INNOVATION IS A QUALITATIVE CATEGORY:

Apparatus of experimental music applied by cultural intermediaries

for the articulation and practice of innovation in events

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Abstract

As cultural economics adapts economic concepts to their concrete application in the creative and cultural industries, certain gaps in understanding are observed. The discrepancy is also present between academic and real-life contexts. In the case of experimental forms of music in event and festivals, the concept of innovation is often used in the value statements of organisations. However, it seems to differ from the meaning attributed by research. While innovation is mainly understood through the prism of technological and economic factors like price, other branches in literature argue for the quasi-impossibility of defining and assessing innovation through traditional economic tools.

To solve this, an argument can be made for qualitative exploration through a value-based approach that delves holistically into the perceptions and experience of concerned actors and encourages a clear establishment of envisioned and realised values. This thesis aims to thus to answer the following research question: How do cultural intermediaries articulate and put innovation into practice in experimental forms of music and events? The role of intermediary – ranging from active audience member to producer and cultural works, such as programmers or marketeers – ensures a reliability towards their perceptions and opinions. While in-depth interviews were conducted on a sample of intermediaries from the local Dutch experimental music scene and data collected, the insights were further studied through a grounded theory approach and a thematic analysis.

Relating to the field of experimental music and using the lens of experimentation as a process and apparatus, the findings highlighted that innovation, although still highly contested and regarded as over-used in its deployment for both form and content of music, it constitutes a social construct in which there is room for intermediaries to assign their own meaning and for a new dialectic of innovation. Resistance to such concepts is transformed then a catalyst for the meaning-making. This way, they can strategically orient the obtention of subsidies in a way that fits their interpretation and use of innovation. Nonetheless, intermediaries argue for the necessity of integrated and collective shaping of innovation through knowledge-sharing, co-creation of its conditions and open discussions to address the appearing gap between concrete and conceptual negotiations.

We conclude then that, despite alignment with academic observations on definitional lacks, principles of experimentation present in the music ecosystem of our respondent brings a new explorative angle to innovation. Through which cultural and creatives industries can free themselves from neoclassical ideals of progress that sets obstacles for experiential forms of arts where cultural outcomes are unknown, demands uncertain and market success inapt for grasping social and societal dimensions.

Keywords: *Innovation, Cultural Intermediary, Experimental Music, Cultural Ecosystems, Value*
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1. Introduction

Shifts in the music industry, mainly that of digitalisation, has proven to impair the generation of revenues for artists. They have thus increasingly found new ways to make income on top of digital sales and streams that are rarely enough. Substantial studies have shown that live music and performing arts have the most potential to do so (Frith, 2007), and is the most important, if not the only profitable way to secure continuous earnings, on top of reaching audiences. Hand-in-hand, festivals became the primary form of live music, allowing both sides of promotors and artists to reach those goals (Mulder & Hitters, 2020). As their number has rapidly risen, mainly from the beginning of the 21st century (Frey 2000), such quantitative rise can only bring interrogations about their qualitative features. The offered supply of festivals, being mainly the programme, its content and experience, can generate innovations for the music industry and the festival sector in general (Mackellar, 2006). Although certain types of festivals and events define themselves as innovative by nature, providing forward-thinking, adventurous and exploratory acts, I observed a lack of measurements and conceptual framework to uncover in which ways they may achieve these goals. This is why this thesis will answer the following research question: *How do cultural intermediaries articulate and put innovation into practice in experimental forms of music and events?*

The starting point was my own interest for those types of events, both personally as an active audience member and professionally through past and current occupations. Over time, my taste and that of my peers developed into more niche and concentrated spheres of music that are more generally and broadly, sometimes out of conveniency, referred to as 'experimental'. For instance, the Shape+ platform – non-profit and European-Union funded platform for innovative music and art concerned with talent development and career fostering through residencies, commissions, seminars, networking events and performances opportunities – collaborates and partners up with over a dozen of festivals and event platforms who all make us of concepts of innovation, experimental music, and other adjacent words. If the term is contested and abstract (Lucier, 2017), experimental music uncovers a certain approach and attitude to music whose principles and guidelines (Ballantine, 1977) can be applied on a broader level to several independent and alternative branches of music. Similarly, the notion of innovation is subject to many definitional obstacles and theoretical gaps, especially when such business and technology-oriented concept is applied to the field of cultural and creative industries (Wijngaarden et al., 2016). After all, economics being a social science, certain currents in economics claim it only makes sense to incorporate it as widely as possible

(Lazear, 2000). The economic concept of experience goods, theorised by Nelson (1970), fits the topic of festivals and events as they are neither fully a product or a service, and requires thus different methods. Next to this, existing literature on the articulation of innovation by cultural workers (Wijngarden et al., 2016) underlines the complexity of the innovation concept, as *something new*, is not always obvious and evident to the point that many professionals doubt its actual existence in creative and culture industries, besides when talking about technological progress. To bridge this gap, we must look into relevant patterns and insights on what cultural intermediaries deem as innovative and how they approach value in their respective ecosystem.

Additionally, the roots of innovation tend to destine it for quantitative measure, whilst there are many benefits to qualitative exploration in terms of conceptual and theoretical definition of contested concept, in order to explore the own perceptions of actors involved in a field. Adorno in *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a damaged life* brings up a compelling point on this matter that resonated with my thesis process, but here about modernity: "Modernity is a qualitative category, not a chronological one. Just as it cannot be reduced to an abstract form" (1951, p.218). Likewise, this thought can serve as a guideline for approaching innovation. Just as abstract, innovation becomes then a construct and its necessary attribution of meaning stems from interpretation. By pertaining to the field of arts and culture and presenting essentially a lot of subjectivity and taste preferences, difficulties arise in attempts to assess quality in a systematic or impartial way (Cunningham, 2002).

On top of aforementioned notions of events/festivals, innovation and experimental music, the second chapter of this thesis dives into existing theory, on cultural intermediaries, and values, and discusses the concepts in perspective of each other. Branches of cultural economics seem to point out at the prevalent role of so-called intermediaries that might bridge the gap between the supply and the demand and serve as guarantors and assessors of quality and value within markets (Stachowiak, 2017). The scope of intermediaries as solely middlemen in the field can be expended to that of peers, which would include creative producers and artists too. Audiences might benefit to reach out to intermediaries in order to make sense of their consumption. although due to accessibility and digitalisation that allow for amateur participation of consumers in valuation processes, consumers and intermediaries often overlap. For this research, we will use the concept of cultural ecosystem (De Bernard et al., 2022) to describe the interconnectedness and multiplicity of occupations and perceptions in the field – or scene – of experimental music. In this case, audiences, producers, artists and cultural workers are interrelating and connecting with each other. As we are interested in their perceptions, the use of a Value-Based Approach helps mapping out potential practices of innovation and makes

sense of how do communities and 'regimes of valuations' (Karpik, 2011) create, shape and analyse cultural and social values attached to innovation (Klamer 2017, Petrova et. al.2022). It constitutes a methodological framework to measure and assess the success and completion of desired values, as well as unveil sub-consequent ones. This thesis aims thus at uncovering ways in which participants of this cultural ecosystem put into practice principles of experimental music, that itself helps unravel the understanding and application of innovation.

Whilst deductive and quantitative research on innovation necessitates high means in data collection and analysis, in-depth qualitative interviews with peers and so-called intermediaries from related cultural industries, ecosystems and occupations may contribute to a clearer determination of the innovation criteria and the assessment of their realisation through the lens of experimental music and experimentation. Fourteen semi-formal interviews were thus conducted on a Dutch local sample of intermediaries, representative of the concepts advanced here and capable of providing useful insights on innovation. Our research method and design is further developed in chapter 3. The following quote "Experimentation exists on the margins of everything that is currently running" from one of the respondents already announces the tone and direction this thesis will take. A combination of grounded theory approach to our data with a thematic analysis will highlights various dimensions of understanding and relate all used concepts to each other in order to provide answers to our research questions and complete, nuance, accept or refute our hypotheses. Findings will then be interpreted and put in perspective in the light of theory in chapter 4. Throughout its completion, the thesis showed several theoretical, methodological and findings-based implications, all eligible for the development of further research or at least the underlining of its limitations and potential. Alongside concluding remarks and main takeaways, those will be specified in chapter 5.

The following set of formulated hypotheses followed a hermeneutics approach to establishing the current theoretical narrative around innovation, its articulation by cultural intermediaries, its relation to experimental forms of music, and its application in festivals and events. Innovation is more than merely technological. It can be something novel, something contributing to society, something combining old and new elements. The valuation of innovation in experimental music content is based on the a posteriori experience. Alternative forms of festivals and live music events are drivers of innovation. The different roles of cultural intermediaries and experimental music processes shape the conditions of emergence of innovation. Cultural intermediaries probe the various values associated with experimental music events in order to justify its relevance. All in all, this emerging theory provides a dialectic of meaning-making and experience that this thesis will explore.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Innovation in the CCIs and festivals: concepts, measures and limitations

This thesis' main point of study, being innovation, is rapidly confronted with matters of aesthetics in the establishment of its theoretical framework. Innovation occurring within the cultural and creative industries (CCI's) has proven to be difficult to measure quantitatively and statistically due to the presence of an art for art's sake and conceptual aesthetic features in their product and services (Cunningham, 2002). The same abstract nature of concepts originally archetypal of economics, technology, science or engineering (Wijgaarden et al., 2016) hinders the study of innovation through a qualitative lens, if not suffers from a quasi-systematic exclusion to the research. Indeed, the idea of new products as innovative inputs and their high performance in the market as outputs remain often too simplistic and non-applicable to creative industries, contrarily to scientific and technological (mostly STEM) sectors, or business and management ones when sometimes attached to R&D (research and development).

Contradictorily, CCI's are often defined as being innovative by essence, or at least significantly more than in other fields. Indeed, the businesses are nearly always a source of innovation when there is a commercial basis to the services offered (Stam, De Jong, Marlet, 2008). Due to the rise of the knowledge economies—concerned with the transmission of information (Brinkley, 2006)—service and experiential economies (Scott, 2000), as well as Florida's widespread belief of the creative class generating economic growth and innovation in places they settle and work in, cultural economists such as Throsby (2001) and Oakley (2009) enhance the idea of the creative economy driving novelty and ideas. In 2000, Caves argue that innovation and the generation of novelty in CCIs is not simply additional to business practices but essential for firms to survive. Whilst small firms are generally sources of innovation, larger ones benefit from the novelties by implementing them in their activities, keeping the industry going; such phenomenon is described by Peterson (1971) about the popular recorded music industry in the United States where innovations (organisation and technological) proved to be drivers of diversity within the field allowing new artists, genres and cultural movements to emerge.

Perhaps this essential quality of innovation is what excludes the CCI's from regular innovation studies and the deepening of its framework. Indeed, solid framework and a conceptualisation of what innovation means in the CCIs is strongly lacking (Wijngaarden et al., 2016). Nonetheless, researches have tried to supplement the traditional conceptualisation of

innovation by Schumpeter (1934) deployed as the introduction of new goods, methods of production, markets, sources of supply and organisation. Although Stoneman greatly contributes to the debate in 2009 by coining the concept of soft innovation, the inclusion of creative qualities into new products only covers how general products can benefit and succeed in their market when added aesthetic features. If the renown Oslo Manual (2005) for the making of innovation surveys establishes a concrete framework (new/improved products/service, introduction to the industry, business processes, new distribution methods, presence of an innovation plan, use of external and exchanged knowledge, partnership, use of specialised workers, expenditures in training and education), application onto the creative and cultural industries, especially those of services and experiences, is limited. (Bellini, 2017). For instance, Stam, De Jong and Marlet (2008) mention instances where surveys of innovation excluded firms constituted by less than ten employees. However, such small firms are widely present in the CCIs and it resulted in their majority being overlooked.

Whilst Castañer and Campos (2002) divide artistic innovation in terms of the content and form of the object, Bakhshi and Throsby (2009) focus on innovation in the form development, audience reach, value creation and business management and/or governance. Still relevantly, Larson (2013) looks into organisational practices that foster innovation and renewal, such as encouragement of brainstorming, imitation of other relevant actors and the consideration of external environments, allowing for an organic emergence of innovation: either incrementally (combination of new and existing) or improvisationally (completely new). Such concepts mirror the innovation matrix (Figure 1) based on the theory of Satell (2017) taking as criteria the definition of a certain problem and the domain in which the innovation occurs. Depending on how well defined the variables are, the innovation pertains to different categories: breakthrough, sustaining, basic and disruptive (also sometimes associated to radical innovation due to its impact in an industry, resulting often in the creation of new market). We see then a concordance between more traditional forms of economic theory of innovation and its direct application in cultural economics which, to an extent, crucially needs neo-classical basis in order to justify its relevancy.

Figure 1. Innovation matrix. Source : Kohardinata et. al (2020)

Eltham (2012) brings a critique to the idea of accumulative or breakthrough innovation by highlighting the fact that market success of a new or recombined product does not necessarily equate relevancy and innovativeness. Three arguments against soft innovation are made in his paper, all highly related to the very notion of economics. Stoneman's account on soft innovation exist within the fictitious frames of neoclassical economics that assumes perfect competition, certainty, an equilibrium between the supply and demand, the rivalry and excludability of goods, the homogeneity of goods, of profit-seeking firms and utility-maximising consumers, and finally copyrights as a perfect incentive for innovation. Evidently, the reality of cultural goods and services is far outside the world of neo-classical economics, especially when different school of thoughts differ in their considerations. Eltham highlights as well how the North American tradition tends to view innovation, mainly technological, as drivers of economics growth, whereas the European tradition generally understands innovation as processes of production and commercialisation of products. Similarly, that distinction can be related to the first two types of valuation approaches that Dekker (2015) brings about: economic analysis and the commerce approach. Pointing out the emergence of a third type, being valuation and the involvement of organisations, peers, experts and communities, may relate to how Eltham considers initial views not enough to understand soft innovation. His conclusions points towards in-depth works of academics about real innovation and refers to Jackson who states that so-called 'agents of cultural innovation', listing 'ethnic entrepreneurs', 'cultural intermediaries' or 'ordinary consumers' have a much larger importance than usually considered (2002, p.14). Nonetheless, if some academics talk about real innovation and some emphasize on the essentially innovative nature of the CCIs as a "process and by-product of creative production", the gap between those considerations and how actual cultural workers view it is blatant (Wijngaarden et al., 2016, p. 19). Answers from this research include the belief that

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there is no more innovation to be made, but technological. Another explanation however might be that academic findings and notions get too seldomly incorporated in real-life cases of policy development, organisational practices and the vocabulary of CCIs' actors (Klamer, 2016).

The aforementioned research of Wijngaarden et al. (2016) is also highly relevant due to its research design and qualitative method of interviews with cultural workers, that also pertain to the sphere of intermediaries that this paper is concerned with. It also highlights how innovation beyond that of technology and the innovation that is not radical and evident. Additionally, it looks at the root of the problem and observe that Dutch CCIs, specialised in cultural products, do not always believe in the concept of innovation, or at least in its application in their sector. Thanks to qualitative interviews, the researchers were able to understand more peers' perspectives and impressions of the concept through three dimensions of: (a) complete newness; (b) contribution to society and (c) a combination of new and existing elements. Indeed, a quantitative process and its data collection are made possibly through the use of widely-spread, and possibly costly, surveys, or the collected information about the organisations, their partners and audiences that are rarely accessible publicly or cannot always be systematically traced, mainly due to confidentiality reasons. Such method reveals itself consequent and burdensome, especially when the relevancy of studying innovation in the CCIs is not fully supported or explicitly evident by its own members. Nonetheless, Wijngaarden's scope of research remains highly based on cultural products and goods, as opposed to services and entertainment, and/or commercial artistic commission work (i.e. graphic design or advertising for instance) and undermines the particularities in innovation that services or experience goods like music festivals and events can present.

2.2. Festival typology and application of innovation

Given the topic of this thesis, we must establish the links between studies of innovation and that of festivals. As events, (Getz, 2008), culture festivals such as music festivals place very much the generation, transformation and use of knowledge at the core of the value chain of services and festivals (Carlsen et al. 2010) in order to produce innovation (Castro-Martínez et al., 2022). Their multi-facetted character of presenting multiple functions and different values makes their case relevant for this thesis' objectives as connecting points for intermediaries to relate to the meaning of innovation and exemplify its practice.

