspers, 2011).

For trade to occur, consumers and producers need to reach a shared understanding of the qualities of goods. This is what Beckert and Aspers (2011) mean by market coordination. In their view and as opposed to neoclassical economics, a shared understanding of "quality" among consumers and producers coordinates the market, instead of the markets enabling the coordination between consumers and suppliers. It thus follows that the qualities that determine the economic value of goods are socially constructed "through practices of qualification" between consumers, market intermediaries, producers, and their interactions in the market field (p. 14). These practices lead to the formation of "conventions" (Beckert & Aspers, 2011, p. 17). The authors regard conventions as frames through which "actors base their expectations and actions on joint knowledge" (Beckert & Aspers, 2011, p. 17).

However, emerging frames are not uniform. Conflicting orders of value can coexist and be institutionalized within the same field causing actors to negotiate to reach a common understanding. It thus follows that in the negotiation process, actors need to justify their logic of valuation.

2.2.4. Orders of Worth and Justification

Such frames appear in economic sociology literature under different names. Of

particular importance for this study is Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) *orders of worth*. Their approach regards how an agreement can be attained between groups or economies that follow different valuation systems (Rendtorff, 2012). This framework has been chosen for this study as it allows for analyzing the tensions underlying ARI practices and their struggle for institutional legitimacy (Patriotta et al., 2011).

Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) argue that modern societies consist of six ‘‘orders of worth" or ‘‘common worlds", namely *the world of inspiration, the domestic regime, the regime of opinion, the regime of the civic world, the regime of the market, and the regime of the industrial world*. Orders of worth can be seen as overarching valuation systems that organize different social domains and can be utilized in 'tests of worth' to settle conflicts between individuals or groups who have varying levels of legitimacy.

In other words, they represent six distinct modes of ‘‘coordination and evaluation" (Levy, 2002, p. 258). The six different orders of worth co-exist in complex societies. The plurality of the ‘‘forms of agreement based on universal principles" (Pariotta et al., 2011, p. 1809) can lead to conflict. If a disagreement occurs between actors that employ different orders of worth, individuals attempt to justify the worth of their practices in accordance with the order of worth they invoke. Actors thus engage in public debates to maintain the legitimacy of institutions relevant to their activity. Moreover, justifications encompass more than just verbal discourse. Individuals must also reach a practical agreement regarding artifacts through the ‘‘test of worth" (e.g., technologies in the industrial world). In order to reach an agreement, a compromise has to be reached between the parties. In such situations, the values are tested according to a higher standard of worth that relates to a superior ‘‘common good" in society (Rendtorff, 2012).

To conclude, values matter. Whether one discusses the reasons individuals decide to engage in certain practices or coordination within specific markets, valuation allows one to discover matters that the tools of the neoclassical economy leave hidden. It allows one to engage with what matters for individuals, the means through which they arrive to value certain goods, services, or practices, and the reasoning they use to justify their choices. The matter of values is thus essential for this thesis as it provides the necessary tools to inquire

about forms of economic organization such as the network in a qualitative way.

2.3. What is a Network, and Why Does it Matter to Culture?

One can find the concept of networks in numerous instances of academic literature. For instance, economists refer to "network effects". A good is said to be subject to network effects when ‘‘the utility a given user derives from the good depends upon the number of other users who are in the same 'network' as is he or she" (Katz & Shapiro, 1985, p. 424). Sociologist Castells (2000) deems the concept of the network crucial for explaining how modern society is organized, even arguing for a "network society." Moreover, the "network" has proven to be a relevant concept for the cultural and creative industries, as Potts et al. (2008) define the creative industries as social-network markets.

The broadness of the concept is apparent and has been acknowledged by other scholars. For instance, Thompson (2003) states: "Networks have become a ubiquitous metaphor to describe too many aspects of contemporary life. And in doing so, the category has lost much of its analytical precision […] It has become a 'word' rather than a 'concept'" (p. 2).

To provide a more systematic understanding of the term, the author proposes a distinction between two potential meanings of the concept. Thompson (2003) refers to the network as "a conceptual category or tool of analysis and an object of analysis in the form of an actual mode of coordination and governance" (p. 6). In other words, the "network" can refer, on one hand, to an analytical device that can be used as a framework for understanding a wide range of social phenomena, such as Social Network Analysis (Wasserman & Faust, 1994), or for describing an organizational arrangement situated between markets and hierarchies with distinguishing characteristics and functioning logic (Powell, 1990). On the other hand, the "network" can represent the object that is to be analyzed. Some examples of potential units of analysis are Social Networks, Industrial Networks, Policy Networks, and Computer Networks. Even though conceptually separated, Thompson (2003) warns that often "these two aspects are treated very much together" (p. 15), the difference between the two being rather helpful for emphasizing specific

dimensions of networks in a more focused and structured way.

This unit of analysis of this thesis is the network as a social practice, which does not necessarily fit into either category. However, one argues that theory informs practice, and thus, conducting a successful analysis on this matter requires a theoretical understanding of the several aspects of the network, to which I have dedicated the final part of the theoretical framework. The first dimension of the network that will be discussed is adopted from Organizational Theory. It regards the network as a third "ideal" type of social organization distinct from hierarchies and markets. Secondly, the relationship between networks and valuation processes will be briefly presented.

2.3.1.Networks in Organizational Theory

Perhaps the most influential work regarding networks in organizational theory is the work of Powell (1990), who introduced it as a form of viable economic organization distinct from markets and hierarchies. Having noticed the evolving nature of collaborations among firms that resembled neither "arms' length market contracting nor the former ideal of vertical integration" (p. 297), the author considered that assessing economic exchange solely through a continuum having the two ideal organizational models at each end of the spectrum is no longer satisfactory. Instead, he proposed the inclusion of networks as the third element for understanding "the larger puzzle that is the economy" (p. 300) as it allows for explaining the novel types of exchange more adequately.

Powell (1990) presents several features of the transactions occurring in networks that allow for its clear distinction from markets and hierarchies. For instance, in a network mode of organization relationships matter greatly and attributes such as reciprocity and trust are central to exchange (see Section 2.3.2 for a more detailed discussion on attributes). Moreover, resource allocation occurs through "reciprocal, preferential, mutually supportive actions." (Powell, 1990, p. 303). Complementarity of activities is another feature highlighted by Powell (1990) who argues that individuals usually organize their economic activities in networks when the participating parties engage in practices that complement each other, pooling their resources to gain a more advantageous position. The foundation of problem-

solving and communication among parties lies in a “mutual orientation” (p. 303), which the author defines as the knowledge the participants assume to have about each other.

Instead of focusing solely on transactions and economic exchange within industries, Thompson (2003) offers a broader conceptualization of networks regarding them as a hybrid coordination and governance mechanism situated between markets and hierarchies. It is hybrid since it can contain mechanisms characteristic of both forms of organization. This is best depicted by Thompson (2003) who makes a distinction between organized and self-organized networks. For the former, similarly to a hierarchical system, social order is constructed and established deliberately, while for the latter order is said to emerge in a spontaneous fashion, resembling a market system. Coordination in networks, on the other hand, is not achieved strictly by following the pricing mechanism, nor is it reduced to a purposefully organized administrative or managerial structure. It is, however, characterized by “informal practices” (Thompson, 2003, p. 30) that rely on personal relationships. Consequently, networks are inclined to be “localized” or restricted to groups that share similar interests, concerns, or objectives (Thompson, 2003, p. 30). An important role in the coordination efforts within networks is played by the identification of a shared aim that all the members of the network can work towards. The author points out that the network form of the organization often entails a flat organizational structure that formally promises equality between the individuals involved; however, in practice, that is not necessarily the case.

2.3.2. Attributes of networks

Thompson (2003) argues that networks are characteristic of “flat” organizational arrangements, implying a shared responsibility and equality between its members. The context in which a network order is apparent is within people within a professional context in which members “organize and regulate themselves in a close network context” (p. 40). In such a context, coordination occurs outside of markets or hierarchy and is based on specific attributes. Thompson (2003) argues for the following: ‘solidarity’, ‘altruism’, ‘loyalty’, ‘reciprocity’, and ‘trust’ through which the existence and the functioning of networks as

forms of organization can be explained.

Shared experience fosters *solidarity*. Groups of people tend to "stick together" when experiencing common struggles, pressures, and so on. Another dimension of networks consists of *altruism* which the author conceptualizes as the act of selflessness. In other words, an actor is altruistic when it does something for the benefit of another without expecting self-gain.

The attribute of *loyalty* is what sustains networks and safeguards "repeated transactions" (Thompson, 2003, p. 43). Following Hirshman (1970 as cited by Thompson, 2003), actors in an organization have three strategic options when encountering perturbations, namely "exit," when individuals decide to give up on the organization and leave; "voice," in which actors proactively attempt to make a change within the organization through making their voice heard, and "loyalty" in which actors continue supporting the organization. The author warns us not to reduce the latter strategy to a passive stance on behalf of the actor but rather to consider that traits such as confidence in others, affection, and trust, as well as norms of duty and obligations, play an important part in the choice of the strategy. Here, the author stresses that "voice" is especially important in the case of networks. Because of their informal nature and flat structure, the process of organizing and securing networks is facilitated by discursive practices such as "argument, debate, and persuasion" (Thompson, 2003, p. 44).

