The geographies of Swedish musicians’ work practices
How, when and where Swedish musicians perform work and creativity in the contemporary popular music industry

Jimi Nilsson
Abstract

Over the recent years, technological changes in the music industry have altered the geography of music production and non-creative music work. Progress in information and communication technology has lead to decreasing revenues from record sales, which in turn has affected traditional income models for musicians, in particular income from record sales. Therefore, contemporary musicians need to spend longer periods on tour, thus being spatially fragmented in a multitude of geographies while performing artistic work practices. In light of such changes, new music geographies have started to gain the attention for performing artistic work, in particular temporary geographies at popular music festivals as well as digital online communities. This dissertation explores these spaces of music work and creativity, and the roles played by such spaces for Swedish musicians’ working lives.

By using a triangulation of methods, this dissertation addresses three important features of the contemporary music profession. First, I explore the geographies of networks and network relations, and the role of networks for coping with contemporary working conditions. Second, I pay attention to the spaces of non-creative work, particularly in festival backstage areas. Third, I focus on how, when and where musicians perform creative work, and the relation between traditional studio locations and new opportunities for creative work while being on tour. Based on interviews, observations and netnographies, I argue that contemporary musicians perform much non-creative work in temporary festival backstage areas and in online communities while creative work preferably is located to traditional studio environments. I also argue that while female musicians and new-established musicians at large, due to increasing competition, have started to explore online communities, established musicians benefit from networking in face-to-face gatherings in order to gain job opportunities. Thus, there is a distinction between different groups of musicians based on career stage and gender.

Keywords: Knowledge communities, social networks, music industry, music geographies, temporary clusters

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Writing this dissertation has been easy and difficult at the same time. It has been easy because I have got the opportunity as not many people will get – to explore and study their main interest in life. It has been a very difficult experience too. In my attempt to capture the many facets of contemporary music work, I have had to engage with the individual stories and, in particular, personal sacrifices that music work brings with it. That is, this dissertation relies on the many musicians and music industry actors that with much interest and frenzy have contributed to make this possible.

However, few people know that this study may have taken another direction if I had not found the inspiration and the positive influence of some very important people, making every step of this dissertation possible and contributing to the most enriching and best periods of my academic life.

When I first started at Forskarskolan in Geography, my intention was to study the new division of Swedish counties – a study that would have been far from the musicians, the studio environments and all behind-the-scenes action in festival backstage areas, where I spent most of my time during the exploration of contemporary music work. The question then arises as to why this never happened.

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Introduction

To introduce a study of the music industry, it is necessary to consider why spaces matter for musicians work processes. The various geographies and processes surrounding musicians, contribute with inspiration, ideas and encourage as well as challenge these individuals to extract their creative skills and talents to produce musical products. Drawing on Swedish musicians’ utilisation of artistic workspaces, this dissertation will contribute to the understanding of the challenges and changes facing musicians when carrying out artistic work practices and creativity in contemporary music geographies.

The focus of attention in this dissertation is on the creative individuals and how they come to organise creative and non-creative work across time and space, drawing upon network relations and resources as well as inspiration generated in a wide range of music geographies and thus contributing to the output of musical products. That is, this dissertation rests upon the fundamental idea that the variety of music geographies and social spaces surrounding the “music creatives”, fulfil and contribute to the performance of various tasks of the contemporary music profession. However, to cope with increasing work fragmentation and growing responsibilities for personal music careers, musicians have to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to master work and creativity in a wide array of music spaces, in order to make use of the potential opportunities originating from these geographies. Understanding knowledge creation and music innovation in relation to different contexts generates insights on how, when and where musicians carry out specific activities in the post-industrial and digitalised Swedish music economy. Therefore this study will draw upon the experiences and perceptions of musicians in terms of their performance of artistic work and creativity related to various and different music geographies, and how these “creative people” capitalise on information and knowledge acquired in this wide range of musical contexts, in order to build individual music careers.

However, the organisation of music work and creativity have been affected by the neo-liberalisation of political and economic governance and above all the evolution of digital technologies resulting in major impacts upon music business models. Above all, in the new music economy, fewer musicians are afforded the opportunity to enjoy the support of major record labels, managers and booking agencies (Tschmuck, 2006). Today, the music profession involves far more tasks than music production and live performances: musicians are increasingly self-employed and have to perform several tasks
of creative and non-creative character thus contributing to fragment work patterns and musicians work lives across time and space. For example, they need to spend time on thinking/reflecting, get inspiration and visual input of other artists’ work and performances, network with social actors, record and distribute music, promote their products, plan tours; they need to visit important “music gatherings” like music festivals, attend business meetings, find new projects and employment opportunities and, above all, construct their music career path in such a way that they will maintain popularity and competitiveness.