Since 2018, The Netherlands alone witness a rise of 10% in the number of festivals organised per year (Vliet, 2019). The phenomenon of the rapid growth, multiplication and increasing importance – coined as festivalisation (Bennett, Taylor, Woodward, 2014) — is now observed exponentially. Nonetheless, empirical and statistical study of festivals must, first and foremost, define what festivals are and describe the different types it concerns itself with. Winston et al. (2017) dives into existing festival definitions, all directing to either tourism, themes, identity or ideology, spatiality etc., to ultimately label them as events held openly, in time and place, whose programming exists pertains to the range of activity of the organisation, in opposition to events who occur outside of it. Evidently, the field of study has increased along yet researches find many relevant gaps. Here again Winston et al. (2017) explains how festivals were firstly put as a sub-categories of event studies, or under the fields of business, management or tourism, to be progressively more precise, thanks to the *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* for instance, as the number of academic publications about festivals went up from none to two (circa mid-1970's to mid-1990's), up to a mean of over 13 (2009-2014). Nevertheless, topics revolve mainly around motivation for organising, funding, attendance, the experience of attendees, and the relationship between festivals and their local environment, whilst undermining networks in which they pertain as well as their development over time. From an economic perspective, Frey (2000) enumerates factors from the supply and demand sides that explain the surge or festivals. For instance, the demand for festivals show high increase due to the higher disposable income of audiences, to the novelty and attractivity of specific types of festivals as well as a decrease in cost when festival attendance is combined with touristic activities. Similarly to cluster theory regarding its importance in innovation process, festivals can constitute a form of hub, cluster and network in which innovation is stimulated and attractive to a certain creative class (Zukauskaite, 2012). The demand meets then the supply for who costs of production are lower while expanding the creativity scope and generating employment facilitating justification for public support and sponsoring.

While there is extensive literature on festivals, there is a lack of research focused on innovation studies. Papers that cover this subject present several gaps which can be filled. Indeed, some cover rather the impact of festivals on attended and local environments rather than over the art form they represent, or their development and evolution over time (Wilson, 2017). While some papers are centred around cultural tourism (Hjalager, 2014), others explore mainly organisational matters within the management of the festival but lack coverage over the real cultural value creation of programmes (Carlsen et al., 2010).

In 2008, Paleo and Wijnberg suggest an innovativeness index of the number of new performers and of musical genres included in the programme, measured relatively from one year to the other. A paper by Castro-Martínez, Recasens and Fernández-de-Lucio (2022) on innovation in early music festivals gives a complete framework and division of innovation in terms of areas. Innovation is observed at (pre-)production and at the commercialisation and distribution in terms of strategies: A/ content (new artists, established artists, new performance types, premieres), B/ collaborations (networks, artists, institutes, universities and schools), C/ production and technological innovation (new material, technologies, unconventional venues…). It is also observed in terms of outcomes: (1) larger and diversified audience, (2) increase in ticket sales and revenue, (3) new sponsorships, (4) increased involvement of local stakeholders in the development of festivals, and finally (5) an improved prestige and enhanced public image of the festival. Nonetheless, those two call for quantitative measures only. The variations in number of the different variables might not necessarily indicate an innovative nature to the acts and genres of a given festival, and fails to consider the perceived artistic and cultural benefits of music.

Mackellar, already in 2006, argued for the determination of a typology of innovation, supplemented by a focus on the involved actors and their interactions. On top of marketing, service, process, organisational, management and product innovation, which relate highly to neoclassical conceptualisations, his research brings in social innovation in the equation and integrates it to the other common types of innovations. Another particularity to this research is the use of qualitative interviews, also observed in Wijngaarden et al. (2016), which inspired the research method of this thesis. Here, social innovation concerns the building of social capital as well as the development and maintenance of bonds between the members of a festival's network. Mackellar finally concludes that a more integrated perspective on innovation contributes to the discussion over the value of festivals as innovation hubs. An interpretive use of existing literature and available sources on several case studies is seen in Carlsen et al. (2010). This qualitative and extensive literature review brings explores the accumulated knowledge on a topic thanks to a narrative process. One of the advantages is the possibility of delving into several types of festivals rather than generalising theory to the field of festivals in general. For instance, one of the case studies concerns the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. As the paper argues that festival organisations have interest in embracing failure in the search for innovation for the generation of knowledge on future growth opportunities, it also purposefully takes the example of a type that by nature is concerned with challenging the norm. Positioned in the Fringe movement, the festival focuses on social inclusivity and diversity. A disadvantage

of the paper is the interpretive nature of the literature whilst extensive interviews would provide a reliable understanding of the given festivals, including a better dive into the artistic and cultural typology.

We witness then a myriad of ways in which festivals are studied yet the instances are quite singular. A gap in the literature can be filled in places in which qualitative study is lacking, where there is little to no consideration of the artistic and cultural angle of innovation or where festivals are seen as a general group of events instead of a multitude of types based on musical niche or genres. A report on festivals in the Netherlands categorised roughly the main types of culture festivals into film, food, art and music. (Vliet, 2019). Evidently, each category can be deployed in a myriad of sub-types especially for the purpose of this thesis focused on music. An instance is, for example, so-called 'serious' music festivals (mainly operatic and classical music) whose surge Frey (2000) researches in the light of financial struggles that opera houses, theatres or concerts halls are subject to. An attendee-focused researched by Gyimóthy (2009) takes the setting of 'niche' festivals to classify visitors in observers, connoisseurs and experimentalists, based on their motivations to attend. Another classification, offered by Lene and Peterson (2008), provides a scale from less to more corporate and institutionalised by placing types of music scenes in: avant-garde, scene-based, industry-based and tradition-based. Applied to this thesis, we can consider that the ecosystems research is placed between the scene-based (local and not necessarily occupational) and industry-based (market-driven and professional) categories. Since considered festivals will be generally non-profit, they are only industry-based due to their organisational aspect but are closer to a scene-based approach due to their maintenance of authenticity. Lastly, the tradition-based type corresponds to the actors' willingness and intrinsic motivation to protect and bequeath a certain music type or movement and its values. In a way, the festivals studied in this paper can also pertain to this approach, but present an intention to bring innovations, thus going beyond preservation and instead making music and performance evolve.

Other researchers (Dowd, Liddle, Nelson, 2004) choose the concept of 'scenes' to explain the creation of festivals and the fields they are attached to, which can also be understood in terms of 'subculture' or 'counter-culture' that are extensively covered respectively by Hebdige (1979) or Roberts (1978). Suggestively, those terms can in a way be closely affiliated to the concept of 'communities' or 'cosmopolite'. Considering the ways cosmopolitanism is widely present in the contemporary art world, thus must exist within that of music festivals. Chalcraft, Delanty and Sassatelli (2016) researched the expression and values of cosmopolitanism in the field of festivals, also by firstly listing four types of relationships it

presents: relativisation of own's identity, positive recognition of the other, mutual evaluation of cultures, shared normative cultures. If the term generally holds a negative connotation, it seems that some festivals intrinsically present an openness, a celebration of cultural diversity and a strong cultural omnivorousness like Peterson labelled (1992) to the point of it almost being banal and part of the norm. The basis of it is done through the example of the Euro-Festival (Sassatelli et al. 2011), a project supported by the Research Framework of the European Union aiming at exploring the cultural significance of cultural festivals in Europe by stepping out of the idea of festivals being embedded into the radical dichotomies of authentic against standardised, and engaged against commercial. Chalcraft et al. (2016) argues for the concept of 'public aesthetic culture' that allows festivals to develop themselves and generate positive cultural outcomes intrinsically to their occurrence. This also counters the idea of 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism' as vain and void of societal, cultural or political value.

The prism of aesthetic considerations is however conflicting with how researchers of experimental music try to see beyond the stylistic forms of music genres and to look rather as the set of practices and interpretations that emerge from composition, performance and listening (Cage, 1961). Since this research uses the prism of experimental electronic music to study innovation, the following section will explore the various definitions and properties of experimental music that exist through literature.

2.3. Qualities of experimental music and practices in events.

The umbrella term of 'experimental' as a way to describe music uncovers many uncertainties and gaps in the way it is defined. A first issue is the difference between what are considered to be experimental practices within music, or what touches upon so-called "experimental music". The notion presents similarities to that of innovation as they are subjective categories that are contested by its own involved actors. We argue thus for a critical standpoint on their meaning and an in-depth exploration of their application in concrete contexts and sectors.

Originally, experimental music was considered synonymously to electronic music, as electrically-produced through instruments that would generate soundwaves solely through electronic means (synthesisers) and synthetically-modified sounds with electronically-assisted tools (for instance pedals, microphones, tape recorders, samplers, amplifiers etc.) (Holmes, 2012). Because of those tools and the new opportunities that those technological innovations brought, many agree that all music nowadays – at least commercialised and diffused – is now

electronic whether it is through their boundless composition or methods of consumption. If electronic music used to be novel as well as implemented itself in other genres to push them to new horizons, music now exists because of the use of electronics.

A landmark manifesto written in 1913 by Luigi Russolo explains the surge of electronic music by the emergence of industrial city life. Inhabitants, in the midst of the noise of the machines, have developed a new sonic palette that requires hand-in-hand a new dimension of and approach to music: electronic music or, eponymously to the manifesto's title, *The Art of Noise*. If many early music experimentations through electronics remain documented (with instruments such as the Telharmonium or the Theremin for instance), it is then only in a post-war context that electronic music benefits from an increasing institutionalisation (see chapter 5). More specialised recording studios appear throughout Europe, such as the first one in Paris in 1951, and many figures of experimental electronic music become prolific. Amongst them we count Henry Schaeffer, Pierre Henry or Edgard Varèse who combine and rearranged industrial and organic sounds in a collage style to produce what is now known as "Musique Concrète", thanks to the manipulation and splicing of tapes, or pitch shifts (see chapter 8) . In the 1960s, the United States started the processes of commercialisation of electronic instruments. Robert Moog popularised his self-titled synthesizers, and other figures emerge such as Wendy Carlos who not only greatly contributed to the production of the *MOOG* synthesizers but also brought its music to the forefront of culture by creating the soundtracks to Stanley Kubrick's renowned films *Clockwork Orange* and *The Shining*.

If so far the experimentation was evident in form and the novelty in content, lines become blurred within experimental and electronic music as technological progress and the wide diffusion of synthesisers or drum machines make electronic music production far more accessible, and thus commercialised. In a rendition of a lecture given in 1957, the renowned and appraised American musician John Cage dived into the topic of experimental music as a reaction to the etiquette of "experimental" often attributed to his music (1961). Cage would firstly strongly object, as to his eyes the experiments has already happened prior to the performance like a painter makes sketches or a writer drafts, and that composers know beforehand what will unroll. Nonetheless, such remarks sparked in him the realisation that composition does not equate performing nor listening. In a book, Michael Nyman (1974) retraces the roots of experimental music and analyses extensively Cage's theorisation of experimental music, which is deployed in the following three dimensions of the experimental music:

- Composition:

He considered composition as the prospect of a situation where sounds may occur, in Cage's word as "acts the outcome of which are unknown" (1961, p. 69). Those processes not only allow to rework rules around music composition, but also brings about new dynamics of chance and choice. Arbitrariness is only present in the sense that phenomena are unclassifiable.

- Performance:

Cage (1961) considers the act of performance as physiological one, in which many aspects of the musicians are engaged whether it is one's initiative, prejudices, experience, subtlety or taste. The presence of unpredictability and possibility of variation from the original composition brings about a gamification of the performance.

- Listening:

On the side of listening, the 3rd entity of the audience plays an important role in experimental music. The exchange between composer/performer and listeners is amplified and fluidified in ways it has never been before. Whilst the audience, in an active listening mode, can arrange and rearrange their perceptions (visuals and sounds) in their minds, the performer becomes a receiver too of the experiential situation they can bring about and does not have to concern itself either with the audience reaction which will not alter the final result.

Taking the three suggested steps of composition, performing and listening, concluding remarks are that culture (here, music) should not only be considered merely as such and for their aesthetic qualities, but as well as fully integrated in their context, existence and representation.

Another issue arises when attempting to define experimental music and/or experimentation in (electronic) music, namely the style. The referring to such kinds of music has sometimes been confused with other types of music and genres. For instance, avant-garde music can be used interchangeably with experimental, although scholars and musicians, including John Cage, strongly argue that there is a considerable difference between them two. The distinction lies in whether the music emerged from an emphasis on an idea rather than style (Smalley, 1975). In other words, avant-garde music is about the style and content, whilst experimental music is about the approach and form. Nonetheless, aforementioned theorisations of experimental music seem to lack a consideration of aesthetic, if not tries to make complete abstraction of it for the sake of concreteness. Christopher Ballantine (1977), takes the opposite path and establishes what could be considered an aesthetic of experimental music. Following on the writings of Theodor W. Adorno (1942) and Walter Benjamin (1937), Ballantine expresses several ideas of experimental music. Eight principles emerge from this analysis:

A unique method of production

As Adorno famously criticised the commodification and mass industrialisation of culture and Benjamin talks about the "age of mechanical reproduction", experimental music does not concern itself with its product but rather its methods of production which ties closely with principles of autonomous arts.

Active participation of the audience

In experimental music, the audience is never passive and their participation in the listening process is crucial to the overall result. Lines are thus blurred between the artist and listeners whose roles overlap.

Aim for unmarketable qualities

If marketed, music requires reproduction and can essentially lead to standardisation in order to improve profits. This makes the work of art loose its uniqueness and "aura" according to Benjamin.

Importance of improvisation

The work of art avoids predictability and predetermination which improves social behaviour and aesthetic matter.

Abstraction of pragmatic and rational meaning

Sounds are devoid of significance that would place them in the realm of formality, standardisation and coherence.

Continuous attitude of doubt and re-actualisation

Experimental music closely follows a scientific and epistemological method of doubt by shifting the attention to new possibilities and discoveries thanks to the omnipresence of improvisation.

Emergence of a demand

A primordial dialectic of experimental music is that the function of art is the creation of a demand, whereas standardised styles of music only try to fit an already existing type and demand. This relates to cultural economics principles of experience goods for which the quality is unknown prior to consumption (Nelson, 1970). Potentially, the demand does not know beforehand what it wants to consume and of what quality should it be.

Openness to mistakes

Finally, as unpredictability of music is central to experimental one, failures and frivolity remain highly important as they healthily contribute to the fields by constituting things to learn and make progress from.

Those guiding principles can help with the understanding of what may or might not be experimental music, as well as facilitates naming certain types of forms of experiences and performances such as the festivals that are the subject of this research. However, the dichotomy between experimental as an approach to music and experimental as a music genre or style can reveal itself particularly relevant for this thesis. This explorative attitude taken by musicians and other members of the industry might pre-emptively be a driver of what is considered innovation in its corresponding scenes. Professor Alvin Lucier, known for his landmark publication *Music 109, Introduction to Experimental Music*, organises a series of lectures at Wesleyan Universities whose transcriptions were regrouped in *Eight Lectures on Experimental Music* (2017). As he admits that many musicians reject the label, Cage's mere claim over the unpredictability of results from experimental music proves that it is rather processes or, as quoted, "experiments in the scientific sense" countering the notion of "a preconceived idea of form is brought into being by the will or skill of the composer" (p.10). On the other hand, innovation management studies widely consider innovation to be the result from the introduction of a new idea, which itself ignites the innovation (Cumming, 1998). This brings up an interesting point over the foreordination of innovation. It questions whether the outcomes, results and expectancies of innovation must be determined in advance, or whether there are advantages to the mindset of experimental music being applied to innovation in order to expand its definitional implications. This way, innovation is treated too as an idea the outcomes of which are unknown.

2.4. Cultural value and valuation processes

Now that previous sections have given clarity over the subjects of this thesis, the following one will concern itself with the concept of values and the way cultural and economic values connect in ecosystems. As our interviews with cultural intermediaries (developed in the next section) dives into their various perception, understandings and exertion of innovation in their cultural ecosystem, it is crucial to see how they attribute meaning to their practice. This is done through the establishment of values that are attached to one's work and cultural output in order to map out its worth. Indeed, values are the expression of cultural producer's motivation to bring about their work for positives purposes, for instance artistic or social, that justify the longevity and maintenance of the cultural practice (Klamer, 2016). Similarly, innovation induces positive change (Wijgaarden, 2016).