Reciprocity represents another dimension that can potentially explain the process of stabilization in networks. It refers to the idea of mutual exchange, of a balanced relationship in which giving and taking are symmetrically matched. It is a concept frequently related to the Gift Economy, a concept introduced by Marcel Mauss in his seminal work *The Gift* (1925/2011), in which an individual who gives a gift expects something in return. However, unlike in markets, the conditions of the gift exchange are ambiguous, the value of the gift is incommensurable (in monetary terms), and the timing for the return is unknown (Klamer, 2003a). Relationships are defined by the ability of actors to develop a mutual understanding of what reciprocity entails, a process that can be sustained by gift-giving.

Certain situations are thought to facilitate reciprocity, such as smaller-sized

communities, short “social distance” between individuals, bounded “chains of action,” and homogeneous actors in lifestyle, economic status, mindset, and habitual practices (Thompson, 2003, p. 45). In the case of larger areas of interest, which are characterized by a diversity of actors and institutions, reciprocity thrives on the existence of multiple, distinct standards or common understandings of what symmetrical exchange means, according to which several types of reciprocal expectations can be defined (Thompson, 2003).

Lastly, cooperation is fundamental to the operation of networks, and *trust* is necessary for cooperation. Conceptually, trust appears due to the uncertainty of the behavior of other people who have the potential to act opportunistically. By trusting, uncertainties are treated as certainties, and a particular course of action is expected. Attributes such as reputation and consistency allow individuals to make aprioristic assumptions about the behavior of another.

2.3.3. Where can one encounter networks?

Powell (1990) formulated in his work an “etiology of network forms” (p. 322) which represents an attempt to determine the circumstances in which network exchange might emerge. Firstly, the author declares that there is “no clear developmental pattern” (p. 323), remarking that networks have different causes and diverse historical evolutions highly contingent on the social and economic context of a given situation. Consequently, economizing (minimizing costs) is just one dimension of the whole story that fails to represent the sole reasons for action.

The author does point out some conducive circumstances that promote a network’s emergence and development. Firstly, networks are more likely to appear in a setting of knowledge-intensive professions that rely on “intellectual capital or craft-based skills” (Powell, 1990, p. 324). Even more, these professions are characterized by highly mobile and intangible skills that are difficult to acquire through the market and in which professionals refuse to work in a hierarchical environment where they are constrained by authority figures. The relationships between the members of the network are distinguished by “ongoing, complementary activities” in which common values are created by the “sharing of critical information” and trust (Powell, 1990, pp. 324-325). Secondly, the network is likely to

emerge in contexts where information needs to be accessed in a fast manner, and flexibility and dynamism are deemed valuable. Networks are considered valuable for their ability to generate new interpretations from “learning by doing” (p. 325). The process is depicted by the author: “As information passes through a network, it is both freer and richer; new connections and new meanings are generated, debated, and evaluated” (Powell, 1990, p. 325). Lastly, Powell (1990) deems networks suitable for situations in which long-term and repeated exchange has facilitated a sense of trust. One’s reputation is deemed crucial in sustaining cooperation. Formal monitoring through specified rules is substituted by “consensual ideologies” (p. 326). Moreover, the establishment of networks is more usual within work environments composed of individuals who share a common background. That is because homogeneity facilitates trust.

In a broader manner, Powell (1990) suggests that networks are particularly beneficial in situations when the quality of goods is difficult to assess. As depicted in the previous chapter, this is exactly the case of cultural goods whose evaluation relies on an intersubjective understanding of quality. Therefore, Powell's (1990) observations provide a strong rationale for the relevance of networks for culture. In this regard, a discussion on the various manners in which the network has been brought up in the discussion about cultural production and cultural value is deemed relevant and addressed in the following subsection.

2.2.3. Networks and valuation

Potts et al. (2008) go so far as to suggest that the definition of the creative industry should be based on the concept of the social network, proposing the following: “The set of agents in a market characterized by the adoption of novel ideas within the social network for production and consumption” (p. 171). Their definition of social refers to “the ability of one agent to connect to and interpret information generated by other agents and to communicate in turn” (p. 172). The authors support this definition by referring to the ‘‘inherent novelty and uncertainty” (p. 169) of cultural and creative goods that require both producers and consumers to rely on their social networks for signals and information. As a result, social networks play an essential role in the decision-making process, being the

predominant factor that determines value. In other words, value is determined by the interaction and communication of individuals connected in complex social networks. Potts et al. (2008) argue that, although socially determined at the level of networks, this value eventually diffuses in all markets.

In a similar manner, Karpik (2010), in his pursuit to formulate an economic theory of "singularities," characterized by quality uncertainty, multidimensionality, and incommensurability, that is not precisely unique but could be better described as particular (e.g., books, movies, wines) suggests that networks represent the foundation of all coordination regimes that make use of personal judgment devices. Judgment devices are tools that individuals use when facing quality uncertainty, while coordination regimes represent analytical models that generalize how certain singular goods are qualified according to specific judgment devices.

Karpik (2010) refers to networks in the context of *personal (judgment) devices*. Contrasting with impersonal devices, they have a limited scope of operation, but they offer more credibility and precision. He distinguishes between three types of networks: *personal networks* made of friends, family, and colleagues, *trade networks* characterized by business-client relationships, and *practitioner networks* composed of professionals that operate in the same field of work. Out of the three, he stresses that the first is the most accessible, utilized, and important one in the valuation of singular goods due to how accessible the information is. Karpik (2010), in a similar manner to Potts et al. (2008), points out the importance of speech in such networks. He equates the practice of networks with speech, arguing that "it is the most flexible and effective mechanism for exploring similarities and constructing convergences of meaning" (Karpik, 2010, p. 184).

Networks, as depicted by the authors presented in this chapter, seem to develop and function based on communicative practices. Speech (Karpik, 2010), communicative actions (Potts et al., 2008), and discourse (Thompson, 2003) are the central tools through which information is shared, meanings emerge, and value is created and understood within networks. It is, however, important to note that the last two authors mentioned do not regard networks as a mode of organization, or rather, that is beyond the scope of their

purposes.

3. Research Design

This research is concerned with exploring cultural networks from a pragmatic approach, following Dekker and Morea's (2023) perspective on the process of art's values through social practice and Powell's (1990) conceptualization of networks. The choice of topic follows the increasing number of such networks in the cultural sector (Gielen & Lijster, 2017). Therefore, this research aims to answer the following research question: *What is the value of networks for culture, and how do creators organize cultural networks?*

To explore this investigation in more depth, the study is subdivided into two additional questions:

(1) How do cultural networks justify the value of their activities and cultural initiatives?
(2) What central values support the making of cultural networks, and how do they become institutionalized?

3.1. Pragmatism, inquiry, and values

Pragmatism is frequently depicted in literature contrasting the two dichotomous philosophical paradigms it seeks to bridge: (post-)positivism and constructivism (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Morgan, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). For the scope of this thesis, the most important takeaway is that each of the previously mentioned paradigms encourages the use of a certain research methodology based on the paradigm's assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge.

Pragmatism distinguishes itself from positivism and constructivism as it does not rely on metaphysical questions of reality and truth to distinguish the different approaches to research. Instead, pragmatism aims to redirect the focus of the philosophy toward a greater emphasis on human experience (Morgan, 2014). This approach is associated with the work of pragmatic philosopher John Dewey, whose focus on experience revolves around the interconnectedness of beliefs and actions. According to Dewey, our beliefs are shaped by our previous actions, and the outcomes of our actions are reflected in our beliefs. By bringing beliefs and actions into contact, experiences generate meaning. Additionally, Dewey highlights the concept of "inquiry" as a distinct form of experience, characterized by

the examination and resolution of problematic beliefs through action. This process requires the individual to engage in reflective, self-conscious decision-making (Morgan, 2014).

Two relevant implications for the research design follow this line of thought and are relevant to this study. Firstly, a pragmatic perspective encourages the analysis of values by inquiring about practices. This choice was heavily influenced by the approach of Dekker and Morea (2023), who adopted the pragmatic approach for studying the process of realization of art through social practices and who argue:

> Values in our pragmatic approach are not universal moral reference points or a mark of conservatism. They are instead the reasons why individuals value the social practices they engage in. They reflect the heterogenous goals which individuals pursue. Values are realized in a process, they are embodied in practices, and it is through practices that they are made 'real' (Dekker & Morea, 2023, p. 6).

Secondly, pragmatism allows for "freedom of inquiry" (Dewey 1925/2008 as cited by Morgan, 2014), which implies the potential of individuals and social communities to define the issues that matter most to them and pursue those issues in the ways that are most meaningful to them. This approach allows the researcher to let go of any presumptions of what might be valuable for the members of the cultural network and rather focuses on how value is created, what values are organizations or initiatives seeking to realize, the extent to which they succeed in doing so and the processes through which they justify those values. In other words, the researcher aims to take the role of the critic seeking to analyze values through inquiring about practices (Dekker & Morea, 2023). In this endeavor, the analyst must arrive at values and descriptions in which actors can recognize themselves (Dekker & Morea, 2023).