Such increased fragmentation of work in time and space for musicians in general have resulted in that musicians have been required to explore new and temporary environments (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010), in order to balance and distribute time between different challenges and to make work more efficient (Watson et al., 2012). Such developments put pressure on music actors to become highly mobile (Hracs, 2009; Menger, 2006; Hracs, 2009; Menger, 2006). When time is treated as scarce and valuable by musicians, the important “hang-outs” in traditional spaces such as recording studios and clubs have to be adapted to new working conditions. For instance, music needs to be produced while traveling on lengthy tours, information and knowledge accumulation have to be located to new geographies, and the crucial face-to-face communication between social actors have to employ contemporary interaction arenas.

As a result there is a need to pay attention to the impacts of speeded-up work schedules and the fragmentation of time and work practices across time and space. Two conceptions in particular have started to challenge the beliefs of permanent geographical proximity as a cornerstone in transfers of information and knowledge; thus, they support the reconfiguration of work patterns.

First, in a growing number of studies, short-term events and temporary economic activities are suggested to be considered as similar to more permanent knowledge communities. Such research is led by the assumption that spatial proximity are more important for certain stages of production processes, to a large part facilitated by contemporary information and communication technologies (Torre, 2011, Urry, 2003, Walther et al., 2005, Wellman, 2001; Wellman et al., 2005).

Drawing on studies of interactions between temporary clustered actors of the furniture and design industry at trade fairs and conventions, “just being there” is considered crucial in order to maintain reputation, status and market position (Power & Jansson, 2008). In these temporary gatherings, interactions in cafés, bars or at informal dinner meetings of conventions or conferences are similar to important spatial contexts used for information and knowledge flows in permanent cluster settings; they “have characteristics somewhat similar to those of permanent clusters, albeit in a temporary and periodic form” (Maskell et al., 2004). This “temporary permanence” also enables social actors to present and compare new products and to participate
in a global circuit of firms and individuals that taken together produce the crucial “global buzz” (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2005; Maskell et al., 2006). Thus, participation in these settings provides access to international knowledge pools and labour markets, global buzz and, hence, information which can be transformed into knowledge creation and new innovations.

However, while economic geographers have started to examine temporary and online spaces and their spatial contexts of interaction and communication in international trade fairs and conventions (Maskell et al., 2004; 2006; Schuldt & Bathelt, 2011; Torre, 2008; 2011), little is known about their roles for musicians. A great deal of the literature on spaces of work patterns in the music industry is focused on mobility and flexibility due to fragmented work lives (Brown, 2012; Hracs, 2009; 2011; Menger, 2006). Only a few studies specifically pay attention to temporary spaces in the context of music, such as Klein’s (2011) comparative study of a music industrial conference and a music-related short-term event, O’Grady & Kill’s (2013) research on networks and networking at popular music festivals, which to some extent involve transfers of information and knowledge, and Leyshon’s (2001) study of the geographical and organisational consequences of new technology in the music industry.

To a large extent however, these studies focus on the overall impacts within the music industry based on firms rather than individuals; they rarely consider the increasingly individualised aspects of the new music economy, driven in large part by individual musicians using new entrepreneurial modes of organising work and creativity in a “do-it-yourself” fashion. To cope with these dynamics and the associated conditions of risk, uncertainty and spatial mobility, musicians are developing new organisational strategies.

1.1. Aim and research questions

To understand the processes of work and creativity of musicians in the new music economy, I argue that exploring the contemporary organisation of work patterns in relation to space is crucial to grasp the geographies of social and economic activities in the new music economy. In doing so, it is necessary to pay attention to musicians’ work practices and creative processes in these key spaces.

In this study, the aim is to examine how technological progress and contemporary working conditions have affected the geographies of artistic work practices and creative processes, and the roles played by these spaces for musicians’ working lives in the Swedish music industry. I explicitly examine the music geographies identified by musicians as crucial for coping with the requirements of the contemporary music profession, in particular temporary spaces at popular music festivals and various online communities serving as intermediaries of network resources between music actors.
In summary, the research questions are formulated as following,

- What are the impacts on network formation and network relations by fragmented musical work patterns?
- In what ways have contemporary working conditions in the music industry affected the geographies of work and creativity?
- How have developments in information and communication technology affected the geographies of musicians’ work practices and creative processes?

1.2. Dissertation outline

Following the introduction and the presentation of the main study areas, I have organised the dissertation into six chapters. In the next chapter, I present the methodological approach in this study which is divided into three sections – in-depth interviews, participant observations and online ethnographic approach. In this chapter, I also highlight the concept of the musician and how it is used in this study.