Talking about cultural significance of various forms of music, its performances and specialised festivals itself bring about judgements of values. The process of establishing and assessing them, studied by cultural economics, only bring about the dichotomy of cultural and economic values as well as questions their coexistence. Throsby (2001) more assertively underline the quasi-impossibility of measuring cultural value due to subjectivity as well as not precise or at least fluctuating measurements. Hutter and Frey (2010), on the other side, enclose ways in which cultural value impacts the economic one. Being both socially-constructed measures, economic values though is expressed in concrete units whilst cultural value is constructed from collective judgements, which can be experts, audiences, media and peers. Value can be accumulated, lost or formed and is highly dependent on various behaviours of consumers and peers. For instance, a good can gain economic value if it has been highly rewarded and recognised but loose value if its scarcity and uniqueness diminishes. Klamer's extensive writings on values consider then rather economic processes revolving around cultural goods as rooted in culture, rather than culture being a mere factor in economics (cf. Klamer, 1996; Klamer, 2003a; Klamer, 2016). Beyond economic value as monetary worth, social and societal value as impact on individuals and communities, cultural value combines elements of cultural heritage, identity and artistic expression to establish the intrinsic worth of a given cultural good.

Recent evolutions due to digitalisation show that actors of valuation are not mainly institutional anymore, but can also encompass general audiences, meaning that lines are blurred between the professionality and taste-making capacities of cultural judges and selectors (Waibel, 2024). According to Klamer (1996) this judgement process occurs by exchange, more specifically in conversation and amongst actors of the fields. Difficulties in valuation also arise when the category of cultural value is confused with its sub-categories of aesthetic or artistic value. Nonetheless, when those subcategories have been broken down more specifically in potential measures and tools, the framework can only improve the work of cultural economists. For instance, as aesthetic theory, mainly in terms of philosophy, has been highly developed, named and evaluated characteristics of aesthetic can be used to assess their positive or negative correlation with economic value (Klamer, 1996). In the account that the economic analysis or the arts or the exploration of the link between commercialisation of arts and their value is not sufficient enough, a third type of analysis emerges (Dekker, 2014). Firstly stating the insufficiency of economic analysis and commercial approaches in the valuation of cultural goods and services, it becomes evident that market prices cannot solely be the indicator for value. Instead, Klamer (1996) shows how valuation takes place in conversation and exchange

between experts, workers and communities (explored further in section 2.6). However, in growth-driven and post-industrial societies, the economic argument of culture contributing to the economy is crucial for the justification of public support for the arts and subsidy allocations to cultural organisations (Dekker, 2014). For this reason, the focus has shifted away from discussion in depth the justification of aesthetic, cultural, artistic, social or even educational value of the arts.

In 1975, Blaug highlights the imperialism of economics and the way that rational thinking and neo-economic logics has found its way in all fields of society. The application of economics onto the fields of arts and culture resulted in the development of cultural economics. However, economic analysis and its principles rarely align with the reality of the arts and culture and, despite attempts to develop quantitative measures, valuating a good or service under a single market price does not translate the other information it contains, may it be cultural, ethical, historical, societal or social. Dekker (2014) suggests thus to look rather at the prerequisites and conditions surrounding the quality of goods and services rather than at the intersection of their supply and demand, which is especially helpful when the quality is uncertain.

Here, quality is a full component of the measure of cultural goods and their valuation. It is intrinsic to the market, and the value is not solely determined by the producer but rather constructed by consumers and a group of informed individuals within the market. Although the paper points out that such notions are not new, and that cultural economists are already familiar with concepts of bandwagon/snob effect, for instance, where a (consuming) behaviour influences that of other. Those individuals not only take part in the valuation process but are also seen as match-makers between the supply and the demand. They create cognitive value categories of goods' and services' for the rest of the consumers and organisations. A new role emerged: that of intermediaries. Not only they are knowledgeable but they also know how to deal with competing estimations over value by signalling quality. Dekker alludes to Wijnberg and Gemser (1999) who break down this taste selection into three categories that is the market selection, the peer selection and the expert selection. Although lines are blurred between peer and experts, each group has different criteria of quality and standards, which results in the relative success of innovative goods and services. Valuations or the criteria used differ depending on the group, time, place and good. Cultural goods are also highly different from what traditional neo-classical economics state as good: they are heterogeneous, their quality is uncertain and involved actors are asymmetrically informed about their quality. The empirical study of peer and expert opinions is thus what can settle, in its context, what are considered to

be prevalent criteria. It also considers the interpersonal and intersubjective differences between individuals and/or institution, as well as how their social settings shape norms and conventions. We seen then than value can be created in market and non-market settings, but never outside of it. It is thus crucial to look into how communities of judgement end up valuing certain goods and what their criteria can be.

2.5. Interconnectedness of cultural intermediaries in ecosystems

The following section will look into what constitute the aforementioned communities of judgements, how they are organise and how they put valuation into practice. Looking at peculiarities and singularities in economic markets, Karpik (2011) proposes various theoretical and empirical tools to analyses their corresponding goods. In those goods, examples of art forms are listed as economic singularities which proves they function differently and necessitate other frameworks that traditional economics have so far ignored. If standard methods are obsolete, due to the multidimensionality, uncertainty and incommensurability of those goods, a set of "judgement devices" or "regimes of valuations" might offer a solution. He distinguishes then: the authenticity regime, the mega-regime, the expert-opinion regime and the common-opinion regime to specify the various tools and conditions under which goods' quality can be defined and assessed, from more to less general and more to less professional.

On the other hand, De Bernard, Comunian and Gross (2022) study in depth groups of the cultural industry or creative economy by scouting through existing research on "creative and cultural ecologies and ecosystems" (CCEE). Although it feeds onto Holden's (2004) research on ecologies and value creation, ontological and epistemological approaches to that matter reveal that the term "ecosystem" is the best-fitting one to study those sites of meaning-making, value-creation and assessment. Thus far, it is clear that they exist in a system rather than linearly, it suggests then the idea of interaction and interconnectedness between actors. If neoclassical economics sees exchanges as part of a market in which producers of supply and a demand of consumers meet that would thus correspond to artists and audiences (in the case of music and festivals), cultural economics consider on top of that in-between players whose roles vary from organisation, production, evaluation, regulation to diffusion. Overall, the chosen ecosystem of this paper – of experimental and alternative music scenes that partakes in corresponding festivals – contains the spheres of artists, cultural workers and audiences. All are interconnected and relate together. Lines between some of those spheres are also blurred as

many individuals pertain to several at the same time, or at least move from one to another depending on their occupation. This is even more the case as workers of the CCIs are known to accumulate various jobs (Woodcock, 2021), or as passion and an art-for-art-sake principle motivates crowds and raise interest or participation in the field. As the cultural industries exist at the intersection of the societal/cultural and economic worlds, cultural intermediaries are thus also primordial actors and participants of the economics processes that unfold in the field (Stachowiak, 2017). Throsby (2010) lists: workers, private for-profit companies, private non-profit organizations, public cultural institutions, public cultural institutions, art schools, state and local government agencies associated with culture and international organisations, consumers and recipients of culture. If roles associated with those actors revolve mainly around the chain starting from production, to distribution, consumption, as is respectively taken up by creators/producers, cultural intermediaries and consumers.

A brief description and role definition of the various groups of that ecosystem is developed below, whilst also being related to key economic concepts of experience goods, intrinsic motivation and cultural intermediation, before the latter gets further developed in section 2.5.3. This way, we can unravel ways in which actors interplay and the reasons why they are pertinent in informing the functioning of the systems they are part of. Passion and intrinsic motivation seem to be then an essential driver for artistic production and creative intermediation, that consequently appears to be trustworthy and knowledgeable. On the side of audiences and consumers, the notion of experience good stating that the quality of a product is unknown prior to its consumption, and that of credence goods where the quality still remains undefinable after consumption, plays a significant role in the constitution of the ecosystem.

2.5.1. Audience and experience goods

Economic theory presents a typology of goods accordingly to their variable criteria of rivalry and excludability, resulting in private goods, common goods, club goods and public goods. In the context of events and festivals, music is both a good and a service in the sense that it is unmaterial content that organisers provide in the form of performances, acts and various types of programming. If product entails even more of a materialistic feature to the good, it has the benefit of assuming a producer (creator) that would be at the source of chains or systems of cultural valuation. In an age of digitalisation and a knowledge-based society, the information in the hands of the producer, consumer or intermediary, plays a pivotal role in markets. Drawing from Akerlof's market for lemon (1978) and economic research that underlines the imperfection of markets, demand and supply are indeed unequal. While the former can lack information

about a product's quality, the latter might even attempt to hide the information over low quality in order to generate revenue. Intermediaries become thus more or less trusted entities based on their assessment and symbolic production of the information. Nonetheless, Eltham (2012) raises concerns about the dangers and consequent failures of considering CCI's too widely through the prism of rational economics. Indeed, goods are not homogenous, not all cultural goods are products (although academic literature focuses mainly on this type) and that taste is subjective, hence quality assessment cannot be impartial. In the light of information asymmetry being one of the most significant market failure, other theorists developed and defined other types of goods.

Literature on experimental music strongly emphasises the concept of experience, whether it occurs during composition, performances or listening, by the artist or listener (Nyman, 1974). Whether it is the music itself being consumed, or the attendance and partaking in a festival, all can be seen as experiences. Experience goods, brought up by Nelson (1970) are the ones where the consumer is unable to estimate quality beforehand and must experience the good in order to further evaluate, as well as endure high search costs to make up an evaluation. Hutter (2020) complements the theory by advocating for the existence of experience goods as a whole other sub-category of economics instead of simply a peculiarity from regular goods. Intrinsically, the good is charged with meaning and information, which gives to the consumers new mental experiences. He mentions also the way that network of experts and regimes of communications bridge the gap where information is highly needed in order for audiences to gain enough incentive to try out the goods. Credence goods (Wolinsky, 1995) correspond to the ones whose evaluation cannot even be performed a posteriori to the consumption. Its quality still remains uncertain and reveals consumer's reliance and quest for the expert (intermediary) eye that could better guide their judgement. Dekker (2016) brings this even further by considering goods relating to each other and attributing to them a symbolic marker, agreed upon by experts, consumers and producers. Those so-called 'exemplary goods' become normatively indicators for other goods to position themselves in the framework of a field and compare themselves. They are primordial to processes of valuation.

2.5.2. Artists and intrinsic motivation

Although theory considers gives strong importance to intermediaries by highlighting their potential roles in production and diffusion processes, the roles of the various actors in an intertwined ecosystems are often blurred and undefined. Indeed, the artist, creator or producer are believed to be driven by artistic passion also known as the art-for-art's sake principle

(Caves, 2000), which in economics translates in intrinsic motivation. That alone may already constitute enough incentive for innovation. Cognitive sciences and researchers considerably dived into the relationship of music creativity and intrinsic motivation (Wolfe & Linden, 1991). Artistic propensities are now widely proven as inherent to human nature and gets cultivated if stimulated through partaking in artistic creation and aesthetically-oriented activities (Varella, 2021). Aesthetic motivational systems are strongly related to notions of curiosity, as well as proven to be consistent within artists regardless of obtained results (Appelgren et al., 2019). Similarly, Ballantine (1977) argues that in experimental music, the practices are driven by unpredictable attempts spurring of curiosity. Stephen Joy (2005) writes even about innovation motivation but reveals a phenomenon in which the expectancy of innovation and a willingness to be different as an individual impacted the level of creativity and proficiency in work of arts (2005).

2.5.3. Cultural workers and intermediaries:

Various literature on cultural economics highlights the important role of a third entity in the neoclassical market model of supply and demand. Intermediaries make up for encountered market uncertainties by bridging the gap between producers and consumers, as well as assessing quality and creating value for experience goods (Russo, Caloffi, 2018). Next to this, their role consists of combining various fields of expertise into a singular and holistic evaluation of quality and value (Eglite, 2013; Maguire & Matthews, 2012). Although the terms used to define cultural intermediaries vary from paper to paper, with its fair share of differences between them, similarities are noticeable enough to establish a portrait of the cultural intermediary by defining its roles, its positioning and industries or markets, and researching how they make sense of value and innovation.

Stemming from a sociological perspective, the work of the French Pierre Bourdieu uncovers a highly similar entity in cultural and social practices. His book *The Distinction* (1979) renders modern society and presents symbolic production amongst various 'habitus' which are environments of shared practices, norms and values. Since those societies he treats are that of a knowledge-based information and service-oriented society, one who possesses knowledge is powerful in its environment. Symbolic importance is thus crucial to the commodification of culture, as it represents a marker of taste, quality and worthiness of consumption. Intermediaries are not part anymore of a linear transmission of products from production to consumption, but rather a focal point around which gravitate the supply and demand and where intermediaries, or taste-makers, go back and forth. In such a dispersed model, promotion and marketing started

occupying a rising role and growing importance for the reach of products (Negus, 2002). According to Ginsburgh and Throsby (2006), gatekeepers are on the search for talents and find ways to develop and market them, most often in a profitable way. They are not only selecting and diffusing agents but also actively take part in ranking processes over quality and potentialities of cultural goods, services and their creators that make it or not on markets for the consumers/audience. O'Connor (2015) goes even further in the idea of the entity creating conditions in which certain goods and services are thought to be of high quality. Those intermediaries essentially operate in economic imaginaries in which they determine which activities and practices undergo policy intervention, consumption or measurement, in order to balance out the total scope of economic activities. Jakob and Van Heur (2015) stress how intermediaries shape, regulate, organise and govern the creative economy whilst negotiating transferred knowledge and linking actors of the cultural industries. He emphasises the control and agency of intermediaries within the CCIs. They also become trusted resources of aesthetic knowledge.

Stachowiak (2017) divides intermediaries in two more specific roles that are mediation between creators and producers as well as transferring or shaping values, and intermediation where they are also involved in the production and distribution of cultural products. This can be related to another distinction made by Hirsch (1969), who added to cultural intermediaries (rather as active talent seekers) the notion and role of surrogate customers. Such actors purchase (and might also consume) finished products to ultimately deliver it to final recipients or regular customers. This type of active is knowledgeable over the market, is aware of ways to reach them but is also recognised by its other peers as such. Petrova (2020) refers to the typology made by De Propris & Mwaura (2013) in an attempt to unveil the roles and functions of intermediaries while a radical innovation is taking place. Intermediation can be creative (content production), commodifying (diffusion and judgement) and consumerist (behavioural). Each are involved in several channels of diffusions in order to target different types of audiences. This chain mirrors the way that the organisation of event and music industries presents various levels. For reference and overview, a diagram (Figure 2.) of the post-digital music industry by Sparviero (2011) show how it is divided logically in production & content, to distribution & marketing and finally to delivery & exhibition.
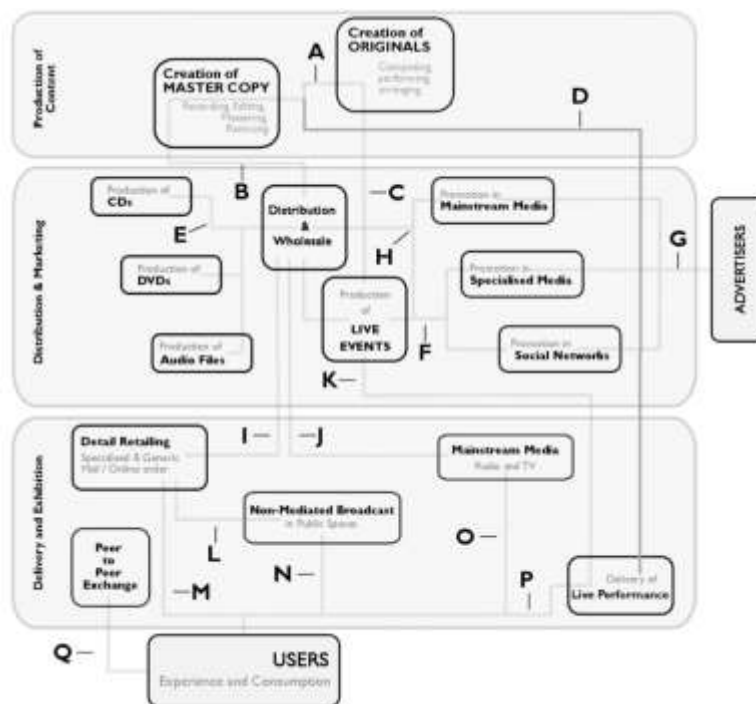
Figure 2. Post-digital music industry. Source: Sparviero (2011)

Finally, Handke's (2010) contribution to the study of innovation in the music industry and copyrights counts as an important dialectic of the CCIs the notions of content creation and 'humdrum innovation'. Humdrum inputs constitute the range of administrative and organisational tasks effectuated within the reproduction and diffusion of creative works. Cultural workers and intermediaries are thus be part of this group and innovation may occur in other ways than through artistic creation and technological progress.