This follows an inductive approach, aiming to enrich theory through empirical knowledge (Bryman, 2012). Consequently, theory and prior literature serve as a framework and support for the data that is to emerge during the research. Taking that into account, a qualitative research method is deemed more appropriate (Bryman, 2012). A qualitative research methodology allows for the in-depth exploration of the values, meanings, and beliefs of the network's members. These aspects are complex, inherently subjective, and

therefore, not suitable for being measured as quantifiable variables. Additionally, due to the novelty of the research topic, the purpose of this study is exploratory, a qualitative approach allowing for a holistic understanding of the context and gaining new information on the matter of interest (Babbie, 2021).

3.2. Participant sampling and characteristics

As previously mentioned, this study is concerned with inquiring about the value of the recently emerged cultural networks focusing on the practices of the actors involved. For doing so, a case study was chosen as the appropriate research strategy. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) define the case study as: "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40) and argue for three main characteristics that distinguish it from other qualitative research strategies. Firstly, a case study is *particularistic*, meaning that it has a specific focus on a specific phenomenon, event, or program, making it suitable to inquire about situations arising from everyday practice. Secondly, the outcome of the case study is expected to be *descriptive* providing a "complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated" (p. 43). Lastly, case studies are *heuristic*. They have the potential to unveil new meanings, affirm existing knowledge, and broaden the experience of readers. In other words, they can deepen the understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Given the novelty of this research topic, its exploratory aim, and its inductive approach, a case study consists of the most appropriate research strategy as it allows for a detailed holistic understanding of the network which aims to serve as the basis for future knowledge concerning cultural networks.

Moreover, an embedded single-case design (Yin, 2009) is deemed most appropriate for researching a network as it accounts for both a main unit of analysis represented by the network itself and "subunits" which are represented by the network's members. Such a design requires two levels of sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) - the researcher must first choose the "case" and then sample within the case.

The main unit of analysis was chosen through purposive sampling. The case chosen for this research was the Reset! Network, and it followed several criteria. First of all, the

network chosen had to be what Thompson (2003) calls an organized network, which is a network established consciously that follows some sort of management structure, as self-organized networks have unclear boundaries (Thompson, 2003). The most visible and prominent cases of such networks in the cultural sector are the Networks of Creative and Cultural Organizations funded by the Creative Europe program, which the Reset! Network is part of. The second criterion was the diversity of the network's members, who differed in terms of size, organizational structure, and focus (see Annex A for an overview of the members at the time of writing). Thirdly, Reset! was chosen because it is the newest European network. This choice follows the assumption that the valuation process is most evident (at least in their public communication) in the emergent stage of a network. It is worth noting that since one adopted a pragmatic approach conducting this research, the network is not treated as an object, but rather as a practice. Therefore, the unit of analysis is the Reset! network as practice.

The subunits are composed of the network's members, coordinators, and policymakers associated with the project. For the first two categories, purposive sampling was used, while for the latter, snowball sampling was considered more appropriate. Regarding the coordinators, the two main coordinators and the editorial coordinator were reached. The main coordinators, being the founders of the initiative, were thought to have the most knowledge about the network's purpose and activities. Moreover, the editorial coordinator has the role of gathering, centralizing, and communicating the data gathered from all the member organizations, thus having close contact with both the organizations and their respective information. These traits were thought to be of high relevance when inquiring about the network.

The policymakers who participated in the research were recruited through snowball sampling techniques. The process was initiated through a proposal containing information about the research that was sent to one of the policymakers who was present at the forum in Lyon. After she accepted it and participated in the interview she suggested two more of her colleagues directly involved with the Reset! network. This technique proved especially useful in granting access to members of a population that is generally hard to reach and

about whom public information is not readily available (Babbie, 2021).

The selection of organizations within the network was carefully planned to ensure a diverse sample, which is deemed important in purposive sampling (Bryman, 2012). To achieve this, the researcher categorized the projects based on their organizational types, including "collective," "festival," "cultural venue," and "independent radio." In cases where organizations did not fit into any specific typology, they were added to the “other” category (refer to Annex A for an overview of all the members). The projects were further ordered by their country of origin. For the initial participant selection, three initiatives were chosen from each organizational type, with a consideration to include initiatives from various geographical areas. Moreover, particular emphasis was placed on including projects whose members had attended the network's annual meeting in Lyon. The rationale behind this was to incorporate their perspectives, opinions, and insights based on their direct involvement in the network's activities. Their first-hand experiences can offer valuable insights and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The final list of respondents can be found in Annex B.

3.3. Data collection

The nature of the data collected in this thesis was qualitative, consisting of “direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge” (Patton, 2002, p. 4 as cited by Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). It was acquired by using multiple research instruments. The use of two or more sources of data is associated with “triangulation,” which is a research strategy that ensures the internal validity of the research’s findings by cross-checking and comparing the data. Moreover, this allows for a more complete view of a complex phenomenon, as the researcher can capture different facets of the issue (Flick, 2004). For this research, semi-structured interviews were complemented by archival secondary data (website posts, newsletters) and participatory observation, each of these being covered in more detail in the following subsections.

3.3.1. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are the main method for data collection. Interviews are preferred as they enable the researcher to gain the perspective of the participant beyond what is observable (Bryman, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). For instance, matters such as beliefs, opinions, and reasons for engaging in certain practices are highly personal and thus difficult to observe. Moreover, interviews allow for reconstructing past experiences and events (Bryman, 2012) which allows the researcher to get an insight into the activities the members engage in and their experiences within the network. A semi-structured format facilitates greater openness between the participant and the researcher, which can result in the discovery of novel insights (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Following a topic guide rather than a list of structured questions is especially beneficial in the case of this thesis as the interviewees belong to three different categories and have different functions. This allows for asking slightly different questions to fit each role while following the same topics of inquiry.

Twenty-two interviews were taken from the 26th of April until the 20th of October 2023. With the exception of one interview which was conducted in person due to convenience, all interviews were conducted and recorded on the platform Zoom. Except for one instance, where the interview was conducted in Romanian due to the native language of both the interviewees and the researcher, all other interviews were conducted in English. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to an hour. All interviews were transcribed following a naturalist approach, imported to Atlas.ti, and read at least five times to get familiarized with the data.

The operationalization of the topic guide explores three major themes and is structured in the following way: (0) introduction, (1) practices, (2) independence, and (3) networks. The introduction starts with basic demographic questions (e.g., name, age, background) and then inquires about their role within the organization they take part in. The *practices* segment inquires about the activities of the organizations the respondents represent and their relationship to them. The independence segment is meant to explore how the cultural actors define independence, how they relate the practice of their organization to independence, and how they justify its importance. Lastly, the network

segment regards the experience of the member organization within the Reset! Network, with the network's practices and the relationship with other members (see Appendix C for a complete topic guide). Drawing inspiration from Arjo Klamer's method of inquiry, the interviewees are often asked about "why" they deem certain activities or practices important (Klamer, 2017).

3.3.2.Observations

Through direct observation, one was able to have firsthand experience with the network's practices and participants, allowing for a better understanding of the network's "language, nuances of meaning," and context of interaction (Patton, 2002, p. 262). It enabled the researcher to be more inductive and avoid relying solely on the perspectives of others, as in the case of using other data collection methods (Patton, 2002). Thus, observations are deemed essential to complement and triangulate interview data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Additionally, since observation occurred before conducting most of the interviews, the contextual knowledge played an important role in refining the topic guide, and it facilitated access to interviewees.

Furthermore, the researcher took the role of the "non-participating observer with interaction" (Bryman, 2012, p. 444), implying no participation in the network's main activities and minimal interaction with the members. This strategy proved the most effective for observing the natural dynamics and interactions of the network, as the behavior of the participants was not influenced by the researcher. This strategy is also deemed suitable in cases where observation is not the main data collection strategy (Bryman, 2012).

All the observations occurred in the context of the European Lab initiative that took place in Lyon between May 17th and 19th, 2023. The network's annual forum was part of the event, and thus, it was deemed the best time to meet and observe the network's members and practices. The researcher participated in all the activities concerning the network or its members that were open to the public and the network's private social drinks, making a total of eight events (see Appendix D). Detailed field notes were also taken during each event to have a written record of the observations, interactions, and key

moments that occurred during the researcher's presence at the events related to the network, resulting in a total of 31 pages of documented information. To ensure focused and systematic observation, the researcher utilized six guiding questions that directed their attention to specific aspects of the events. These questions acted as a framework, enabling the researcher to maintain a targeted and purposeful approach to their observations: "What kind of values are discussed?", "How are the values communicated?", "What is the purpose of the network?", "What do people talk about in the event?", "Are there concrete actions being planned?", "Are there any hierarchies in the network based on interactions?"

3.3.3. Archival secondary data

Data was also collected from archival secondary data as it was deemed to provide valuable insights into how meaning is publicly communicated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This was especially important in one's inquiry about the justification of values. The archival data to be analyzed were chosen purposively.

The Reset! Statement is the network's basis for advocacy (Reset! network | Statement, n.d.). Thus, it is arguably one of the most representative pieces of data for unveiling how they communicate and justify their practices and values to the broader public. Secondly, the newsletters represent another relevant source of data as they ensure the official ongoing communication with the network's members and subscribers. Lastly, documents, where the network was mentioned, were sought. These pieces of data provided an additional layer of information that could not be captured through interviews or participant observation alone.

3.4. Data Analysis

This thesis uses the strategy of "Thematic analysis" for analyzing the data which is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a "method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). A theme represents patterned responses that encapsulate something meaningful for the research question in the data. The authors recognize two ways to engage with thematic analysis, namely inductive and theoretical. In an inductive, or bottom-up approach, the data precedes the theoretical interest of the research. In other words, themes emerge from the data, rather than attempting to conform

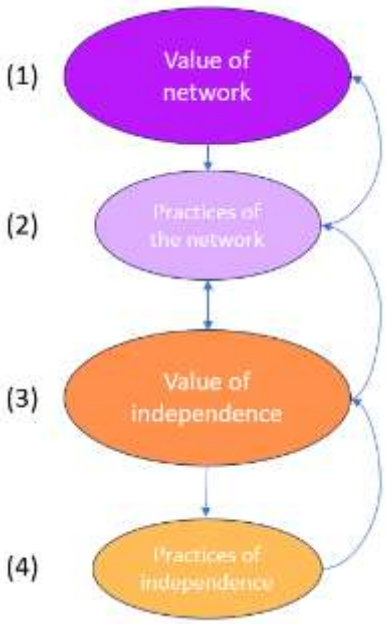
to predetermined analytical assumptions or coding frames. On the contrary, the theoretical approach is guided by theory and prioritizes describing specific elements of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This thesis employs a mix of deductive and inductive coding. To do so, one prefers to use the perspective employed by Ritchie et al. (2003 as cited by Gibbs, 2007) within the framework analysis method, which argues for compiling a list of "thematic ideas" (p. 8) before coding the data. Those could be developed by carefully reading through the transcript materials or informed by previous research or literature. For this study, the latter case is deemed beneficial due to the central role of the pragmatic approach to values in conducting this research. Specifically, the thematic ideas chosen are based on the work of Dekker and Morea (2023) and their conceptualization of values as *the reasons why* people choose to engage in social practice. As such, it was deemed necessary to pay special consideration to the participant's *practices* and their *justification* for engaging with such practices at every step of the analysis. Moreover, the analysis operates under the assumption that networks, as defined in organizational theory, require a shared purpose or direction to emerge and function. Therefore, in the researcher's view, the following rationale can be used for studying the network (see Figure 1):

(1) If one wishes to inquire about the value of the network, it should look at its practices.
(2) The network's practices are organized around the value of independence.
(3) It is thus important to understand the values of independence.
(4) One can do that by looking at the member's practices.

Figure 1.

Rationale for data analysis



This rationale follows that if one aims to inquire about the values of the network, they should start from the very particular, inquiring about the practices of the network's members, and then move backward, fulfilling all the necessary steps to reach a broader conclusion about the values of the network. Therefore, the researcher opted for two broad thematic ideas, namely "independence" and "network," which were both subdivided into "practices" and "values" that compose the predefined template, which allowed for structuring the text around the matters deemed of utmost importance for the research question and facilitated the further analysis of the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The category of "practices" represents quite literally the activities the members and coordinators refer to, while "values" encompass the way their activities are justified.

To find meaning within the overarching categories and potentially discover novel categories, an inductive coding method was chosen to analyze the data. As a first step, the data was analyzed through line-by-line coding that allowed one to avoid imposing personal values and prejudices on the codes and keep as faithful to the data as possible. The process stopped after patterns began to emerge. Next, through axial coding, one was able to identify links between open codes and further categorize and refine the emergent themes found in the previous stage. Through this analysis, several major themes emerged: "ties and

coordination," "establishing conventions," and "values of the network" (see Figure 2).

3.5. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are of concern in any research, making the researcher responsible for taking the appropriate measures to anticipate any potential issues (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In the case of this study, gathering the informed consent of all the participants before conducting the interviews was a matter of great importance that was dealt with meticulously, ensuring that the participants understood the purpose of the research, their role in it, and the potential implications of their involvement. Since most interviews were conducted online, the Informed Consent Form was sent to all participants after they confirmed their participation and before conducting the interviews. All interviewees signed the document and sent it back to the researcher through email. Worth noting is that the form also contains the researcher's contact information, enabling respondents to reach out at any point if necessary.

Furthermore, the privacy of the respondents is safeguarded by maintaining the confidentiality of their names. Only the name of the organization they take part in is displayed, preserving their anonymity.

4. Findings

This chapter is concerned with providing a descriptive overview of the case study by showcasing the themes that emerged during the analysis. The structure follows the sequence illustrated in Figure 2 and displays the themes that emerged during the analysis with their respective sub-themes. Therefore, the chapter will start by presenting some general information about the network, followed by the theme "ties and coordination," which exhibits the attributes that connect the members. Next, "establishing conventions" depicts the practices through which the coordinators attempt to institutionalize the practice of independence, followed by a description of the "values of the network."

Figure 2.

Structure of the results based on the emergent themes.

4.1. General information

The emergence of the Reset! network mimicked a similar initiative in France called "L'appel des Independents," initiated by the same foundation, Arty Farty. The initiative started in March 2020 and managed to gather 1600 independent media and cultural organizations throughout France. The initiative's scope was to create an alliance between independent structures that, due to COVID-19, found themselves in a disadvantaged position compared to their public or private counterparts, which seemed to threaten their very existence. This call aimed to give them a common voice in front of public authorities with the purpose of influencing cultural policies. By doing so, the coordinators hoped to

build a common cultural future from the bottom-up centering on issues such as democracy, addressing social and territorial divides, asserting the role of the youth, and environmental considerations (Le Manifeste Des Structures Culturelles Et Des Médias Indépendants: Contribution Collective À Un Nouveau Contrat Culturel Et Social, 2020).

The first mention of Reset! can be found in the fifth part of the aforementioned manifesto. Reset! aimed to achieve the same goals as its French counterpart but at a European level. To quote the manifesto: "The objectives of this text are to open the call to all European independents and to claim a *reset* [emphasis added] of European public policies in the field of culture and media" (Le Manifeste Des Structures Culturelles Et Des Médias Indépendants: Contribution Collective À Un Nouveau Contrat Culturel Et Social, 2020, p. 188).

The network is co-funded by the European Commission through the program Creative Europe and is the newest member of the thirty-seven European Networks of Culture and Creativity, having been active since February 2022 (coordinator 2).

At the time of writing, the network has sixty-six members from twenty-five countries throughout the European continent, out of which seventeen were interviewed. On the network's website, there are forty-four listed activities in which the members take part and forty-four fields to which initiatives belong. Both the activities and the fields are very diverse, the former ranging from "think tanks" to "bookshops" to "community radios" to "art collectives," while the latter ranging from "Journalism" to "Political Discourse" to "Contemporary Art."

Besides the members, the network is managed by a team of six members who take care of the organizational and administrative matters and who are in contact with the European Commission for consultation regarding the implementation of the EU's cultural policy, monitoring, and advice.

Currently, the Reset! network aims at "gathering and supporting independent, cultural, media and creative organizations" (*Reset! — Reset! Network*, n.d.-a, para. 1). The centrality of independence is apparent by having a brief look at the network's public statement. Beneath the title, the subheading states firmly: "Independence needs to stay

independent" (Reset! network | Statement, n.d.). However, as mentioned in the previous chapters, the notion of independence is somehow ambiguous and rarely found in literature dedicated to cultural organizations. Even so, the members of the network seem to be organized around this practice. It is thus essential to understand what the participants understand the meaning of independence, how they relate it to their own practices, and why they deem it valuable.

4.2. Ties and coordination

What is it that brings the members together and enables their collaboration? As previously mentioned, the network encompasses diverse organizations in size, organizational structure, and focus. Although some might resemble each other, as in the case of community radio stations or music festivals, many of the members engage in different practices centered around varied cultural forms. However, the interviews made it apparent that they relate to each other for several reasons.

Firstly, when discussing the practice of the initiative they belong to, the respondents recurringly recognized how engaging in such a practice allowed them to fulfill both "selfish" and "idealistic" motives (radio 2). For instance, seven members who founded their organizations noted that their motivation to start the practice in the first place was admiration for similar practices. However, they recognized that their motivation to start or contribute to a certain practice extends beyond personal needs. Besides their affinities, the respondents claimed that their lived experience in particular social and political contexts allowed them to notice existing gaps in practices and act upon them, in the case of founders, or contribute to organizations that act upon them, in the case of actors that joined the organizations at a later stage. This is well depicted in the way a co-founder described the initiative he and his partner started:

> Yeah, we were both passionate about independent magazines and books, and we would always go visit Athenaeum [book shop] in Amsterdam, and we noticed that there is a lack of representation of the place we come from, Eastern Europe [..], so we decided to do a magazine that is centered around different communities

(magazine).