From an economic perspective, traditional neoclassical theories also acknowledge a market actor whose role closely parallels that of the cultural intermediary: the middleman. This figure, extensively studied by Gary Biglaiser, builds on Akerlof's concept of the "market for lemons" (1978), which highlights how imperfect markets often suffer from information asymmetries—situations where sellers possess more information about a product's quality than buyers. In such contexts, middlemen serve as economic agents and regulators, helping to mitigate these imbalances. Biglaiser (1993, 1994, 2017) identifies key functions of middlemen, including providing expertise, guarantees of quality, and the transmission of reliable information. While the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) add further layers of complexity through the role of taste and symbolic value, this economic framework offers a valuable foundation for understanding the structural significance of intermediaries in markets where quality is uncertain and value is contested.

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Numerous matters are to be taken into consideration when talking about intermediaries. Indeed, Caves (2006) underlines the bias of intermediation and Negus (2002) advocates for diversity and inclusion in the creation of intermediary group as their bias and demographic qualities might strongly influence and alter the variety of products arriving on a market. Being more or less involved in the production and diffusion process has also a strong influence and might result in a preferential omittance of certain products over others. It is also the case for non-creative actors who still have an impact in the CCIs (Negus, 2002), mostly financial actors (investors, funds) or governing institutions (for instance, censorship). Other criticisms spurs from ontological concerns over the actual and current relevance of cultural existence, or questions whether or not all audiences are not intermediaries too in an accessible digital era of widespread information (Nixon & Du Gay, 2002; Maguire & Matthews, 2012).

The extensive study of cultural intermediaries and their different contributions across ecosystems allow for their categorisation into roles (Stachowiak, 2017). This way, the way that intermediaries relate with each other and with cultural goods is better and more systematically understood. The table below (Figure 3.) shows the various roles and grouped functions that, according to literature, intermediaries can hold.

Roles	Functions	Literature
Talent search and development	Cultural intermediaries are active identifiers and selectors of talents by helping in ranking and diffusion.	Caves (2006) Hirsch (1969)
Shaping the cultural ecosystems and regulating its conditions	Cultural intermediaries create the conditions of a field to which its participant actors cater.	O'Connor (2015)
Symbolic marking of taste and value	Cultural intermediaries bring symbolic significance to consumption by determining taste and value. They set standards for the ecosystem.	Bourdieu (1979) Petrova (2020)
Producing, organising and diffusing	Cultural intermediaries are also involved in the process of production, organisation and distribution of goods.	Stachowiak (2017) De Propris, Mwaura (2013)

Transferring knowledge and diffusing information	Cultural intermediaries regulate exchanges within the sphere by ensuring expertise and a correct flow of information. Consumers are then equipped with the rights tools for decision-making and quality assessment.	Jakob, Van Heur (2015) Biglaiser (1993; 1994; 2017)
Judgement creation, ranking and quality guarantee	Cultural intermediaries commodify the cultural goods and services through judgements processes and become reliable markers of quality assessment for consumers where the information is missing or partial.	Petrova (2020)

Figure 3: Roles, functions and corresponding literature of cultural intermediaries

2.6. Reaching out to a value-based approach

Another way to study festivals beyond their definitional applications and their scope of action in music scenes, is to looking through the prism of values and valuation regimes explored above. Exploring the values expressed by festivals allows to establish a concrete mapping of a priori set of objectives, as well as evaluate their completion and success. David Throsby (2000) distinguishes various types of cultural values: aesthetic, spiritual, social, historical and symbolic. By doing this he argues that the traditional economic measures are not always fit for that of cultural goods and services where value creation is predominantly social, cultural, symbolic and artistic. Building on this, Petrova, Graça and Klamer (2022) suggests a method of value evaluation rooted in the value-based approach. Klamer (2017) conceptualises this method with a focus on non-economic values of the cultural production of goods and services whilst there is a tendency of measure those in a market-oriented and economic sense. Indeed, he draws on his previous publications, arguing that cultural goods derive from discursive constructs and cannot be esteemed through a sole economic value, meaning its pricing (2003b, p.1). To economic values, he adds then the social and cultural value. The former corresponds to the sets of values intertwining in the context of interpersonal relationships, groups, communities, societies and communities. The latter looks at meanings produced by the goods and their relation to spiritual, sacred, symbolic, aesthetic or artistic expressions. Another publication he co-wrote takes a different typology and lists four types of value clusters that

transpose to our thesis: personal, social, societal and transcendental (Petrova, Graça, Klamer, 2022) that they elucidate with examples now used here to illustrate our own set of values.

The individual sphere relates to individual abilities and perspectives that reflect in ways cultural intermediaries understand and concretely apply values in their cultural occupations, such as playfulness, intuition, learning-by-doing principles, creative freedom or use of imagination. The following two types, social and societal, must be intrinsically distinguished and not confused with one another. Whilst the social is the set of interactions with known others and mirrors, in our case, ecosystems, the societal sphere englobes society at large and outcomes on communities beyond cultural ecosystems. Social values would be, for example, co-creation, togetherness, mutual learning and communicating. The societal ones correspond to advocacy, awareness about others members of society outside of the social sphere, and contribution to a city or inclusion. Finally, transcendental values are ideals that surpass the first three dimensions and allude rather to the nature of the works. This can be artistic and cultural values, for instance of innovation and experimentation, found in diversity of genres, aesthetics, skilfulness, new methods and artistic transformation.

Those dimensions of values interact when put in use by the different spheres of understanding: the cultural, market, governmental, social and private (the oikos). Those groups follow their own logic, yet influence each other, allowing values to shift and circulate between them. Consequently, in this dynamic model, changes in a sphere can have impact on other ones, highlighting the fluidity and interconnectedness of cultural value systems (Petrova, 2020).

The value-based approach becomes thus a useful tool in identifying the multiplicity of qualities, such as that of innovation, in the cultural sector (Petrova, 2020). The economic view that creativity and innovation, regardless of its field, is a driver of growth and development results in a high consensus over the necessity to foster and invest in innovation. In other words, cultural sectors constitute knowledge-production system that brings out ideas for new concepts, outputs and methods (Throsby, 2008). However, new output and its economic value is, in those industries, highly dependent on cultural value and finds its expression in symbolic knowledge and intuition, which is hard to establish or categorise (O'Connor, 2000). This requires thus a thorough work on values they express to pre-emptively understand the consequent innovation the new product might bring. Additionally, as theoretical research on creative industrials and its organisation informs that they mainly thrive in clusters of embedded knowledge and informal infrastructures, the work of analysing and recognising its values as an organisation can unclose other values they might have been unaware of before (Banks et al., 2000). It is important to note that this does not undermine either the authentic and intuitive nature of

cultural organisation. Indeed, their growing importance and their highly innovative dynamic nature only calls for their better understanding, which the value-based approach facilitates.

Petrova, Graça and Klamer (2022) break down this method of evaluation into different steps: awareness of desired values, involvement of other stalkers and persuasion of worthiness, and finally the assessment of impacts. In the case of festivals, an exemplary study undergone by Petrova, Kiss and Klamer (2017) takes the case of the Rotterdam Unlimited Festival and dives into expected and experienced goals and impacts, from the perspective of visitors and festival organisers. Such study brings concrete mapping and allows stakeholders to express their visions in a more defined and precise way. An example from the findings is that the application of the value-based approach to organisers of the Rotterdam Unlimited Festival helped them explain that by the use of the diversity value, they referred to both artistic (stylistic) and social (demographic) diversity. Organisations can determine their envisioned value and make a first impression of the perceived values they believe to be achieving at the given time. Articulating values contribute greatly to incentivising other communities (local institutions, audiences, cultural workers etc.) to participate in value creation and in experiencing supplied goods whose value are being assessed. Those other stakeholders can share their own vision of achieved values and help in the evaluation. Finally, organisations can assess concretely the impact of their practices, by themselves and by comparing both the first and second steps. Accordance and differences are now evidently emerging, and new conclusions can be drawn about realised values. Klamer, Petrova and Kiss's research, for instance, reveals that peers tend to have lower expectations than regular audiences but tend to experience and esteem qualities of the experience and programming a lot more positively. This results from the peers pertaining to the same ecosystems and occupying, in other cases and creative organisations, similar positions, thus expectations.

This methodology, although highly relevant for cultural economics, make abstraction of monetary tools and economic values. Noticing more cultural and social properties sparks the discussion about what values contribute positively to the induvial, societies and communities. The increasing consideration of the implementation of diversity and inclusion principles into industries brings even more attention to value and the value-based approach. Connections between sphere are more evident whilst social interactions and positive behaviours are being generated, since stakeholders actively and systematically consider and inherently implement values into their activities. The value-based approach also benefits from a concrete formulation, definition and methodological framework. It also shows what are future opportunities and possible directions organisations may take. Finally, it takes a holistic approach that not only

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links various disciplines from sociology, musicology, psychology to economics, but also identifies common values shared by different actors of the ecosystem. This way, different approaches that could so far have seen themselves abstracted by cultural policy and economics are now taken into account as significant part of the equation that make up cultural value. In the light of this thesis, this research will make use of the value-based approach method of exploring first the understanding of values followed by the establishing of ways in which the values are practiced. Due to the incommensurability of values and their high subjective understanding, values can only be understood through experience. The logical dialectic of articulation and practice echoes in the formulation of our research question. In the following chapter, we start our research process by planning its design and analysis whilst considering various research implications such as sampling, limitations and the academic discussions around our used methods.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research question and hypotheses.

Before delving into the methodological approach and research design of the thesis, this section reveals the research question with its subsequent hypotheses. This will help their recontextualising and highlight their methodological needs.

The research question is the following: "How do cultural intermediaries articulate and put innovation into practice in experimental forms of music and events?"

Here are the hypotheses that emanate from the theoretical framework:

- Innovation is more than merely technological.
- Innovation can be something novel, something that contributes to society, or something that combines old and new elements.
- The valuation of innovation in experimental music content is based on the a posteriori experience.
- Alternative forms of festivals and live music events are drivers of innovation.
- The different roles of cultural intermediaries and experimental music processes shape the conditions of the emergence of innovation.
- Cultural intermediaries probe the various values associated with experimental music events in order to justify its relevance.

3.2. Approach and research method

This thesis adopts a qualitative research design, using empirical data to develop an exploratory framework that seeks to understand how the participants interpret cultural innovation (Bryman, 2012).

As explained in the introduction, the motivation for this thesis stems from the various festivals across Europe that interest me and that describe themselves with subjective categories of values, including that of innovation that cultural economics covers in academic literature. A selection of eight European experimental music festivals (see Appendix A) was used for a general understanding of the ecosystem, in order to give direction to the way this thesis developed. Those festivals present the particularity of being partner and adherent of the Shape+

platform that explicitly defines itself as "a European platform for innovative music and art.". It concerns itself with talent development and career fostering through the connecting their artists and member-festivals across Europe to residencies, commissions, seminars, networking events and performances opportunities. It is non-profit and does not provide funds, but it is co-funded by the European Union through the Creative Europe initiative, and the Swiss foundation Pro Helvetia. Despite that, it functions autonomously from the directives of the EU or the EACEA (European Education and Culture Executive Agency). As they reveal the recognised and institutional dimension of the experimental music ecosystem on a continental level and its relation to values to innovation, this thesis dives into the particular cases of the intermediaries from similar ecosystems to see if their perceptions align. Those various insights into the dimensions of innovation that festivals aim to achieve – found first-hand on their official websites and in mission statements from 'About Us' sections – help formulate the interview guide this research will follow. If there is alignment, interviewed cultural intermediaries will reveal too the multiplicity of categories of innovation and explain the reasons behind its use in their work.

Fourteen semi-structured and individual interviews, each of 45 to 60 minutes were conducted with a sample of cultural intermediaries who pertain to and move across different spheres of their ecosystem. Interviews occurred mostly in person for better cohesion, authenticity, confidence and straightforwardness between the interviewer and the respondents/between interviewees. Questionnaires were not available to respondents beforehand in order to generate more honest answers, but they were preliminarily explained the purposes of the research, its question and motivations. Each interview were recorded (with the respondents' consent) to be later transcribed and finally coded. From a thematic analysis, later developed in this chapter, different concepts were drawn out of the transcripts and further reduced into main dimensions and themes.

Lamont and Swidle (2014) argue that interviewing is a more open-ended approach to qualitative interviews in order to make better sense of collectible data whose subjective and relative nature would be omitted through quantitative research. The established literature framework and the value-based approach helps thus establishing a first theoretical draft on a potential operationalisation of data and forms the basis to a questionnaire that will be essentially identical for all the respondents. Later on, the semi-structured form leaves space for exploring and delving into their answers to better stir the conversation and extract the most singularities from the general answers. A certain level of subjectivity and of the interviewer's intervention can potentially harm the reliability of the research, but is however unavoidable. The interview

guides can however be replicable over time and ecosystems, although field-specific questions would need adaptations to better suit the respondents' domain of expertise. The specificity of the interview improves nonetheless the reliability of answers as they are fully crafted for the respondents. The research remains highly valid as the further-applied operationalisation and data analysis will bring consistent results and justified theory.

3.3. Sample

Here, we dive more specifically into the characteristics of the respondents, representative of this thesis' subject. The sample used for the interviews correspond to cultural intermediaries who have expertise on the field and the functioning of the ecosystem, and undertake different roles across the sector. The description of interviewees and their precise occupations are shown in Appendix B/. All participants are cultural intermediaries who have various cultural occupations, more or less professionally, from creation, production to diffusion and consumption, across the local ecosystem of the Dutch experimental and electronic music scene that consume or work at corresponding festivals.

Out of conveniency and proximity purposes, the focus is on Rotterdam and the Randstad part of the Netherlands constituted by the regions of Rotterdam, the Hague, Amsterdam and Utrecht. This is especially relevant since Dutch creative workers are mostly based around metropolitan areas (Wijngarden, 2016). Participants also all share as a common factor that they are frequent visitors of experimental music festivals.

The sample is representative of the real-life ecosystem we are studying in which various intermediaries coexist and interact with each other. It is constituted by intermediaries who are artists, audience members, cultural workers (for instance marketing, programming, journalism, education) and event organisers closely related to experimental music and/or experimental practices in the industry. The interviews conducted with them relate their occupations and views to the articulation of innovation, and the contexts or methods behind its shaping and implementation in music scenes.

3.4. Research design and data analysis

The research design applies a combination of grounded theory approach with a thematic analysis. Theorised firstly by Glaser and Strauss (1999), grounded theory ties academic literature and qualitative empirical data in a rigorous and systematic way that later justifies the credibility and solidity of emerging theory. A method of open and axial coding developed by Gioai (2013) transforms qualitative answers into a series of open codes, further arranged into more selected categories and dimensions that make up for answers to the given research question. The theming achieved can thus lead to a new theory for the field. Although examples of cultural economics and entrepreneurship research show the use of thematic analysis solely on content analysis of articles or publications (for instance: Bürger &Volkman, 2020), the main researchers of thematic analysis as a methodological tool for interviews operate in the field of psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2017). Nonetheless, there is interest in applying such approach to the field of cultural economics to make up for the gap between economic systematic consistency and the relevance of individual subjectivity, often found in psychology. A new articulation of innovation can be drawn out from those answers and this theming, without being obstructed by the more systematic definitions of innovation, seen for instance in innovation surveys.

Thematic Analysis can be seen as a progressive method, in which the researcher goes through various continuous steps (Riger & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016). It is particularly useful for research in which an extensive amount of data is between collected from different sources, here respondents, over a continuous time, to overcome difficulties encountered during interpretation (Alhojailan, 2012). The science of interpretation, called hermeneutics, can be used wisely to overcome those issues. This thesis will firstly make sense of a general narrative around innovation emerging from literature and theory, to further establish another narrative based on the respondents' answers and their interpretation. The idea of narratives facilitates the comparison between theory and empirics when dealing with qualitative data, when pragmatic and rational quantitative tools of comparison cannot be applied. Additionally, hermeneutics provide a dialectic in which the interpretation of a part of a given topic contributes to the understanding of the whole, here: an ecosystem (Myers, 2004).