Dekker and Morea (2023) highlight that members of the cultural civic society often have dual aims – to contribute to the art world by innovating aesthetically and to contribute to the social and political world by fostering communities around the practice. In the aforementioned case, one could argue that the interviewee wished, on the one hand, to contribute to the art world of independent magazines and books. At the same time, on the other, he imagined he wished to counter-balance the lack of representation of Eastern European artistic communities in Western Europe.

The interviews revealed how the latter – a shared social and political imagination- brings the members together. They coordinate around a shared ideal that they relate to independent practice. Some refer to an ideal cultural sector, while others refer to an ideal world at large. Both will be depicted in the following subsection.

4.2.1.Social and Political Imagination

Through the social and political imagination attributed to independent practice, members of the network realize the value of *freedom*. They refer to freedom in three different ways: curatorial freedom, freedom of expression, and decision-making freedom. Curatorial freedom is the ability of members to pursue their own artistic vision or that of assigned programmers, emphasizing self-expression. Secondly, freedom of expression stresses the fact that independent organizations are not constrained by external pressures when it comes to the content covered. The difference between the two is well depicted by one of the respondents:

> Independence, like artistic independence in creating what you want to create without having to deal with someone else telling you what to do […] it means independence from big money sources or big private sponsorship that would censor probably some of your ideas. [..] Curatorial independence in terms of free thinking like creating ideas the way you would want to with people you would want to (festival 3)

Lastly, freedom of decision-making regards the flexibility that is attributed to

independent organizations that can decide and change their course of action as they see fit. For instance, some of the respondents argued that being independent allows them to have a more flexible plan regarding their organizations' future steps.

Moreover, independent practice is associated with a vision of an *ideal* society. Nine of the interviewees associated the simple existence of independent organizations with a more democratic and inclusive society. That is so because of the non-institutionalized discourse of such organizations that allow for a plurality of opinions to be expressed and, as such, more diverse choices and solutions. Emphasizing this point, the founder of one of the festivals states:

> I think a well-balanced pluralistic democratic society is a good society, so I think it's important to have a multitude of voices, different institutions, opinions that form this large orchestra of strategies, opinions, and approaches to, often complex, problems. (festival 2)

Two of the nine go as far as to link independent organizations to a representation of a desired alternative future that opposes the dystopian image of the one imagined within the current system. This sentiment is illustrated well by one of the members of the network who regards independence as the only option for a better future:

> I don't see any other solution. I don't know what else works because nothing works apart from that, let's say in a world like this, which is falling apart every day […] Being independent, I'd say, it's not just like a why it's important, but I feel like this only solution for a bit of a better future. (radio 3).

4.2.2. Shared experience

While the previous subsection illustrated how independent practices embody the social imagination of a better society, the interviewees recognize that such ideals come at a price. As none of the members have been directly affiliated with established public or private institutions, they must conduct their operations without having direct access to the resources, power, and legitimacy of the respective institutions. This causes the organizations to experience a constant *struggle* for survival. This struggle is emphasized to such an extent that it can be considered part of the identity of independent practice, with some

respondents citing struggle as a defining trait of independence. This, however, makes communication easy: “Once you start talking with a complete stranger, you have this feeling that you know, so she knows as well. I think that is mostly the struggle in taking the risk of being independent” (radio 3).

In turn, one can argue that independent practice is characterized by having to compromise. Such compromise can be personal, in which the practitioner acknowledges the hardships of working in the independent sector and accepts them for an ideal. While the commercial activity is deemed necessary for the survival of the independent organization, the respondents recognize they would not engage if not for the pecuniary advantages. For example, as one interviewee explains: “You know, there are a lot of things that we accepted that we do just because we need money, and it doesn't help to put the energy where we want to put it” (collective 1)

4.2.3. Contestation

When discussing the definition of independence, four of the respondents contested the term, expressing doubt about its meaning. The interviewees point out that the term can be easily appropriated in very different ways and thus can be potentially harmful by normalizing self-exploitation and precarious work conditions. For example, one member of the network goes on to explain his view:

> I'm gonna say up front that independence is not a super important value for me. I would rather feel dependent on people, on salary, on many things. I don't have this feeling, this need for independence myself. [..] This was also a little bit of my problem with Reset! that this focus on independence is so strong, and I think there are some dark sides to independence. (festival 3)

On the other hand, some interviewees communicated disbelief about the concept of pure independence, disbelief best depicted by one participant: “Complete independence is an illusion, of course. [..] If you're not dependent on the public sector or private corporations, then you're dependent on enough people willing to pay for what you have to offer” (festival 2)

4.3. Establishing conventions

This section discusses two themes, namely *rules* and *practices* through which the coordinators attempt to institutionalize the practice of independence. This theme is informed by Howard Becker's (1984) notion of *conventions*. In his regard, "conventions provide the basis on which art world participants can act together efficiently to produce works characteristics of those worlds" (p. 42). In other words, conventions are standardized practices associated with an art world that facilitate the coordination of its members. When conventions are institutionalized, they are taken for granted by the art world's participants. They constitute the language known by all practitioners (Becker, 1984).

4.3.1. Rules

Independent practice is not yet established, and as we can see in the previous section, its meaning can be up to contestation. This is recognized by the editorial coordinator, who admits that every time they speak about the Reset! network, they are questioned about the definition of independence. Therefore, one of the goals of the network is to establish certain conventions around independence. This is clear when taking into consideration the formal requirement or *rule* for an organization to join the Reset! network. According to their official website, independent actors are those who are "neither under the control of any public authorities nor affiliated with large private groups" (Reset! network | Who are we?, n.d.). The coordinators further explained this definition during the interviews, which revealed two fundamental agreed-upon dimensions of independence. Firstly, the editorial coordinator explains how, in the context of the Reset! Network independence is linked with the economic model of an organization: "So if the finances you have for your project are not a hundred percent dependent on public forces or a hundred percent depending on private companies, that makes you independent" (coordinator 2)

Secondly, in a different interview, the two main coordinators of the network stress that an independent organization has a non-institutionalized structure and position, arguing that they are:

> neither parts of big large groups of the entertainment industry and big players of the capitalistic cultural industries, neither organizations which are under the umbrella of the public [institutions]… in the middle of these two sides, there is this independent ecosystem (coordinator 1)

These definitions, which highlight the member organizations' economic model and relative (oppositional) positioning, display the established conventions of independent practice. They are established in the sense that there was a *general consensus* between the interviewees regarding these traits of independence.

However, the coordinators recognize that independence is a more complex matter. They explain how they work with external parties to find a more fitting framework:

> The most important thing is also to analyze how these mirror into the activities […] because, of course, in the beginning, we needed to use some kind of rules to be independent, and these rules are basically based on quantity. And now we're also validating with OPC [Observatoire des politiques culturelles] and various other people, helping us find the quality of that independence (coordinator 1)

4.3.2. Practices

Besides the rules, the practices of the network are crucial for establishing the conventions of independent practice. Firstly, one has to mention the network's formal activities that were formulated when applying to become part of the European Networks of Culture and Creativity and that they are obliged to accomplish.

The first phase of the network project is represented by the *decentralized workshops* phase. The members are encouraged to host workshops in the location they are based in and invite other independents who share their locality to discuss a specific topic that represents a challenge for them (e.g., accessibility, decentralized technologies). The coordinators then compile the reports written by the members and analyze and categorize the discussions into broader themes that are deemed of great importance and concern for the independent cultural sector. By complementing the reports with editorial content, these topics are turned into "thematic manifestos" (coordinator 2), which aim to make

information more accessible and provide a point of reference to members for inspiration and good practices. In addition to the manifestos, the network plans to release what the editorial coordinator called a “livre blanche” that encompasses a summary of all the topics and represents the basis for political advocacy. The second phase of the network also called the “Reset! toolbox,” is aimed at empowering the members of the network on the topics they found most challenging through training and workshops done by both the members and people from outside the network. Lastly, it is revealed that all the activities of the network are aimed at advocating for “the cause of cultural independence in Europe” (coordinator 2) in light of the 2024 European Parliamentary elections.

One can assert that these practices play a role in institutionalizing the practice of independence. The mention of a manifesto that depicts best practices makes that quite clear. Moreover, the public events attended and the analysis of public documents were particularly revealing. Through these events, the value of independent practice and the purpose of the network are justified both in the eyes of policymakers and within the members. Worth noting is that all these practices are *discursive* in nature, consisting of panel talks, workshops, public statements, and newsletters. In the following subsection, one aims to present how independent practice is justified through them and how its meaning is understood by the actors involved in the network.

4.3.3. Justification

Analyzing the public discourse of the network through attending panel talks, studying the content of the newsletters and statements, and interviewing its coordinators allowed the researcher to draw some conclusions about how the network justifies its practice. The public discourse, or the common message of independence, is framed in two different ways. Firstly, independence, due to its non-institutional position and discourse, is considered key to tackling pressing social matters ranging from ecological practices to labor rights, inclusion, equality, and so on. The fact that they are not affiliated with any hegemonic institutions allows them to have an “honest” conversation, “being closer to the essence of things” and having more credibility than other agendas (field notes, The State of the

European Independent Sector). Secondly, independent organizations are constantly framed at risk of survival in the face of the changing political context in Europe that threatens free speech and cuts cultural funding and in the face of large private companies in the creative industries that tend to acquire the whole value chain of cultural production. Independent organizations are said to provide alternatives to these spheres and ensure the plurality of voices (Reset! network | Statement, n.d.).

The network's purpose regarding independence is thus twofold and is best presented in the network's public statement. Firstly, the statement highlights the fact that the network exists to gather, connect, and increase the visibility of independent cultural and media organizations in Europe.

Secondly, the network's main purpose is depicted as: "Working together to redesign (reset) the cultural and media landscape in Europe [..]" (Reset! network | Statement, n.d., para. 3). The purpose of advocacy is continually stressed by the coordinators and placed above all other goals. For example, one of the coordinators explains: "that was kind of clear till the beginning with Reset! and I think that the goal is not cooperation, but it's more like the capability of unify all these people into one, two or three global messages" (coordinator 1). These messages are not only supposed to reach the likes of policy-makers, but they also have to be agreed upon internally by the network's members. The coordinators argue that the members are evaluating the value of the network continuously: "I've noticed with the members it's a little bit like we say in Italy for the best marriages there's always some kind of question of you know why I am marrying you" (coordinator 1)

The coordinators explain how this evaluation requires an ongoing effort of justification that is accomplished by generating content and maintaining proactive communication with members through tools such as newsletters. Because the network's goal is to advocate, its activities are not concrete cultural practices such as hosting art exhibitions or organizing live shows but are more abstract and of a discursive nature, like hosting panel talks, radio shows, and workshops on topics related to independence. Coordinators acknowledge how this makes it more difficult for network members to connect and engage with the practice.

> For any independent structure time is money and the fact that you want to devote yourself for a cause which is kind of a volunteer cause it's a double-edged sword. And what's the reward? [..] The reward here is intangible. It is talking about spirit and engagement, and words. It is not about money or, you know, getting to do stuff specifically, and this is possibly the challenge, you know, to act kind of idealistically (coordinator 1).

Some of the respondents confirm this point, as eight out of eighteen members interviewed were non-active at the time of writing, three of whom never participated in any of the network's activities. The non-active members, although they expressed interest and appreciation of the project, chose not to participate due to the lack of resources and time or due to their affinity for other projects closer to their area of interest, as in the case of festivals. What is more, for some of the respondents, the purpose of the network is still unclear, limiting their willingness to contribute to the practice of the network. For instance, one interviewee admits:

> We've been to two events by Reset! so the first one, they've been using words like experiment and laboratory as for Reset! […] and it seems very vague and mysterious, and the year has passed and I don't know anything more (festival 3)

4.4. Values of the network

The political value of Reset! is recognized and appreciated by the policymakers interviewed. They regard the network as a potential partner in combating the rise of far-right populist governments that have been taking over European states. The network proves unique when compared to other European networks that gather big institutions, which, even if they are not necessarily public, are inevitably regulated to some extent by values related to national identity. Not being connected to any source of established power allows the possibility of dissent and contestation.

Although the network actors recognize the political value of their practices, they value the network for slightly different reasons. First and foremost, members acknowledge that the network has *emotional value*. The participants value getting together; they feel less

isolated and lonely in their practice and feel stronger within a community with whom they can share, discuss, and learn. One interviewee explains how the network provides a feeling of security:

> I think [the value of the network] is to share, learn, and to realize that you're not alone in what you do [..] It is like a motivating factor to stay, to sustain yourself. […] So, I think it can be this safety net for independent cultural actors (media 2)

This can potentially provide the drive for independent actors to continue their practices even when facing difficult moments. Moreover, being in a network allows for becoming stronger in the eyes of external parties, allowing the organizations to access certain opportunities:

> And yeah, it's really because in the independent scene, we struggle a lot, and it's very hard in terms of visibility possibilities. So, a network is really like a place where you can develop and get more. (other 2)

Networks are valuable for the discussion they spark between the members, which encourages them to reflect on their own practices and, therefore, evaluate them. Moreover, they allow the space for experimentation, first among peers and then applied to one's own organization.

> Let's say we want to expand our journalism elsewhere or create a new partnership to create new projects. We can be inspired by Reset's other members. Just say ok right now it seems they are working a lot on gender equality or female empowerment. Do we have something on the media scene which is actually matching those kinds of things or should we position ourselves to do that? Does it make sense for us? So I think this is what I mean by experiment (media 1)

Moreover, the cultural network has private value. The respondents value being in the network because it brings them visibility and opportunities; it allows them to start new projects, access funds, and activities, strengthen their projects, and gain visibility and voice. Another value discussed by the respondents is the political value of networks, in which members participate in the public discourse outside of their own country.

5. Discussion

Powell (1990) conceptualizes networks as a form of economic organization distinct from markets and hierarchies. Networks, in his view, are characterized by ongoing exchanges between two or more parties based on informal relationships (i.e., participants are not linked by legal ties). From this perspective, individuals or firms choose to organize their exchanges in networks when the activities of the parties involved are complementary and grant the members of the network an advantageous position against their competitors. Therefore, network coordination is ultimately deemed as a matter of competitive advantage and economic gain.

As the previous section depicts, these assumptions do not hold for a cultural network. Firstly, in the case of Reset! exchanges do not occur based on pecuniary gains, but rather, they occur through deliberating ideas and sharing knowledge and experiences. In other words, the exchange system is characterized by an idea-per-idea transaction rather than goods or services per money. Klamer's (2017) notion of *shared goods* is of use here. In his view, a shared good is a good that is sustained by the willingness to contribute of the participants. He asserts that, unlike in a transaction, there is no "immediate return" in the case of shared goods; there is only the assumption that "the contribution will add values to a shared good" (p. 88). In this regard, one can regard the network as a shared good or practice in which functions based on the willingness to contribute of the practitioners.

Secondly, a basic assumption in organizational theory is that coordination occurs through informal practices that rely on personal relationships (Thompson, 2003). In the cultural network, many of the members were not acquainted with each other at the time of writing. However, even if that is the case, the members assumed certain knowledge about each other, sharing a "mutual orientation" (Powell, 1990, p. 303). They *assumed* to share the same ideals (e.g., freedom of expression, democratic cultural sector) and experience (e.g., economic struggle, compromise) with the other members. Using the language of values, one can say that the network embodies values the members seek to realize. Thus, the coordination between members occurs through the assumption of shared ideals and experience.

Howard Becker (2008) deems cultural production as a social activity that requires the joint effort of numerous individuals. In his perspective, an artwork's creation involves individuals working different tasks together, guided by a shared understanding of the respective artistic practice referred to as conventions. Important for this analysis is the view that connections between individuals occur with the purpose of bringing an artwork into existence. The aggregate of those connections is called an Art World.

In a similar manner, Dekker and Morea (2023) argue that cultural practices are organized in artistic circles. Their conceptualization follows the concept of Innovation Commons introduced by Potts (2019), which he defines as “systems of rules for cooperation to facilitate pooling of information in order to maximize the likelihood of opportunity discovery” (p. 1). Allen and Potts (2016) argue that the earliest stages of technological innovation often emerge within groups of enthusiasts who pool their knowledge and resources and experiment without necessarily having a definite goal in mind. Dekker (2020) states that Innovation Commons are particularly prevalent in the cultural sector. However, the author contests the idea put forth by Potts (2019), who deems information to be the key resource in Innovation Commons. Dekker (2020) suggests looking at practices instead as they give “coherence and identity” (p. 663) to artistic communities. Moreover, he emphasizes the need to consider “places” in the analysis of scenes.

If the notion of artistic circles discussed in Dekker and Morea (2023) operates under similar principles as Dekker (2020), it can be inferred that communities of artists from around specific practices and adhere to particular conventions. Practitioners choose to join an artistic circle based on their values and level of expertise (Dekker and Morea, 2023). Although this might be the case for the members of the network who may take part in their respective local cultural scenes, it is not the case for the broader operation of the network. The connections around the network are neither organized around producing a specific art form such as in the case Becker (2008) argues for, nor around a specific scene that is defined by concrete practices. Even if one were to consider that ARIs constitute a scene, Coffield (2015) draws our attention to the fact that the notion of ‘conventions’ is rather limited for such projects as “members of ARIs cannot be expected or assumed to behave in certain

ways" (p. 213).

However, one can argue that the network is organized around an *imagined practice* of independence that is said to characterize non-institutional initiatives. To clarify, in the researcher's view, the practice of independence is imagined as it is not yet established but is currently in the making. Arguably, in the context of the network, independence is an umbrella term used for non-institutional initiatives that fit into what Dekker and Morea (2023) call the cultural civil society, which are bottom-up communities that operate at the intersection of the private and the public sphere. The authors argue that such communities often have a dual scope – to contribute to the artworld via aesthetic innovation and to bring a contribution to the social and political sphere. As the individual members belong to diverse art circles (e.g., underground music scene, independent publishing scene, international journalism), the researcher suggests that their connection through this network is less focused on realizing values related to "the aesthetic imagination" and prioritizes a shared vision of the social and political world to which they believe to contribute through their initiatives.