Stages of thematic analysis include: immersing oneself in the date, generating inductively initial codes, searching for overarching themes, reviewing the themes in accordance to their relevance and meaning, defining and naming them properly, producing the report or analysis. Such procedure induces a better systematisation of subjectivity, and a better understanding of

concepts conveyed through speech and conversation. Another underlying benefit of the thematic analysis is its self-reflective potential and the constant revaluation that occurs. The first inductive themes, as well as the ones that emerge from the first interviews, feed the following interviews highlighting the accumulative character of theory. In 2017, Terry, Hayfield, Clark and Braun summarise their main findings and that of other methodology experts to establish a handbook on qualitative research within psychology. They suggest that an ontology of thematic analysis approach that reveals itself particularly relevant to our research. By dividing those approaches into three: realist/essential, critical realist/contextualist, relativist/constructionist, they challenge fellow researchers to think about the way they view reality and where they root it. Whilst the former approach considers reality to be 'out there' and to be unravelled by the research, the second one builds up on it but adds the prism of cultural meanings through which reality deploys itself. Finally, the latter takes an opposite view and considers there is no reality to be discovered and research only creates versions of it by interpreting the worlds of the subjects, attributing meaning to it and studying how those realities are produced or relate with one another. The sheer concept of ecosystems, applied in our research to that of creative and cultural industries of experimental music, implies the existence of various worlds in which actors and intermediaries make sense of reality themselves. Although, they inevitably reach to cultural frameworks, our inductive approach and the way this study's questionnaire encourages the emergence of answers, we can consider this study to take on a rather constructivist approach. Articulations of innovation and experimentation that will come out of it are also constructed from the subjects' own world, later interpreted by me as a researcher.

Although, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis should be considered as a research method of its own, other scholars such as Ryan and Bernard (2000) steadily associates grounded theory with theming. Braun and Clarke added the idea of linking approaches as they usually run parallelly (Alhojailan, 2012). This research will combine both approaches. Indeed, each data collection is informed by the data analysis of the previous one. This accumulation must be seen as rather an advantage for the establishment of precise questions and answers instead of an obstacle. A first open coding on the gathered data will transform into a constant thematic selection of the most important information based on previously collected answers. They will then be categorised into relevant elements of response to our research questions.

Previously established themes and the theoretical frameworks from our literature review will serve then as a guideline for certain questions (see interview guide in Appendix C/). After completion, a thematic analysis will be conducted on the interviews in order to obtain a

homogenous and solid pool of answers for our research question, as well as sufficient proof to accept, refute or nuance our hypotheses (see coding processes in Appendix D). Despite the attempt of immersing myself in the data without prior assumptions, my personal experience in the field, my knowledge over the existing theory and the observations gathered from various festivals statements result in the impossibility of full abstraction when looking at data. Considering this, the first open coding process was made with our formulated hypotheses kept in mind and used as an advantage for effective selection rather than as information bias. The subsection a. in Appendix D exemplify main elements of answers looked at in order to avoid a saturation of codes that were not all be relevant to the research.

3.5. Ethical concerns, limitations and properties for further studies

There is little to no ethical concerns involved in this research besides subjective views on innovation. All participants are informed about the motivations and purposes of this study and content to the research without any deceptive omission of information. They will also be asked for consent for the recording of their interview, in order to further analyse them. Recordings will be stored only after final and irrevocable evaluation of the thesis. As each participant's roles and occupations within the ecosystem will be described, they will not remain anonymous. Limitations of the research concern mainly the specificity of the study. Indeed, applying it to other ecosystems may reveal itself difficult as questions will be crafted towards this group. It can be however replicated to another group of the same ecosystem, and at a different time too. The overall research approach and method can contribute to further research as it systematically and theoretically considers innovation when it occurs beyond technology and is not radically novel. This helps even more in fields, like experimental music, where the form of art is already essentially unclear and requires further definition.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Values of innovation, considerations and main take-aways from findings

Before the analysis of this research was conducted, attributes of innovation that emerge from various mission statements of European experimental music festivals help understanding in the first place those categories to explore how they relate to perceptions of innovations by cultural intermediaries. Following the definitions of value dimensions explored in 2.6., keywords from those fragments make up three categories of understanding: social/societal, cultural and experience-based (see Appendix A/). The latter itself shows both angle of progression, associated with traditional ideas of neoclassical innovation, and exploration, echoing rather principles of experimental music and experimental practices within independent music.

As expected, respondents' answers did resonate with the fact that experimental music ecosystems express innovation in several ways, beyond the traditional economic and technological sense of it. Thanks to a thorough thematic analysis (see excerpts of the process in Appendix D), this section will explore the responses and analyse them in light of the thesis hypotheses and its theoretical framework. Beyond the establishment that innovation is a subjective category of understanding that conveys across various of the ecosystem, the findings revealed more specifically the ways in which it is discussed, negotiated and put into concrete application. The value-based approach served as a basis for the process by accompanying the formulation of answers around understanding and practice.

While the term "experimental" was interpreted broadly—focusing on artistic approach rather than just aesthetic or stylistic elements—the use of qualitative data helped clarify the relationship between innovation and experimentation. Although closely linked, these concepts are not interchangeable and present many definitional implications. The research provided an opportunity to link frameworks associated with experimental music to the study of innovation within the respondents' cultural ecosystem. Following up on the hermeneutics method that provides a narrative to explain the direction of a research into a coherent discourse, this results section improves the former one emerging from gathered theory, hypotheses and assumptions. Concrete quotations and explanatory fragments of the theming that emerged from the coding will accept, refute, complete or nuance those theoretical claims, whilst being put in perspective with theory. The ideas of both articulation and practice, expressed in the research question, soundly divide elements of answers under those two measures (Figure 4.)

Understanding of innovation: articulation	Use of innovation: in practice

• Contested construct
  o Multiplicity of values: social and cultural
  o Beyond technology and economic value
• Over-used term calling for definition
• In form (humdrum) and content
• Process-based
	• Discussion dichotomy
	  o Concrete-informal
	  o Conceptual-formal
	• Strategic use for:
	  o Support
	  o Survival
	• Need for:
	  o Internal collective-shaping
	  o External exchange with research
	• Resistance-based catalyst

Figure 4. Articulation and practice of innovation by cultural intermediaries of experimental music ecosystems

4.2. Use and understanding of innovation by cultural intermediaries

4.2.1. The articulation and understanding of innovation

Innovation is a contested concept but there is alignment in cultural intermediaries' perception within their ecosystem.

<u>It is more than merely technological.</u>

By pertaining and occupying a significant role in fields of science, engineering or business, the concept of innovation is strongly considered as **concerning mainly technology**. This highly concords with Wijngaarden's results from interviews with Dutch cultural workers (2016). Similarly, the first mentions of technology even awoke in few respondents the consideration that innovation and technology hold similar, if not the same, meanings:

"For me, innovation is still definitely technological" (Int. 5)

The same research (Wijngaarden et al., 2016) asks respondents to provide their own definition of innovation in relation to their own experience as cultural workers. Three definitional approaches emerged with the latter prevailing: innovation can be something (a) novel, (b) bring positive impact or (c) be a constant process of re-actualisation. The other respondents of my research, who did not view technology as fundamental to innovation, at least deemed the sole technological and economic – price – consideration incomplete, **acknowledge its wider understanding** and bring up those three approaches.

"I would feel that I'm hearing sounds or genres or production methods that sound very contemporary and also fresh and still kind of new to me. So things I haven't heard before" *(Int. 9)*

Two respondents go even further in **attaching novelty to renewal**, by advancing that the idea that even "having this combination is something new" *(Int. 6),* because "has never been done before while repurposing something already available for different means." *(Int. 1)*. In terms of form, innovation is then rather **incremental**. The only counter-instances of cultural intermediaries describing innovation as radical or breakthrough (Satell, 2017) are cases in which innovation is caused by "chaos, being the moment of a breaking point" *(Int. 8).*

Nonetheless, novelty is nuanced with the fact that it is **individual and cultural**. What is novel to someone's eye might not be for someone else due to past experiences and knowledge, such as exemplified by three respondents who explain how Eurocentric perspectives on music may alter the actual recognition of innovation by a cultural intermediary who confuse it for something that was simply unknown to them to them. This contextualised negotiation of the idea of novelty relates to Eltham's critique (2012) stating that market success of a new cultural product, new does **not compulsorily make it relevant not innovative**. By this question advanced by a respondent: "And because he has never heard it before, does that mean it's new?" *(Int. 8),* novelty becomes relative and is put in perspective to its context, showing that what appears new to one does not make it as such by default. Organisations may introduce a product as new to a targeted group for who it is, although it already exists in other ecosystems, hence the importance of weighing arguments of innovation.

<u>Innovation presents cultural and social values</u>

The aspect of **positive** societal contribution translates and unravels in conversation about the **purpose of innovation**, as a respondent considers the notion to feel "disconnected" when it is in the hands of higher spheres of societies although "innovation should be something for the public and especially the less fortunate." *(Int. 5)*. In the way that Klamer (2003b) and Petrova, Graça and Klamer (2022) establishes the list of values that appear in cultural industries, the definition attributed to **social** and cultural **values** reflect those advanced by this response. If progressive and transformational for society and culture, innovation ought to be radical and have "some sort of resistance within it" *(Int. 1)*. It is thus highly social and cultural. Nonetheless, Klamer's (2003b) division of value put the economic one on the same list as social and cultural, whereas with his peers in 2022, the economic dimension was considered more separately. The former angle resonates with a respondent's view over the quality of music in its post-digital era, where not only the cultural but also the economic value is lesser due to standardisation and reproduction that they say new technologies engendered. Here, they tie cultural and **economic** value, based on the fact that a good becoming less rare and more common looses significance in pricing:

"Making music has just become far less valuable, in a very economic sense" *(Int. 14)*

<u>Innovation, as a term, is over-used and requires definition before its use.</u>

Due to a **lack consensus over their definitions** and a vague, if not an opportunistic use, many cultural intermediaries from various similar ecosystems tend to be **sceptical** towards those words. Indeed, over two thirds of the respondents, surprisingly enough, used the same formulations to describe innovation (and other adjacent concepts from our research such as 'experimental') as being "buzzwords" "thrown around" or "overused" *(Int 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14)*. Two respondents brought up more radical answers regarding pretentions over innovation in **trends** and **marketing**:

"No, I think if you as an organisation would call yourself innovative, I think it's a bit cocky, maybe. Because we are one of the millions or million organisers on this planet and I think everything has been done before. You're never innovative, I think, in the

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music scene. For me, it's also always like some sort of cycle, right? That we're in. When speaking about trends." *(int. 13)*

"It's marketing. It doesn't mean anything. It's just marketing. And I think that's the world we live in now. Everything is marketing." *(Int. 14)*

Innovation is, amongst many other terms, a **social construct**, or in Klamer's words (2003b, p. 1) a "discursive construct". Institutions concerned with policy-making or funding are also integrate parts of the given ecosystems with an important role. The meaning of innovation must thus be **attributed** by members who practice it, only if they clearly define it, and rather by those who benefit from it. Else, it is not concrete enough which only hinders the process of definition, when music is already so ungraspable verbally in itself. Respondents say indeed that "if I use it, I would explain why afterwards." *(Int. 9)* because such subjective categories of understanding are "dangerously empty without an explanation." *(Int. 8).* Whilst Petrova (2020) highlights the importance of agreement amongst cultural actors over the concepts they make use of, a respondent indeed argues for the importance of **consensus** in order to establish a definition. They nuance their thought however by warning us about the ways in which definitions are made, who are the people behind it and for what **purpose** they would stir the definition a certain way or another, to potentially make it advantageous to them:

> "The problem with a definition is who makes it: is it a group of people or is it three? Is it a certain percentage of the people that you know? You have to have a definition for these things in economic theory. But it doesn't mean anything" *(Int. 14)*

<u>It translates both in content and form, in terms of production, distribution, delivery</u>

Besides contested views on innovation and the conviction for its social and cultural positive purposes, respondents do recognise the presence of innovation in the humdrum. As the range of organisational and administrative tasks that occur alongside artistic and creational work (Handke, 2010), **humdrum innovations** were talked about in terms of production, delivery and distribution similarly to Sparviero's diagram (2011) of the post-digital music industry that can be applied to ways organisation put out their music event. In other words, this concerns the form of a cultural and experience good instead of its content, as seen in Castañer and Campos' division (2002). Some examples that resonated with the interviewees included:

the transposition of digital to analogue music *(Int. 12)*, playing around rhythm music *(Int. 1),* making two scenes or genres collide *(Int. 9),* the curation of artists as music programmers for festivals *(Int. 3)*, the repurposing of lights for stage design *(Int. 1 & 12)*, or playing around the typical times or places for an event *(Int. 4)*.

However, responses conveyed the feeling that this adaptability and constant re-actualisation, that Larson also encourages (2013), stems rather from the **intrinsic nature** of the experimental music ecosystem and the creative industries, rather than an actual show of innovation. Indeed, Wijngaarden et al. (2016) concluded that innovation is a "by-product of creative production" (p. 19) and Throsby (2001) and Oakley (2009) that the creative economy drives novelty and ideas.

As respondents mention social and humdrum innovations – of marketing, service, process, management and product as seen in the typology of festival innovation of Mackellar (2006) – we seen then that both forms can coexist, if integrated in discussions. The former is then more an objective and a potential outcome, whereas the latter is innate to cultural production in this ecosystem.

<u>It is rather a process than an end-result, in which experimentation plays a significant role.</u>

Wijngaarden et al. (2016) adds to this too that innovation is a process (p.19). In so far, results from this research aligns with mine, proving its relevancy and the reliability of results to different fields – here events and experience, over cultural goods. Seven respondents (*Int 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13)* agreed indeed that innovation is "more of a **process** than a result" *(Int. 13),* *"*an **attitude** and an **approach**." *(Int. 12),* rather than a result and a teleological or end-product. One respondent specifically talks about standard parameters being pushed and crossed:

> "Innovation is to think outside of the standard […] parameters of things that have been done and have been proven successful." *(Int. 4)*

My research had the particularity of adding the element of experimentation, as seen in experimental music, to the equation. Its use and application is relevant as the responses of my interviewees, when talking about innovation, already allude to some of their eight principles of experimental music emerging from Ballantine's analysis (1977), such as a continuous attitude of doubt and re-actualisation or novelty, as seen earlier in this section.

In regards to **experimental** music, there seems to be a multitude of views and positioning. Only two respondents presented **innovation with experimentation as synonymous**. "For me, they are quite synonymous. […], in its true meaning experimental includes innovation in it." *(Int. 1)*

In contrast, certain say that innovation is a result of experimentation, "but [experimentation] doesn't necessarily have to […] cause innovation" *(Int. 2)*. Others argue that it is not necessarily inherent but rather **sequential** – "So when you experiment sufficiently, you are able to innovate sufficiently." *(Int. 10)*. If not, experimental music is only a relative concept to other genres of music, meaning that any style can show alternative and experimental forms (i.e. experimental pop or techno).

Here again, **resistance-**oriented forms of cultural production strongly tie with the idea of experimental music and experimentation. Several respondents bring up the **DIY ethos** (Do-It-Yourself), originally emerging from punk anti-conformist and alternative scenes – such as subcultures and countercultures I mentioned in the section 2.2 – and its underlying importance in the ecosystem. One argues even, through the example of an event and community-based venue they worked at, that "the way it approaches things are very focused on, actually, experimentation" *(Int. 5)*. If resistance and **norm-defying** are essential to experimentation and that experimentation can **instigate innovation**, more radical stances to innovation are preferred by some cultural intermediaries for effective completion of objectives and the realisation of positive outputs. In other words, **explorative principles** of experimental are preferred **over neoclassical progress-based ideas of innovation**. This dichotomy is shown in the table below (Figure 5.):

	innovation	experimental
focus	outcome	process
form	Formal, explicit	Informal, implicit
idea	progress	Multi-directional
purpose	strategic	explorative

Figure 5. Key aspects of innovation and experimental in the light of respondents' answers

4.2.2. The practice of innovation

There are various ways in which cultural intermediaries put innovation into practice, which is generally strategic, knowledge- and value-based. After all, due to their dynamic roles and the flexible barriers between groups of artists, audience and humdrum, cultural intermediaries are "primarily an audience member" *(Int.3)*. This qualifies them as highly knowledgeable because they not only bridge the gap (Russo, Caloffi, 2018), but also embody both the receiver and sender of information.

<u>The element of resistance is also present in humdrum innovation as independent and alternative forms of music strive now for survival.</u>

While Adorno highlights the mass reproduction of the arts and its **standardisation** for wide **commercialisation** (1942), respondents talk about ways in which independent, alternative and experimental forms of music are subject to a dire situation in the creative and cultural industries that **work against** their benefits.

Two interviewees bring up **marketing** by stating that in so far used methods of social media and their algorithms are now obsolete and counter-productive for the ecosystem because it does not put it forward. One argues "to learn and how to approach this in a better way" *(Int. 11)*. Another respondent has an even more negative outlook on this explaining the following:

> "I believe that marketing innovative programmes are, is practically undoable. The only way you're able to market innovative programmes is word of mouth." *(Int. 12)*.

If Caves in 2000 was already arguing that innovation and the generation of novelty in the creative and cultural industries does not simply supplement business practices but are rather **essential** for firms to **survive**. Although in definitional matters elaborated in the previous part, innovation seemed intrinsic to CCIs, it appears to be rather a necessity in **practice**. Although the term of innovation and its use is contested, resistance-based practices, stimulated by the situation CCIs are subject to, can act as a **catalyst** for an improved form and use of innovation.

<u>Knowledge plays a significant role in experimental music, as cultural intermediaries helps contextualising the content.</u>

Marketing is especially relevant as it is part of the **knowledge and information transmission** that we find both in the theory around cultural intermediation (Jakov, Van Heur, 2015; Biglaiser, 1993, 1994, 2017). In the ecosystem, intermediaries concerned with the distribution of information ensure expertise and the correct flow of information. This way, audience members of events are **equipped with the right tools** to make decisions over their consumptions, understand a work of art and asses its quality.

As distribution and marketing are closely related in the chain of music and event industries, marketeers are responsible for "**contextualising"** music for audiences to find if more "digestible" and "accessible" *(Int. 1).* Their role, especially in cases where the music requires more information and is more abstract such as in experimental forms, is to create "a comfortable environment for receiving this, […] so you are in a comfortable environment to receive it and accept it or not." (Int. 1)

We witness thus a situation in which humdrum work fills the gap of 'unmarketable qualities' and a 'previously unexisting demand' within experimental music (Ballantine, 1977). It bridges to innovation when cultural intermediaries responsible for knowledge transmission overcome uncertainty challenges and show success and efficiency in their work in a way that resonates with the ecosystem.

<u>In discussions, the discourse on innovation is concrete when informal/inter-personal and conceptual when formal/professional.</u>

As innovation encounters many barriers to its definition and understanding, it must be thoroughly discussed. A consequent part of my interviews touched upon ways cultural intermediaries talk about innovation, in terms of frequency, environment, tone and scope.

After conducting all the interviews, two ways in which intermediaries discuss innovation are noticeable resulting in a **discussion dichotomy**. On one hand, it is discussed (a) **concretely and informally** in more "friendly" and personal contexts *(Int. 3).* However, the discussion is generally short and occurs only after the performance:

"You discuss it a bit and that's mainly it" (*Int. 1).*

For some, the discussion is even only personal internal:

> *"I just think about it and then I just leave it." (Int. 5)*

> "I also don't try to overthink too much with sound like that, because I think that at a certain point, it loses a bit of the impressive value and effect that it has" *(Int. 10)*

Talks with friends within groups of cultural intermediaries concern mainly event recommendations when it has potential to interest both the respondent and their group of friends and peers *(Int. 1 & 2)*. Rarely is the experimental or innovative nature of a music piece and/or event discussed in depth and for its concrete instances:

> "It's not necessarily striking at any of the points like 'Wow, this hasn't been done before or this is challenging the norm so much'." *(Int. 1)*

On the other hand, it is rather (b) **conceptually** and embedded in the **professional** world where this discussion, questioning and re-actualisation is part of the job and/or occupation. Here again, contextualisation and accessibility is key.

> "We talk about what it is like, how it's discussed, what new and innovative things we can offer, what is experimental and what is more high-selling acts, or what would make something more accessible. We need to talk about some different things and discuss different opinions because a lot of things come down in the end to a lot of subjectivity so we try to make sense of subjectivity into a concrete festival." *(Int. 1)*

In the former approach (a), respondents describe that the process happens rather shortly following a performance attended at an event or festival but quickly put aside as other things come up. On the other hand, in the latter (b), a process of valuation inspired by the value-based approach, described in section 2.6, presents many interests for organisations such as festivals to gain knowledge about their audience, what is popular, what needs more contextualisation for understanding etc. A respondent who worked with several organisations of the same type gives benefits and disadvantages to horizontal and professional forms of labour. Although the latter might bring in more ideas more organically, the latter has better conditions to realise objectives. This might explain the reason for the dichotomy between informally and formally-induced

discussions, where the level of professionalisation an organisation achieves influences the way values are reviewed and practices put into place.

> "I actually think the lack of structure gave me more ideas or more freedom. […] However ultimately, the other order is much more conducive to being able to execute new ideas or innovate properly*" (Int. 3)*

Regardless of this level of professionalisation and how formal or informal an organisation or intermediaries negotiate the notions they use, a respondent argues that "articulating value is always good." *(Int. 8)* for organisations. Two other responses relate even more to the steps taken in the value-based approach, argued by Petrova, Graça and Klamer (2022), which are the awareness of desired values, the involvement of other stalkers and persuasion of worthiness, and finally the assessment of impacts:

> 'If you are defining yourself as an experimental festival and so on, you always look […] more at the values and visions I guess by asking yourself does this need to align with what the festival wants to communicate. That's very important that the artists that are there represent your values.' *(Int. 1)*

<u>There is a strategic use of innovation that organisations can benefit from if they attribute their own meaning to innovation, in order to fit values and practices with subsidy requirements.</u>

As Dekker (2014) argues, the economic argument of culture contributing to the economy is crucial for the justification of public support for the arts and subsidy allocations to cultural organisations. Thorough discussion over innovation and its articulation of values is thus highly beneficial for the practice of cultural production by organisations and cultural intermediaries in the ecosystem.

A response that particularly stood out explores the possibilities of words that remain devoid of meaning: the aforementioned social constructs. Comparing it to an elevator pitch, the respondent says it is up to **cultural intermediaries to attribute and motivate their own meaning** to widespread concepts that tend to find themselves often in subsidy requirements, in order to "stretch its meaning" and "appropriate it" *(Int. 8).*

Indeed, the main argument advanced by almost all respondents is the **necessity** for intermediaries of independent culture **to adapt, in language and goals, to the values and requirements of subsidies**. Especially when their survival is in play, then they "start playing this game of subsidies and public support" *(Int. 8)* and need to "write towards it" *(Int. 7)*

A valuable point made by few respondents concerns the way that **legal** and **organisational** structure of organisations impact the allocation of subsidies. The same respondent, talking about the submission of a big subsidy plan with the organisation they work at, explains that legally a foundation was compulsory for applying. This legal framework divides organisations into non-profit foundations ('Stichting' in Dutch) or for-profit companies (B.V.). Whilst the former can use the argument of supporting social and cultural causes by nature to obtain subsidies (KvK, 2025), the latter is not eligible for public subsidies but can remain more independent and potentially generate more revenue. This opens up the question whether legal structures encourage innovation and in what ways cultural policy understands innovation to then make the choice of where to allocate subsidies, based on propensity for innovation.

<u>The extrinsic use of innovation in practice is thus based on knowledge and argument.</u>

An interviewee who recently co-wrote a plan for municipal subsidies lists the required keywords: "innovation, interconnectivity and inclusivity" as the main concepts that need to be "put into practice and wrote about" in the subsidy request *(Int 7)*. An **extensive knowledge** over those elements is thus crucial for cultural intermediaries. This allows organisations to be financially supported more consistently. One respondent develops:

"The thing about funding is really an important point because when you're applying for funding or subsidies from larger bodies, they're also looking for a goal or a product you are going to bring to us. […] You have to cater to them to be able to put on the whole thing or you do end up making use of certain buzzwords or having to create a picture for what this theme is or what this festival represents to the wider public." *(Int. 5)*

The main objective thus is to **convince** on a wider level the **benefits** of and **need** for those places, organisations and events that push music experimentally and innovatively. Based on the thin social/societal value distinction clarified by Petrova et. al. (2022), we understand thus that despite pertaining to their own ecosystem and benefiting rather socially their known others

(peers and audiences), cultural production ought to contribute **societally** to the whole of various communities. A respondent underlines this respondent who encourages those types of questioning in cultural ecosystems:

> "How do you convince, first of all, like institutions or public funds, governments that for people who are not the target audience, who are not the demands, that they could potentially have it?" *(Int. 8)*

Cultural intermediaries argue for a collective discussion, supported by research, across the ecosystem for better-fitted use of innovation and an improvement of results.

Coming back to reasons why a clearer definition and consensus over the meaning of innovation is needed, as well as its strategic use in subsidy application and political discussion over their support, there is a strong argument by the respondents *(Int. 8, Int. 12)* for the **need of more collective, learning-based, interdisciplinary and inclusive discussions across organisations and cultural intermediaries of an ecosystem**. This includes learning from each other, but also learning from other venues and festivals even if they operate in commercial scenes as they provide relevant insights on the state of the art and audience taste or behaviour. Only a collective effort of co-creation can result in a more accepted view of innovation that can work at the benefit of all.

A respondent suggests that individualistic mindsets in music hinders the process of thinking collectively about the meaning of innovation and art.

> "You nurture people to always show the best example as an individual. But then after to work in a collective context. And that's all because of […] the way we measure the quality of a person by measuring them individually., I think that those things really feed in sort of like not getting closer to think about the collective mindset in practises, industry, culture." *(Int. 10)*

If some institutions try to start funding collectives instead of individual artists, the process remains slow and difficult:

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"A lot of these things are a little bit more in its experimental phase. And I have no clue where it will go to with the current shakiness of the cultural industry. But I do see that […] they find it difficult to kind of change these things because they need to go up to the government and the government doesn't understand that." *(Int. 10),*

One claim stands out for its consideration of the ecosystem as a whole. The respondent takes on a **holistic angle** to explain ways in which all types of innovation that can be thought of are **interconnected**. Similarly, we can transpose this result to Klamer's (2017) five-sphere model, in which various dimensions dynamically intertwine with each other and circulate, and where a variation in one triggers shifts in the other.

"Any innovation, and its results, is cultural […], it did influence an entire ecosystem. It's all connected" *(Int.1)*

We seen then that a value-based approach feeding on the holistic understanding of the nation followed by the determination of concrete uses of innovation is particularly suitable for value creation and strategic practices

<u>There is a need for academia and research to not only participate in the definition of innovation to help organisations put it into practice, but also for it to support arguments for public support.</u>

Finally, and sometimes due to the academic and research background of some respondents, there has been remarks about the state of culture in today's Netherlands attached to its current political context. For instance, in 2024, the Dutch government planned substantial subsidy cuts and a raise of taxes on cultural products from 9 to 21% (Sanou, 2024) – repelled since – putting many organisations at risks of survival as only an increase in their price significantly over the demand equilibrium price could ensure the coverage of basic fixed costs. As there are attempts to defund culture and the necessity for the existence of independent culture is questioned amongst different spheres of societies, a few respondents highlighted the **need for academia** to research their ecosystem. Indeed, as academia might have been avoided by cultural actors due to a **gap** between conceptual definitions and ideals of culture compared to the reality of the field, which Dekker (2014), Bellini (2017) and Stam et al. (2008) illustrate with their respective research, cultural intermediaries now advocate for deeper research and understanding in order to provide **justification** for their existence and their benefit to society

as presenting significant **societal values**. Although there have been attempts, they maybe do not dive enough into specific subjects as they englobe the matter of the whole city, or they pertain to semi-academic fields in forms of independent publications that do not quality as literature sources and are not "direct academia" *(Int. 12)*

       Innovation thus deserves a revised academic perspective informed by experiences, learning and co-creation. As some concepts still remain too hard to grasp, first links can be established to deepen understanding. An encompassing approach might thus contribute highly to the discussions, as the concluding response show:

> "I used to be very much against the idea of academia about these kinds of things, because I do believe in letting the magic happen, but seeing the growing issues currently show that we need some smart people to write some smart things which we can deduce and analyse from. Because I think that is always healthy to keep doing. So yes, these publications are good, but it should be more of a rolling ball towards what's going to happen further." *(Int. 12)*

One of our responds mentions a European project aiming at mapping independent cultural across the continent, to which they add:

> "Maybe mapping needs to happen in order to open up other possibilities, beyond academic to be taken seriously, or we should link up those worlds more." *(Int. 8)*

Mapping out is here too a significant step of the value-based approach (Petrova, Graça, Klamer, 2022) that another respondent highlighted with a statement that soundly concludes many points of this analysis section:

> "Innovation starts by understanding how things work in the first place thanks to models, mapping etc. to be able to change the parameters and test what could be existing and fresh in the present or even in the future. From experience comes experiments, from which come ideas and insights." *(Int. 10)*

4.3. A dynamic interpretation and use of innovation through experimentation

For illustrative purposes, the following diagram (Figure 6.) provides an integrated overview of our findings. Here are show the interrelations between our concepts and the depending processes that act on them. Whilst innovation is attributed various meanings and present different definitional implications, the resulting and reformed notion of innovation takes also a new angle. Through experimentation, rather than a teleological purpose of progress, innovation is then put into practice through a collective shaping (articulation) and a strategic use (practice), with the former serving the latter. More specifically, collective shaping takes place internally through encourage discussion within the ecosystem but also thanks to an external exchange with research bodies.
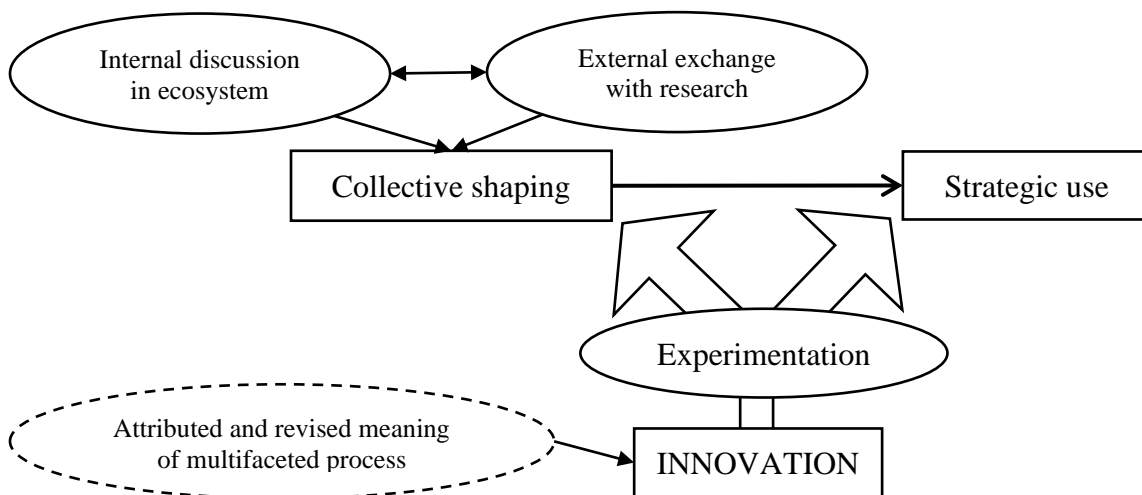
Figure 6. Dynamic integration of experimentation in innovation

5. Conclusion

As festivals and live music events are high in demand and constitute a consequent part of the music industry and revenue generation for artists, their multiplication transformed them into a relevant case of study for academic research, including for cultural economics. In order to navigate the competitive environment they are in and justify the obtention of financial public support, the use of values brings in a distinctive element. Defining themselves through relevant cultural, social and societal values reveals a typology of festival. For this thesis, as I first looked at festivals of my own interests revolving around experimental music, I observed a frequent use of the innovation objective as an umbrella notion for those types of events in their own mission statements. Subsequently, the conduction of in-depth individual interviews appeared then to me as the most suitable methods to study interpretations and uses of innovation. Although experimental progressively became rather experimentation in terms of approach taken to music, either by the artists themselves, the humdrum's work or the audience's perception of the arts, it uncovered many ways in which the concept of innovation is used and put into practice. A deeper understanding of innovation through this framework of innovation had thus the potential to inform about its various assessments and guide its further application.