The social and political imaginary is particularly important for the coordinators of the network who argue that independent practices lie at the heart of social change. In other words, they believe that through independent practices, the values embedded in the shared social and political imaginary can be realized. Therefore, they proclaim that the main aim of the network is advocacy. As the practice of independence does not follow conventions and its meaning is often deemed ambiguous, the central focus of the network's formal activities is aimed at its valorization – "the creation, enhancement and affirmation of a value" (Klamer, 2003, p. 200) by establishing "conventions" (Becker, 1984, p. 42). This is clear when considering the first phase of the network, which has as an aim the public release of a *manifesto* that will contain information about the common condition of the practitioners and list the best practices. Therefore, they create a framework for the common practice of independence. Moreover, the network employs discursive practices such as workshops, podcasts, radio shows, panel talks, public statements, and so on to create and justify the value of independent practices both within the members of the network and to the broader

public and policymakers.

The policymakers interviewed place significant importance on the political value attributed to independent practices. In their regard, the Reset! network represents organizations that merge cultural and political elements, viewing them as valuable partners in overcoming political challenges such as the rise of right-wing populism. Independent practice, as depicted in the network's public communication, emphasizes notions such as democracy, social change, and freedom of speech. As Klamer (2021) asserts in his discussion on the logic of different economic spheres, "language matters" (p. 211). The values communicated by the network are aspects of the political imaginary that are valued in the governmental sphere (Klamer, 2021). Even more, in another of his works Klamer (2003b) argues that deliberation is crucial in the valorization process – the process in which an individual reflects whether to value something or not. He shows how using values that are incompatible with the spheres they are deliberated in could be detrimental to a project (e.g., cultural values in economic deliberations). Arguably, the language employed by the network matches the one of the policymakers and thus facilitates its valuation on the behalf of policymakers.

The process of valorization occurs differently within the network's members. They actively shape the social and political imagination related to independent practice. They do so through the network's formal discursive practices in which they deliberate, negotiate, and contest the values and meanings associated with independent practice. In that sense, networks serve as a platform for coordinating values and exchanging ideas about how independent practice should develop, shaping its meaning. It is worth noting that this reflective process and the political imagination underlying independent practice were subject to contestation during the interviews, some of the members even being confused about the network's formal purpose, questioning its political aims.

Regardless of their view on its formal activities, for most of the respondents, the cultural network is *valuable in itself*. In other words, the connections formed within the network are valuable in and of themselves. As depicted in the previous section, one of the central values attributed to the network was the emotional one. Members of the network

value getting together. Through collectivization, they alleviate the feeling of loneliness. Belonging to a community provides them with a safety net and a motivating factor for the members to continue pursuing their practices. Moreover, even members who are not particularly active have mentioned that they value taking part in the community. The importance of collectivization is portrayed by Pascal Gielen (2018). He distinguishes four spheres of life – domestic, peer, market, and civil – that should be in balance for a successful artistic career. He argues that over time, the logic of the market increasingly began to influence the operations of the other spheres, which, in turn, diminished the institutional protection those spheres granted the artists. Consequently, the artists have been negatively affected – suffering from increased pressure and burnout. It is worth noting that the author does not argue for the return of said institutions but considers collectivization through civil initiatives as a potential solution for regaining the balance between the spheres and thus safeguarding cultural production.

Arguably, one could consider the cultural network as a form of alternative institutional support for its members, even if this support is potentially solely on an emotional level. This helps regain some balance in the peer domain – the domain of social interaction in which artists gain knowledge through discussion and debates with fellow practitioners (Gielen, 2018).

In fact, the *value of discussion* is another fundamental value the members highlight when the network is considered. Conversations with fellow members allow them to reflect on and potentially change their own practice, thus facilitating value discovery and transformation. This view aligns well with Dekker and Morea's (2023) pragmatic view on values, which asserts that values are not "universal moral reference points" (p. 6) but rather reflect what is of significance to the practitioners. This implies that values are dynamic rather than static, and their realization is a process of exploration that is inherently social. Conversation with peers one admires in the network can lead to what Dekker and Morea describe as "value aspiration" (p. 39) - the desire to engage with a certain social practice because of the values it embodies.

Moreover, one argues that engaging in conversation enables the members of the

network to co-create values. According to Dekker and Morea (2023), value co-creation is associated with the relationship between the audience and artists. The authors proclaim that when a cultural good is released to the public, it has an open-ended nature in the sense that it requires certain efforts on behalf of its audience. Audiences need to engage with art, offer critique or appraisal, and in some cases, they can even perform it themselves (e.g., performing a cover of your favorite song). In other words, they participate in the meaning-making of an artwork. In the case of the network, however, value co-creation does not occur between the audience and the artist but rather between practitioner and practitioner. They engage in co-creation not so much by engaging with each other's practices but rather by sharing information and knowledge about their own activities and engaging in deliberation about the meaning and use of their own practice. It can be remarked that in the network, the information represents the key resource aligning with Potts' (2019) viewpoint.

One could also go a step further in analyzing the value of discussions. Considering Potts (2019), one could argue that due to the non-institutional nature of the members, organizations are faced with a high level of uncertainty regarding their condition due to the precarious nature of their work. Within the network, members from diverse fields and geographical locations possessing heterogeneous information come together to share and discuss to make sense of and reach a common understanding of their practice. They do not do so to find opportunities for aesthetic innovation but opportunities to make themselves sustainable. This view was especially prevalent among members coming from countries in which culture receives less governmental support, such as Georgia and Ukraine.

6. Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the value of networks as a mode of organizing culture from a pragmatic perspective. It drew upon the concept of networks as found in Organizational Theory literature, following especially the work of Powell (1990) and the pragmatic approach of values of Dekker and Morea (2023) to construct what is, to the researcher's knowledge, a novel approach to studying networks in the context of Cultural Economics.

In a pragmatic approach, if one is to inquire about values, one should pay special attention to practices, and consequently, this thesis regards the network as a practice rather than an object. Networks, regarded as social practices, fit into the framework of Dekker and Morea (2023), which explores the different steps of the process through which the values of the arts are realized. Networks were deemed worth exploring due to their ability to overcome locality (i.e., connecting transnational organizations whose main operations are local) and due to their increased prevalence at a European level (Gielen & Lijster, 2017).

That being said, this study aimed to answer the following research question: *What is the value of networks for culture, and how do creators organize cultural networks?* and the following sub-questions:

(1) How do cultural networks justify the value of their activities and cultural initiatives?
(2) What central values support the making of cultural networks, and how do they become institutionalized?

The themes discussed in this research are useful for answering the research question. *Ties and coordination* portray how the cultural network is organized. Secondly, through the theme of *establishing conventions,* the activities through which independent practice is institutionalized and justified are explored. Lastly, the research reaches a conclusion on the values of the network through the third theme holding the same name.

Regarding ties and coordination, the analysis showcased how a cultural network can be distinguished from the conventional conceptualization of networks in Organizational Theory. For Powell (1990), networks are a different form of economic organization than markets and hierarchies. He focuses on explaining how, in circumstances in which the

quality of goods is hard to assess and there is a need for specialized knowledge, firms tend to operate and coordinate based on relations of trust and reciprocity forged through ongoing exchanges. Focusing on industrial arrangements, however, in his regard, transactions in the network are of a pecuniary nature – money per service or good, the ultimate goal of the collaboration is added economic value.

In a cultural network, however, the exchange is not characterized by pecuniary gains and competitive advantage but rather by sharing ideas and knowledge. The exchange of ideas does not work based on the expectation of immediate return but on the expectation that their contribution will add value to the network. Therefore, the cultural network is better conceptualized as a shared good or practice (Klamer, 2017).

Secondly, in the cultural network, coordination does not occur through trust forged by previous exchanges but by an assumption of a "mutual orientation" (Powell, 1990, p. 303) of shared ideals and common experiences. What is more, the network is organized around the practice of independence that embodies a common social and political imagination rather than an artistic one. This contrasts the views of Becker (1984) and Decker and Morea (2023), who view artistic production as the social practices through which the values of culture are realized as organized around a specific cultural practice.

The second theme, "establishing conventions," regards the activities through which independent practice is justified and institutionalized in the context of the network. Firstly, the coordinators formulated the rules of *independence, which represent the membership criteria* for the network. Moreover, through the first three phases of the network, the coordinators aim to justify the value of independent practice in the eyes of policymakers. This requires some level of standardization and generalization that they are trying to establish by creating a frame of a common practice.

The discursive practices aim to create and justify the value of independence both within the members of the network and for outsiders. In these activities, the practice of independence is framed in two ways: by being fundamental to tackling social change and by being under constant threat of the changing political context and the expansion of large private companies. The grammar employed by the network suits the governmental sphere

(Klamer, 2021), and thus, policymakers find independent practice valuable. However, the political value is not as clear to the respondents.

The *values of the network*, however, are different for the members. The practitioners find the network *valuable in itself*, which was presented under the sub-theme named *emotional value*. They value getting together and the sense of solidarity and safety provided by the network. In this sense, the network can be seen as an alternative form of institutional support (Gielen, 2018).