Although innovation remains highly contested as a concept, cultural intermediaries within the ecosystems of experimental music and experimental practices in event organisation believe in the holistic use of innovation. If not explicitly, forms of innovation unravel in ways to resist and to re-actualise a certain status quo in industries praising renewal in content and form. If the technological and business-oriented angle often demonstrated in economics is still prevalent, there is enough room for change emanating from the lack of consensus over innovation. In cases where innovation is used, it is referred rather in relation to content, meaning the artistic and aesthetic innovation that experimentation generated (through risk-taking or improvisation for instance) despite innovation not being the end result envisioned. It terms of the humdrum in the sector such as production, distribution and distribution, the sheer nature of the CCIs in experimental music, essentially pushing boundaries and constantly re-actualising the status quo, show ultimately significant innovative processes. Experimentation can indeed constitute an apparatus for innovation and stimulate it but not necessarily. An explorative form of music over a progress-oriented one is then preferred by cultural intermediaries. For clearer definition and better use in practice, they argue for further discussions over innovation. This research put in evidence the dichotomy between conceptual collective renegotiations of the concept, and concrete yet informal inter-personal discourses over its meaning. This opens up possibilities for

an informed attribution of meaning by cultural intermediaries themselves in a way that cultural and social values of organisations concord with subsidies, who generally require principles of innovation and social relevance in the projects they fund, concord with cultural, social and societal values of cultural and creative organisations. Indeed, if innovation is a social construct, intermediaries concerned with it can consequently build the concept itself. Nonetheless, intermediaries highlight the necessity for collective discussions across the ecosystem backed by research, over its segmented interpretation. A value-based approach, focused on a holistic understanding of the notion followed by the establishment of all its concrete applications, is key to further value-creation and strategic practice.

The articulation and definition of innovation advanced by respondents aligns closely with academic literature that covers the innovative nature of the cultural industries, the contestation of the concept due to definitional deficiencies and its presence in the humdrum through constant re-actualisation. The element of experimentation I bring in this thesis is novel however to research. At times where cultural intermediaries call innovation insufficient, it seems that an experimentation approach and experimental music fields have more potential in achieving positive social and cultural contribution. Additionally, as certain respondents mentioned, academic research has potential in bridging the gap with the reality of the CCIs and cultural ecosystems and bringing solid argumentation for their support to the public sphere. This thesis' conclusions also take into consideration cultural policy implications when the allocation of subsidy by funding bodies depends on the way they evaluate the impacts of those events and festivals. The institutional nature of organisations also plays a role because funding bodies deem non-profit foundations and their social, societal and cultural contributions as more worthy of support than commercially-driven companies. Applied to other ecosystems, this research framework offers similar benefits to comprehend the context they are embedded in and their direct affect on theoretical concepts. It encourages cultural intermediaries, especially if the notion is taken at large, to broaden its understanding, question tools that surround them and make sense of the terms they use for the benefit of their practice. Many viewed this as necessary for the development of cultural organisations and the improvement of their practice.

Although ideas of experimentation remain highly relevant for innovation, other applications of this research framework may unravel other driving forces. Broader research methods can indeed be oriented to rather discovering new factors, particular to certain ecosystems, instead of delving into one only. The qualitative and conceptual take of this thesis, as well as the use of a value-based approach on cultural economics notions, significantly helped in grasping them. Certain difficulties arose when the concrete and pragmatic aspects of cultural work made it

trickier for intermediaries to articulate more intangible thoughts over word meanings. This resulted in a vast array of answers, from more to less abstract, but all as relevant as the other. Interviews have the advantage indeed of being reliable in concretising and making sense of subjective categories of thinking. During the development of this thesis, the idea of focus groups came up as a way to deal with this issue but was put aside due to time restrictions and the difficulty of its realisation without sufficient experience. As several intermediaries expressed the necessity of collective discussions, co-creation, accumulating knowledge together and mutual learning, the proper conduction of in-group interviews can generate new interesting answers that most likely did not occur during individual talks.

Despite biases due to a low number of interviews creating barriers to transfer those results to a broader sector and larger scale, the targeted orientation of the interviews in alignment with each respondent's case with an open- and follow-up question approach allow for a valid framework. For this reason, I argue for further research to take such direction as its replicability to other fields and research, nationally or internationally, is possible without generalisations taking away relevant theoretical perceptions. As Shape+, the non-profit European-Union funded platform for innovative arts and music collaborating and representing artists and festivals across the continent, was a starting point to this thesis, there is thus potential in conducting interviews with its representatives or other cultural intermediaries working with experimental music and innovation practices on an international and institutional scale. A wider understanding over all ecosystems involved can contribute to the development of concrete, adaptable and accessible value-based methods for cultural intermediaries. This implies attributing deeper meaning to their values. as well as illustrating and justifying the purposes and directions of their practice. Since their role already entails shaping the conditions of their ecosystems, they are encouraged to appropriate themselves subsidy applications and other forms of support requests. Further research can then help in exploring suitable schemes for greater cultural and social impact.

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Appendices

Appendix A/ Fragments and coding of mission statements of 8 European experimental electronic music festivals from the Shape+ Platform

1. **Excerpts and keywords**

Rewire (NL):
"…festival for **adventurous** music"; "**wide-range** of musical and **interdisciplinary**…"

CTM Festival (DE):
"Festival and platform for **adventurous** music & art"; "multi-perspective experiences, critical reflection, hedonism, and collaborative learning"

Unsound Festival (PL):
"focuses on a broad swath of **contemporary** music – **emerging**, **experimental**, and **leftfield** – whose sweep doesn't follow typical **genre constraints**. **Influential**, it has developed a reputation for identifying **innovative** scenes and **radical** sounds."

Intonal Festival (SE):
"A SANCTUARY FOR **EXPERIMENTAL** MINDS"; "**international** programme of **experimental** and electronic music covering a **wide range** of genres, subgenres, and **unique** expressions".

Skaņu Mežs (LV):
"As almost every form of **contemporary** music has an **experimental** edge, the festival represents genres ranging from free **improvisation**, **academic** avant-garde, electro-acoustic music and noise music to **peculiar twists on** rock, hip-hop and rhythmic music".

UH Fest (HU):
"**adventurous** modern music"; "special emphasis on presenting **unconventional** approaches towards music and pinpointing individual **national** scenes, which are — more often than not — **left uncovered** by the domestic media and bypassed by the organisers of large-scale festivals"

"Not focusing on genres is a principle that reflects in our overall activity and in the actual programming of our events. Any given member of our audience is likely to hear music s/he did not "**intend to**"; or from another point of view: **explore** something new."

Terraforma (IT):
"**international** festival of **experimental** music oriented towards **sustainability**. It was conceived as a platform for research and **artistic experimentation**, guided by **core values of care and respect** for both people and the environment."

OUT.RA/OUT.FEST (PT):
"festival whose programming seeks to reflect the most **significant developments** in **contemporary experimental** music in its many forms - from **improvised** music to abstract electronics, from free-jazz to noise, from **contemporary** classical music and the new and **unclassifiable** musical languages born every day throughout the world. Alongside music, the festival features a broad and exciting universe of experiences and **multi-disciplinary** events bustling with **novelty**, **challenging** the classical rules and borders of the many forms of human and **artistic expression**."

2. Categories of understanding

Experience-based values		Cultural values	Social/Societal values
Progressive	Exploratory	"abstraction of genres"	"unintended listening"
"innovative"	"experimental"	"beyond genre constraints"	"uncovered by usual media and large-scale festival organisers"
"novelty"	"improvisation"	"twist on originally non-experimental genres"	"core value of care & respect (for people & environment)"
"radical"	"exploration"	"artistic"	"sustainability"
"emerging"	"adventurous"	"experimentation"	"interdisciplinary"
"challenging"	"challenging"	"unclassifiable"	"wide-range"
"search for significant developments"	"unique"	"unconventional"	"international"
		"leftfield"	"national"
		"contemporary"	"academic"
		"expressive"	
		"peculiar"	

Figure a. Attributes of innovation emerging from Shape+ festival mission statements

Appendix B/ List of respondents

- **Interviewee 1: marketeer, artist handler, festival advancer, DJ**
- **Interviewee 2: event organiser, programmer, DJ, producer, cultural fund coordinator**
- **Interviewee 3: music journalist, radio host, writer, programmer, researcher**
- **Interviewee 4: programmer, event organiser, DJ, radio-maker**
- **Interviewee 5: artist, DJ, music journalist, cultural analysis researcher**
- **Interviewee 6: nightlife coordinator & urban policy specialist, DJ, producer event organiser (community-focused)**
- **Interviewee 7: cultural producer, webradio programmer, DJ, booker/promotor**
- **Interviewee 8: DJ, producer, programmer**
- **Interviewee 9 : co-programmer and event organiser, lawyer, journalist cultural researcher**
- **Interviewee 10: artist, DJ, producer, label manager, programmer, event organiser and teacher, board member**
- **Interviewee 11: culture venue programmer and co-manager, creative director, marketeer, DJ, producer**
- **Interviewee 12: marketer, DJ, producer, label manager, booker/promotor, event organiser**
- **Interviewee 13: event organiser, club programmer, creative director, DJ, marketeer**
- **Interviewee 14: sound engineer, music producer**

Appendix C/ Interview guide

After an explanation of the purpose of the study, as well as full disclosure of data treatment, the consented recording start. First introductory questions are asked to get acquainted with respondents and start the conversation.

- What's your name?
- How old are you?
- Where are you from?
- What is your educational background? (if applicable)
- Where do you currently live?

As related to theoretical concepts covered in our literature review the following questions will test the thesis' hypotheses and bring about more elements of answers to our research question. It will be conducted semi-formally with general open questions and corresponding follow-up questions based on the respondents' answer.

I/ Role as a cultural intermediary
- How would you describe your main occupations?
- What kind of organisations is it? What do they do?
- Where do you work?
- What roles do you hold?
- Would you say you are highly involved in the CCIs? How important would you say your role is?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging to a certain cultural group?
- How would you briefly describe the scene/ecosystem you operate in?
- How would you describe the differences between the personal and professional aspects of your cultural ecosystem?
- I highlighted types of roles that cultural intermediaries can hold, according to theory. Which ones would you say represent you the most?
- Which of those roles would you say are the most concerned with innovation?
- Is there a sense of responsibility towards fostering or creating innovation?

II/ Festivals and music consumption

- How often do you go to music events and performances? What about festivals?
- How would you describe that consumption in terms of frequency, type of music, mode of listening, reason for visit, context…?
- What kind of festivals do you attend? On which side of the cultural landscape do they operator from more autonomous to more commercial? What is their approach to music and programming?

III/ Innovation

- Would you consider them concerned with innovation? Why so?
- Do regularly operating venues and events (running all year, outside of festivals etc.) also produce innovation.
- Does one have more potential and opportunities to do so? How/Why?
- Can you think of an example of a performance you saw recently and tell me what was innovative about it?
- In a brief way, how would you describe innovation? What does it mean for you?
- Can you think of other types of innovation? With examples?
- Can innovation be beyond technological?
- (bring about: cultural, social, content, organisation, aesthetic, symbolic…)

III/ Experimental & Experimentation

- We talked about innovation in general, would you say the music you consume and events you attend show an approach of experimentation?
- In what ways?
- What do you find experimental about it? Can you give a recent example?
- What difference do you see between experimental music and adopting experimental approaches to music?
- I found that principles of experimental music, for instance … [cite & show] have overlap with general criteria of innovation. Do you agree? Why so?
- What about […this one…]?

IV/ Articulation and ecosystems

- Coming back to your work and your occupations, in what ways would you say you are concerned with innovation and experimentation?

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- How is it applied?
- Do you consume music reviews, media coverage over music, online content of judgement/quality assessing?
- How do they articulate innovation? Does it differ from your own articulation? /Do they look at something else?
- Looking at your peers, in a more informal and friendly setting, is there conversations about music innovation and experimentation? How does it usually go?
- How do you decide in group what to attend with/recommended to each other?
- (if applicable) If someone takes more the lead, what makes them trust-worthy of that decision?
- Do you discuss innovation and experimentation at work? How does this process look like?
- Does it precede the event/establishment of a company, is it continuous or does it happen also afterwards?
- Do you see differences in your personal and professional treatment of innovation? How?
- Does innovation happen and get shaped purposefully? How so?

- Is there anything else you would like to share or talk about?

[end of the interview]

Appendix D/ Coding process

1. **A priori coding: elements of answers considered during open coding.**

- Innovation is more than merely technological	- Types of innovation mentioned. - Relevancy of innovation in relation to technology - Reason for the use of term innovation
- Innovation can be something novel, something contributing to society, something combining old and new elements. It can be looked at in terms of content, approach, value and position.	- Novelty (yes or no, why?) - Contribution or not to society - Combination & incremental, or not - Innovation is about the content. - Innovation concerns only the approach taken. - Innovation is a value of music and events. - Innovation distinguishes live music events & festivals between each other. Distinguishing elements: alternative, underground, niche, experimental etc., how?
- Alternative forms of festivals and live music events are high in demand and are drivers of innovation even when the demand does not exist yet from the side of the audience.	- Previously unexciting demand - Innovation is what they don't know yet.
- Cultural intermediaries are thus the ones predicting the demand and catering the supply beforehand. Innovations are thus shaped by cultural intermediaries.	- CIs are taste-and value-makers, knowledge-transmitters, talent-developers, producers, and shaper of the ecosystem. - Ways in which CIs achieve that

- Cultural Intermediaries discuss innovation through important valuation processes.	- Setting of discussion of innovation - Nature of the discussion (conceptual, concrete) - Moment of the discussion (continuous, on-site and singular) - Rejection or acceptance, why?
- In this industry, cultural intermediaries make use of experimental music processes to produce, shape and drive innovation.	- Principles of experimental music apply as a framework to drivers of innovation

2. Dimensions emerging from open coding

3. Dimensions to concepts and themes

Understanding of innovation: articulation

Contested	Emerging from Experimentation	Social Construct	Relative & Contextual	Beyond Content: Production, Delivery, Distribution	Need for Research
Codes that show rejection, discomfort, or critique of the term 'innovation' and its associations	Codes where innovation is understood as a result or by product of experimentation	Codes that describe innovation as a socially or politically constructed idea	Codes describing innovation as relative to genre, history, or cultural frame	Codes related to non musical forms of innovation	Codes calling for deeper academic or investigative engagement
Innovation is a buzzword	Innovation follows experimentation	Innovation must be defined by practitioners	Innovation depends on listener's background	Innovation in scenography	Need for academic validation
Overused terms	Experimentation as process, innovation as result	Meaning shaped by institutions	Not innovative in itself	New presentation methods	Research to define innovation
Technological reduction	Characterisation as source of innovation	Negotiated within cultural field	Innovation is comparative	Contextualising difficult music	Field needs to be understood better
Marketing-oriented language	Sequential relation between experimenting and innovating	Constructed for funding/policy	Context defines innovation	Accessibility through design	Lack of cultural policy insight
Doesn't mean anything anymore	Experimentation precedes value attribution	Innovation doesn't exist outside discourse	What's experimental varies by scene	Innovations in marketing, flyers, posters	Research as legitimation
Disgust towards term				Use of digital tools/platforms	

Use of innovation: meaning-making

Discussed Concretely Informally & Conceptually Formally	Strategic Use	Collective Shaping	Resistance-Based Rejection	Structural and Organisational Conditions
Codes identifying how innovation is talked about in different contexts	Codes that reflect the instrumental use of innovation for survival or funding	Codes emphasizing internal or ecosystem-based meaning-making	Codes that reject innovation ideologically, yet often act innovatively	Codes about the influence of venue, legal form, or infrastructure
Innovation discussed casually after shows	Used in funding applications	Shared understanding across scene	DIY scenes reject term	Innovation varies between festivals and venues
Formalised in programming/strategy	Language tailored to subsidies	Learning from peers	Anti-commercial ethos	Legal status affects use of innovation
Value-based reflection in planning	Elevator pitch terminology	Community led definitions	Deliberate avoidance of innovation label	Foundation (Stichting) vs B.V. structure
Spontaneous vs structured engagement	Strategic buzzword use	Innovation as a negotiated practice	Innovation exists without being named	Smaller venues foster innovation
Occurs differently in informal vs professional settings	Necessary for cultural legitimacy	Cross-organisational reflection	Resistance to imposed innovation discourse	Financial freedom supports experimentation

4. Correspondence between quotes and themes

CONCEPTS	CORRESPONDING QUOTES
Innovation is more than merely technological	"For me, it's still definitely technological." *(Int. 1)* "I have a different view on the word innovation because I have a technical background. […] So, then it's really more concrete what innovation is. […] I never linked the word innovation with the work that I'm doing.' *(Int. 6)* "innovation is kind of equated with technology and development" *(Int. 5)*
Wider understanding of innovation	"Precisely because of its origin, they [cultural institutions] believe that innovation is only tech..." *(Int. 8)* "Technology is just a tool, innovation is the whole intention and mindset." *(Int. 10)* "It can be technical innovation… It can be very innovative but still sound bad" *(Int. 14)*
Innovation is something novel	"But just having this combination is something new. So, I think a lot of people perceive it as like innovative and especially boundary pushing, because it's something that didn't exist before." *(int. 6)* "I suppose it is something that has never been done before while repurposing something already available for different means." *(int. 1)* "I would feel that I'm hearing sounds or genres or production methods that sound very contemporary and also fresh and still kind of new to me. So things I haven't heard before" *(Int. 9)*
Innovation can combine the old with the new	"they're trying to like play with this feeling of nostalgia and like the music that their parents would listen to, for example, and try to like put their own twist to it in order to create something new." *(Int. 6)* "It's like using AI technology and using the most traditional instrument that ever existed, which is the voice. But using tools, how far can you go with a voice or using very almost like archaic instruments" *(Int. 10)* "Novel might be new ways of archiving. There's this project where they take heritage in their sound forms and do both archiving and reinterpreting of that to appropriate those sounds that are from their heritages and even in the diaspora. So I found that very, very interesting. And it is also in a sense, novelty. There is a reinterpretation of what already exists, which is the definition of the avant-garde." *((Int. 8)* "The themes covered are essentially the same but they take another dimension, like I talk about war, which was different implications in the 80s or nowadays. And yeah, I would say shining kind of my shining my own light through the lens of those artists on those themes." *((Int. 9)*
Importance of expression and experimentation	"It's experimental, it's innovative, I don't know, usually a combination of the three. Something you haven't heard before, that feeling of being completely good music." *(int. 14)*
Individual and cultural understanding	"And because he has never heard it before, does that mean it's new?" "I also think because I grew up with Western music that maybe something non-Western would be considered more considered

	innovative more quickly. So elements of non-Western music already sounds unknown to me." *(Int. 9)* "primarily an audience member" (*Int.3*)
Innovation is a process and an attitude rather than a result or end-oriented product	"Maybe more of a process than a result." *(Int. 13)* "But in an experimental way, it's more of an attitude and an approach." *(Int. 12)* "Innovation is to think outside of the standard […] parameters of things that have been done and have been proven successful." *(Int. 4)*
Scepticism over innovation, partly explained by marketing	"buzzwords" "thrown around" or "overused" *(Int 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14).* "No, I think if you as an organisation would call yourself innovative, I think it's a bit cocky, maybe. Because we are one of the millions or million organisers on this planet and I think everything has been done before. You're never innovative, I think, in the music scene. For me, it's also always like some sort of cycle, right? That we're in. When speaking about trends." *(int. 13)* "It's marketing. It doesn't mean anything. It's just marketing. And I think that's the world we live in now. Everything is marketing." *(Int. 14)*
Innovation is a social construct that requires context and definition	"It's a bit personal that I have to relate to my own understanding of music, music production, music history etc. If I use it, I would explain why afterwards." *(Int. 9)* "I think they're dangerously empty without an explanation." *(Int. 8)* "You have to have a definition for these things and consensus is a definition." *(Int. 14)* "The problem with a definition is who makes it: is it a group of people or is it three? Is it a certain percentage of the people that you know? You have to have a definition for these things in economic theory. But it doesn't mean anything" *(Int. 14)*
Innovation is seen as synonymous to experimentation	"For me, they are quite synonymous. […], in it's true meaning experimental includes innovation in it." *(Int. 1)*
Innovation is sequential	"They're sequential. So when you experiment sufficiently, you are able to innovate sufficiently." *(Int. 10).*
Experimentation does not always cause innovation	"innovation can come from experimentation, but [experimentation] doesn't necessarily have to […] cause innovation" *(Int. 2)*
Necessity of intuition and Expression in experimental music	"Well, of course you want to express yourself through music" *(Int. 9)* "it's about exploring and intuition and not about like real concept or something. But you also do need those limitations to be creative to experiment." *(Int. 9)* "it's not just making music, but it kind of defines your existence or your activities as well. I found that idea quite nice. A bit more complete and encompassing." *(Int. 2)*
Rejection of seriousness in	"it was just like a very naturally funny performance as well, which is feel like a lot of these people are like, you know, trying to make these like avant-garde art like very serious or like forcing it." *(Int. 1)*

experimental music and events	"what I sometimes miss in Dutch festivals is like it's all so serious. Like they really can't take a joke or something." *(Int. 10)*
Innovation stems from a breaking point of chaos and tension	"I do think that, I don't think it's necessary for innovation, but I do think it is necessary to invoke chaos in the crowd to be able to push them further, which doesn't directly lead to innovation, but it does lead to broadening of minds" *(Int. 12)* "They're saying they do innovation but they're reaffirming themselves in the status quo, it's not leading us anywhere because there's no chaos. Exactly as in the chaos being the moment of a breaking point and things destabilising at a moment. I wonder if this could be a lens to read this sort of experimental scenes." *(Int. 8)* "But what kind of connects them is that they always go with this kind of like super intense. There's always like a strong intensity" *(Int. 10)*
It is necessary to break away from the status quo and constantly re-actualise yourself in experimental music	"I think that's a good innovation like doing something like changing the standard formula, changing it in some way that challenges the status quo." *(Int. 4)* "You're branching out and leaving the status quo of what is respectable." *(Int. 5)*
The progressive and break-through idea of innovation cancels out the experimentation nature of experimental music	"What makes the chaos exactly, is it a proper word or does it cancel out the nature of experimental music?" (*Int. 8*)
Innovation is observable when it is no longer an innovation but is now established.	"essentially it looks at what remains through the lens of what is no longer there. […] it's also very almost spiritual in the way that it proposes to look at things and redefine those terms." *(Int. 8)*
Cultural intermediaries are the judge of innovation but it is artists who make Something innovative	"They don't know what they want. They're only the ones to judge, say like, oh, I thought it was innovative or not, but it's for the artist to create something innovative" *(Int. 9)* "I feel like it's mostly for the artist. They are producing the work. […] I think intermediaries are serving actually quite important part in creating a comfortable environment for receiving this, you know. […] so, you are in a comfortable environment to receive it and accept it or not." *(Int. 1)* "They really got to do this really experimental piece for also a crowd that's usually a bit more conservative in forms of art and music, but it still worked out. […] it's also interesting to go to something that they usually don't go to, but in an environment that still feels safe for them" *(Int. 6)*
Standardisation and reproduction in the	"Making music has just become far less valuable, in a very economic sense. It's just far less valuable." *(Int. 14)*

arts make them less valuable economically.	
Examples of innovation beyond content concern production, delivery and distribution	"I'm thinking marketing or scenography or like the processes around it or the content itself of the music" *(Int. 6)* "I thought that was pushing the boundaries of what electronic ambient can be because she does see herself as an electronic artist, but then she really pushed past that and just used this really old and analogue church equipment" *(Int. 12)* "She just was pushing, pushing, pushing what breakcore is, where all the lines are, and where live improv and breakcore can be. She would at one point turn up the BPM so much that it becomes half-time, which barely happens in breakcore. Breakcore can go fast. A lot of times they go half-half, but she was doing the half-half effect in breakcore by just going so fast that you can only process it in half, which I thought was really cool to see." *(Int. 12)* "opera live performance meets electronic eclectic DJ set. To me that was those were two worlds that never meet and she managed to kind of make sense of them in a weird surprising way. "the definition of what a programmer is opens up social discussions, or brings in totally different genres or performance-based things, and I think that creates a lot of room for experimentation and innovation." *(Int. 3)* "We have this football stadium light that we know use as the main light moving around above the stage. I suppose it is something that has never been done before while repurposing something already available for different means" *(Int. 1)* "it can be done by hosting an event at a time that would normally not host events like the morning sober raves" *(Int. 4)* "they would add like a small stage during the middle of festival like that's not expected that there's a stage that only opens at the middle of the festival and then maybe disappears again or stage that is moving around" *(Int. 9)*
Innovation in music journalism play a role in the articulation, reinvention and Redefinition concepts, when themselves innovate in their coverage and form.	"I really enjoyed this kind of like hybrid music journalism with radio and it not just being written but it also being something that like includes music and its medium […] this kind of form of music journalism that is a little bit more creative or more flexible than the written word." *(Int. 3)* "They're lazy journalists. They write what we all know, what we all see. And they repeat the same over and over again. It's not innovative at all, I think. They are not experimenting. We just talked about it. Well, they're not." *(Int. 13)* "I think there are a bit redundant always and the way that I don't need somebody to review music for me like I can do that myself. If I want to check out something I will and it's the same with a review. If the review either super negative or super positive, then I would be more likely to check it out than if it would be neutral." *(Int. 9)* "who's combining kind of video and more informal, super sincere approach to music that I think makes her very interesting." *(Int. 3)*

	"But in my eyes, that's secondary to curiosity, passion and wanting to meet artists on a human level." *(Int. 3)*
Marketing is about making content accessible to audiences.	"I, as a marketeer, can step in and contextualising explaining it and everything." "you want things to be digestible" "you also have to recontextualise and make it accessible for the others, for the audience in order for them to know what is out there" *(Int. 1)*
Innovation in marketing include the development and use of other alternatives than already existing and established one.	"To learn and how to approach this in a better way. Because we're using a format that is Instagram. Which is very using an algorithm against us." *(Int. 11)* "I have quite a grim outlook on this. I believe that marketing innovative programmes are, is practically undoable. The only way you're able to market innovative programmes is word of mouth." *(Int. 12)*
There is a need for research and academia in defining innovation	"I feel like the current publications that are happening are some of the only academic-ish things, because it's not direct academia." *(Int. 12)* "I feel like the current publications that are happening are some of the only academic-ish things, because it's not direct academia." *(Int. 12)* "I used to be very much against the idea of academia about these kinds of things, because I do believe in letting the magic happen, but seeing the growing issues currently show that we need some smart people to write some smart things which we can deduce and analyse from. Because I think that is always healthy to keep doing. So yes, these publications are good, but it should be more of a rolling ball towards what's going to happen further." *(Int. 12)*
Audiences' feedback and impressions are important in defining what is experimental and innovative	"I think it's pretty important to also have the crowds give feedback on it as well, because it's also just a matter of taste of how experimental something is for you, because something that is really normal for me could be really experimental for someone else, for example." *(Int. 6)*
Innovation is discussed concretely, Shortly and informally	"You also tend to discuss other people's works in a friendly context, simply when you're going out." *(Int. 3)* "I just think about it and then I just leave it." *(Int. 5)* "I also don't try to overthink too much with sound like that, because I think that at a certain point, it loses a bit of the impressive value and effect that it has" *(Int. 10)* "most of my friends are sort of the artsy events, electronic music bunch. So practically all we talk about is, oh my God, this DJ is playing here or this event is happening then." (Int. 12) "We also initiate the conversation if there's something cool happening in town that we know could interest us all." *(Int. 1)* "I don't send a lot of music to other people, but I do send events that I want to go to other people." *((Int. 2)*

	"We wouldn't say like, 'Oh, that's just experimental or something'." *(Int. 9)* "It's not necessarily striking at any of the points like 'Wow, this hasn't been done before or this is challenging the norm so much', you know." *(Int. 1)*
Innovation is discussed conceptually and professionally	"I think there's always a discussion because it is also part of the job, if not one of the main parts as you always consider those things, and try to balance what you offer. We talk about what it is like, how it's discussed, what new and innovative things we can offer, what is experimental and what is more high-selling acts, or what would make something more accessible. We need to talk about some different things and discuss different opinions because a lot of things come down in the end to a lot of subjectivity so we try to make sense of subjectivity into a concrete festival." *(Int. 1)* "if you are defining yourself as an experimental festival and so on, you always look at this first. And then you look more at the values and visions I guess by asking yourself does this need to align with what the festival wants to communicate. That's very important that the artists that are there represent your values.' *(Int. 1)* "Innovation starts by understanding how things work in the first place thanks to models, mapping etc. to be able to change the parameters and test what could be existing and fresh in the present or even in the future. From experience comes experiments, from which come ideas and insights." *(Int. 10)* "Then articulating value is always good. If you're in an organisation and you decide with your peers to just sit down and let's talk about what we're doing" *(Int. 8)*
Forms of resistance reject innovation but aim for positive changes and progress for society	"it's also a bit more DIY and it's aesthetic and like the way it approaches things very focused on, actually, experimentation" *(Int. 5)* "experimental should take the shape of experimentation while having some sort of innovation or resistance within it" *(Int. 1)* "There's benefits for everybody to just talk about it all together, else it doesn't get stretched as much." "So, there is room now when you're asking for funding and when you're practising your practise to appropriate that word" *(Int. 8)* "It just feels disconnected, it doesn't very grounded and all those people are so obviously the elite, whereas I feel innovation should be something for the public and especially the less fortunate." *(Int. 5)*
There is a strategic benefit to the use of innovation	"There's benefits for everybody to just talk about it all together, else it doesn't get stretched as much." "So, there is room now when you're asking for funding and when you're practising your practise to appropriate that word" *(Int. 8)*
Extensive knowledge over subsidy language, functioning and requirements is necessary.	"The thing about funding is really an important point because when you're applying for funding or subsidies from larger bodies, they're also looking for a goal or like a product you are going to bring to us. […]You have to cater to them to be able to put on the whole thing or you do end up making use of certain buzzwords or having to create a picture for what this theme is or what this festival represents to the wider public." *(Int. 5)*

	"they work with the three I's like innovation, interconnectivity and inclusivity. Like those are three things you need to put into practise and write about in your subsidy request." *(Int. 7)* "There, the word innovation was used. So, then you write towards it. But I think there, we probably also expressed it more as experimentation or interpreted it more as experimentation." *(Int. 7)* "You know how to use academic information to convince people the importance of it." *(Int. 7)* "if you do strive for a form of survival for your organisation or your scene, etc. then to a certain extent you start playing this game of subsidies and public support" *(Int. 8)*
Intermediaries should be convincing that the ecosystem is beneficial to overall society. Exposure in the public space is an example of ways this can be achieved.	"How do you convince, first of all, like institutions or public funds, governments that for people who are not the target audience, who are not the demands, that they could potentially have it" *(Int. 8)* "That's what public space should do. It should expose me to realities that I don't organically inhabit because I came from a privileged or an entirely marginalised community." *(Int. 8)*
There is a need for more collective, leaning-based and inclusive discussions across the ecosystem.	"There is attempts to like understand innovation differently that I don't always see in real life, except people who are maybe working more on the size of like subsidies." *(Int. 8)* "You nurture people to always show the best example as an individual. But then after to work in a collective context. And that's all because of […] the way we measure the quality of a person by measuring them individually., I think that those things really feed in sort of like not getting closer to think about the collective mindset in practises, industry, culture." *(Int. 10)* "You nurture people to always show the best example as an individual. But then after to work in a collective context. And that's all because of […] the way we measure the quality of a person by measuring them individually., I think that those things really feed in sort of like not getting closer to think about the collective mindset in practises, industry, culture." *(Int. 10)*
Parts of the ecosystem are all interconnected and influence each other	"Any innovation and its results is cultural […], it did influence an entire ecosystem. It's all connected" *(Int.1)*
There is no consensus over what type of event organisers and venues can be	"Because festivals are only once a year, they have more freedom, I feel like, to experiment in this way" *(Int. 2)* "It's maybe easier to experiment with an established name as a festival than for a small venue." *(Int. 4)* "So therefore, they can put in acts that hardly anyone knows and they could still draw a crowd because they're at the festival anyway." *(Int 9)*.

drivers of innovation, because structural and organisational conditions affect the potential for innovation.	"And for programmers, it's about finding the balance between, okay, how can I make a lineup work for a bigger crowd so I can at least have the income so I can also use that money to programme a more experimental stage, for example." *(Int. 6)* "with festivals nowadays, there's also the financial pressure to sell out" *(Int. 6)* "I think the smaller venues have more space to be adventurous in their programming and more experimental because you don't need a big crowd for it." *(Int. 6)*
Long-term forms of residencies are beneficial for co-creation, knowledge sharing, learning and development of innovation projects	"This kind of residency approach where there's a lot of knowledge sharing in this kind of way is a good way to get more people to try that, more people to work with it, more people to experiment with it" *(Int. 2)*
The legal status of organisations can affect their purpose and thus their positioning in regards to innovation.	"The important part is that you are a cultural institution, a 'Stichting', or a foundation basically, that you do something cultural and they work with the three I's like innovation, interconnectivity and inclusivity. Like those are three things you need to put into practise and write about in your subsidy request." *(Int. 7)*
Less professionalised organisations can generate more ideas but more professionalised forms are more conductive and can put them into concrete projects more easily.	"I actually think the lack of structure gave me more ideas or more freedom. […] However ultimately, the other order is much more conducive to being able to execute new ideas or innovate properly*" (Int. 3)*