Another important value, and perhaps the most important in the context of this study, is the *discussion value*. Conversations allow members to reflect on their practice and potentially change it. The network thus enables the members to discover and alter their values. This is a particularly important discovery that aligns with Dekker and Morea (2023) and implies that values are not static, but they are dynamic and can be changed.

One argues that this study makes an important contribution to the discipline of Cultural Economics for several reasons. Firstly, it provides a basis of knowledge for the research of cultural networks within the discipline, providing interested researchers with a framework that could be used as a guidepost. Secondly, it provides another account for the dynamism of values. Finally and most importantly, this study indicates that cultural networks play an important role in the process of realizing the values of culture that Dekker and Morea (2023) have overlooked, thus requiring further investigation. Considering them in the process is particularly important as networks move beyond artistic circles and connect peers transnationally. Moreover, they are organized around shared experiences and ideals rather than actual practices.

6.1. Insights into the European Networks of Creative and Cultural Organizations

The study allows for making some observations about the European Networks of Creative and Cultural Organisations. One believes that the network projects are valuable as they allow for transnational deliberations on the state of a certain cultural sector and give a direct voice to cultural initiatives to the European Commission policymakers. This is even more useful as the initiatives can participate in the public discourse and receive support

outside of their own countries.

However, several aspects of the project can potentially raise issues. Firstly, as the coordinators mentioned, participating in a network project requires time and resources. Moreover, it imposes a certain language barrier. One believes that, in this sense, the representation such projects allow for is limited. Secondly, as the thesis depicted, these networks require some degree of institutionalization of their practice to communicate and collaborate with the policymakers. While that is not necessarily a bad thing, in the context of Reset!, which stresses the non-institutionalized nature of independent practices, it should be recognized more. Moreover, while the message of the Reset! the network is apparent; the practicality is less so, in the sense that it is not clear what it is specifically that they are advocating for. Here, the researcher puts forward Dekker and Morea's (2023) suggestion about advocating for a framework that allows initiatives to have space to engage in their practices. Lastly, the strong emphasis on the ability of independent practices to drive social change can lead to the instrumentalization of the practice.

6.2. Limitations

Multiple limitations could be mentioned in regard to this study. Firstly, due to its novelty in literature, the chosen topic proved to be rather complex for a novice researcher. Conceptualizing the topic proved to be an especially difficult task that required repeated attempts. Consequently, as the interviews were taken relatively early in the research process, the operationalization was not very consistent with the scope of the study. Secondly, one found it difficult to operationalize according to the pragmatic approach as, to the researcher's knowledge, there are no guidelines or methods on how to do so, and it can get confusing at times.

Secondly, the researcher did not have access to any of the private practices of the network; thus, one believes that a major dimension of the network's dynamics and functioning was missed.

6.3. Future research

As this study was exploratory and aimed to solely provide a basis of knowledge on the practice of cultural networks, it uncovered numerous avenues for future research. For instance, one could explore how the dynamics of a cultural network develop over time. As the Reset! network was a young network at the time of writing; its values were not yet institutionalized. One believes it would be of great interest to see how the valuation process develops over time and potentially distinguish the stages of development of a network.

Moreover, this thesis unveiled that the network is relevant in the process of realizing the values of culture and that it performs a complementary role to the four steps proposed by Dekker and Morea (2023). The role of cultural networks in this process could be explored in more depth by emphasizing a comparison between networks and the other steps proposed by the authors.

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Annex A – Overview of the Reset ! network members at the time of writing

Name	Country	City	Focus of the organization
Pixelache	Helsinki	Finland	Collective
Oramics	Poland	Kraków	Collective
Vinylbox	Italy	Naples	Collective
Bijat	Kosovo	Pristina	Collective
Radio Quantica	Portugal	Lisbon	Community Radio
Sphere Radio	Germany	Leipzig	Community Radio
Palanga Street Radio	Letonia	Vilnius	Community radio
20ft radio	Ukraine	Kyiv	Community radio
Mutant Radio	Georgia	Tbilisi	Community radio
Lahmacum Radio	Hungary	Budapest	Community Radio
La Foret Electronique	France	Toulouse	Cultural venue
Tropsime	France	Montpellier	Cultural venue
Ground Control	France	Paris	Cultural venue
La Valle	Belgium	Brussels	Cultural venue
ISBN	Hungary	Budapest	Cultural venue
Aurora	Hungary	Budapest	Cultural venue
Le Guess Who	Netherlands	Utrecht	Cultural venue
PIP	Netherlands	The Hague	Cultural venue
Inkonst	Sweden	Malmö	Cultural venue
Drugstore	Serbia	Belgrade	Cultural venue
Femnoise	Spain	Barcelona	Digital platform
Black Artist Database	UK	London	Digital platform

Cameltown	Belgium	Antwerp	Other
Les garages			
Numerique	Belgium	Brussels	Other
c/o pop	Germany	Cologne	Festival
Seanaps	Germany	Leipzig	Festival
Intonal	Sweden	Malmö	Festival
Insomnia	Tromso	Norway	Festival
Unsound	Poland	Kraków	Festival
Elevate	Austria	Graz	Festival
Terraforma	Italy	Milan	Festival
reworks agora	Greece	Thessaloniki	Festival
Artportal.hu	Hungary	Budapest	Media
MMN	Hungary	Budapest	Media
Lazy Women	Hungary	Budapest	Media
Arty Farty	France	Lyon	Coordinator
Soundwall	Italy	Milan	Media
Arty Farty Brussels	Belgium	Brussels	Coordinator
are WE europe	Netherlands	Amsterdam	Media
skala magazine	Macedonia	Skopje	Publishing
Kajet	Romania	Bucharest	Publishing
Whisper Not			
Agency	Spain	Barcelona	Music industry related
Bi:pole	France	Marseille	Music industry related
BLiP	Netherlands	Amsterdam	Music industry related
InFine	France	Paris	Music industry related
CPWM	UK	Leeds	Music industry related
Fairly	France	Paris	Other
Consentis	France	Paris	Other
Café Babel	France	Paris	Media

The shift project	France	Paris	Other
Canal 180	Portugal	Porto	Media
Garp Sessions	Turkey	Çanakkale	Other
De Structura	Estonia	Tartu	Other
All Girls to the Front	Poland	Warsaw	Collective
Réflexivité(s)	France	Lourmarin	Cultural venue
Robida	Italy	Topolovec	Collective

Annex B – List of respondents

Participants	Country	Focus of organization	Code for respondent
Reset! Co-founders	France		coordinator 1
Reset! Editorial coordinator	France		coordinator 2
Magma	Belgium	Music events, Artist management, Consultancy	collective 1
All Girls to the Front	Poland	Music events, Publishing	collective 2
Le Guess Who	Netherlands	Music festival	festival 1
Elevate	Austria	Festival focused on the intersection of music and politics	festival 2
Unsound	Poland	Experimental music festival	festival 3
Kajet	Romania	Magazine focused on Eastern European art	magazine
cafebabel/ ereb	France	European journalism	media 1
Lazy Women	Hungary	Blog on the intersection of the political and personal	media 2
Canal 180	Portugal	TV Broadcasting	media 3
De Structura	Estonia	Platform supporting young artists	other 1
Pixelache	Finland	Multidisciplinary association	other 2
Consentis	France	Organization increasing safety in night clubs awareness	other 3
20ft radio	Ukraine	Community radio	radio 1
Lahmacum Radio	Hungary	Community radio	radio 2
Mutant Radio	Georgia	Community radio	radio 3
ISBN	Hungary	Book shop and art gallery	venue 1

PIP	Netherlands	Event venue	venue 2
Alejandro Ramilo	Belgium	Project Advisor and Coordinator	policy-maker 1
Monica Urian	Belgium	Policy officer	policy-maker 2
Danijela Jovic	Belgium	Project Officer	policy-maker 3

Appendix C – Topic Guide

Introduction

- Name
- Age
- Background and education
- Role within the [organization/ collective/ project]

Practices

- Activities/ Practices of initiative
- Motivation to start/ join the initiative
- Purpose of initiative
- Structure of initiative
- Values of initiative

Independence

- Definition of independence
- What makes this initiative independent
- Importance of independence
- Struggles

Network

- Reasons for joining
- Purpose of the network
- Activity in the network
- Responsibilities
- What brings the members together – how they relate to the other initiatives
- Impact of network
- Value of network

Appendix D – List of events attended

Name of the event	Location	Date	Connection to the network
Focus meeting: Ukraine	Lyon	16th of May	Activity organized within the network
Focus meeting: the state of the independent	Lyon	16th of May	Activity organized within the network
Networking event at Nuits Sonores	Lyon	16th of May	Activity organized within the network (private)
Talk: Space and Dance of Urgency. How can we enable access to space for the next generation of culture?	Lyon	17th of May	Network members participated
Radio Lab: Sound Sustainability: How Live Music Venues are Taking on Environmental Challenges?	Lyon	17th of May	Network members hosted the event
Radio Lab 2: Shaping Tomorrow's Europe. The Role of Cultural	Lyon	17th of May	Network members hosted the event

Networks

Workshop: Crowd Power. Using Dance for Renewable Energy	Lyon	18th of May	Network members participated
Workshop: Building your Own Community Radio	Lyon	19th of May	Network members participated