Chapter 3 pays attention to the theoretical framework with focus on network theory and more explicitly on a threefold network typology, building on different strengths of ties between social actors. The typologies are used to analyse the qualities of ties between social actors of the music industry in this study. The chapter continues with the importance of knowledge processes as a driver for innovation. The theoretical section also elaborates on the changing geographies of transfer of knowledge. The chapter is concluded with a presentation of the creative processes.

Chapters 4 to 6 present the empirical findings focused on music geographies in relation to networks, the “locations” of musicians work practices and, finally, the spaces of musicians’ creative processes.

As a start, in chapter 4, I pay attention to mobile and flexible working lives and the highlighted importance of access to network resources. I therefore take a closer look on how network relations are established and maintained as well as the roles played by networks as intermediaries of information flows. Additionally, the network chapter also presents the findings considering access to networks and the tendencies of inclusion/exclusion in such network communities and is thus concluded with a discussion on exclusionary tendencies in the Swedish music industry.

To better understand the temporary geographies of music work practices and the changing music geographies I explore the geographies of musicians’ non-creative work patterns in chapter 5. This section examines how musi-
cians make use of temporary geographies in festival backstage areas as well as online communities in order to carry out different music work practices.

The sixth chapter outlines the empirical findings on musicians’ creative processes and how, when and where they perform the various components of music creativity. The various geographies of creative work are presented and related to experiences and opinions on the role of specific geographies for different components of creativity.

In the final chapter, I summarise my key findings from the three empirical sections and outline research topics for future explorations of the music industry.
2. Methodology

Considering the focus on strategies employed by musicians to cope with changing working conditions and the spatial dynamics of artistic work practices and creativity in the contemporary Swedish music industry, this study have been based on methodologies allowing for the understanding of music actors’ activities in a wide array of spaces. The changes in occupational conditions are interpreted in the light of personal experiences, values and expectations by musicians, and are manifested in various ways. Understanding personal experiences and opinions of the risks and uncertainties of new geographies of work and creativity suggest methodological approaches allowing for personal narratives on such changes. Also, to be able to analyse how musicians manage to balance between non-creative and creative work – work and creativity – I define this, to some part blurred, distinction on Throsby’s (2001) concentric model which illustrate creative skills and talent separated from professions producing non-creative goods. Thus, to explore various aspects of social contexts and different artistic practices in the music industry I will use in-depth interviews and participant observations.

Furthermore, recent attention to new geographies of work and creativity calls for the exploration of new methodologies allowing for research in such spaces. Work in increasingly mobile labour markets direct attention to new technologies for facilitating and maintaining network relations. In order to follow online networks and digital music communities, using various information and communication technologies (ICT) for communicating information and knowledge, I have supplemented face-to-face methodologies with netnographic studies of online realities. Netnography represent the importance of ICTs for the study of everyday life of networked actors. Moreover, alternating between online and “offline” realities in order to understand strategies and creative pathways contribute to the triangulation of data and allows for the exploration and understanding of different aspects of changing work patterns in the music industry. Thus, added to the experiences and opinions expressed through interviews and observations in face-to-face environments, the netnographic study of work and creativity in online communities will consider data collected in online realities like Facebook, LinkedIn and mail conversations.

This chapter elaborates on these methodologies and their different roles in conducting the study on the changing geographies of work and creativity in the Swedish music industry.
2.1. The musician in the popular music industry

Considering much definitional arguments and difficulties, conceptualising "the musician" is a rather ambitious undertaking. My intention is not to provide for a universal definition of all musicians or to specifically identify who will be included in artistic labour in the music industry. Rather, the definition of musicians should be considered as a result of the variety of potential career paths and strategies employed to sustain competitiveness. Such representations of music identities are contradictory to prevailing statistical methodology using census data. Nevertheless, defining the concept of artistic work in the music industry will always be arbitrary (Towse, 2006; Elstad, 1997).

The numerous attempts to define artists in order to establish the artistic labour in the music industry, frequently stress the dependency of context (e.g. Alper & Wassall, 2006; Coulson, 2012; Karttunen, 1998). In popular music, artistic labour is not confined to definitions based on educational qualifications, professional certifications or income in order to be included in the concept of “musician”. There are no barriers for joining or participating in the popular music profession. Financial support providing for artistic careers and occupational sustainability are premised on the ability to adapt to contemporary working conditions, for example to manage fickle and volatile consumer behaviour, and the self-management of individual music careers. Therefore, in research on cultural industries, numerous studies use self-definition as a guidepost to define who is to be considered an artist in order to refrain from definitional difficulties (Coulson, 2012; Towse, 2006).

In contrast, some researchers argue that to be eligible to define oneself as a musician, members “need to be professionally involved in the music industry” (Cummins-Russel & Rantisi, 2011) and earn a significant portion of the income from music work. Income is therefore assumed to represent successful artist careers. Such economic characteristics are however highly contested due to statistical difficulties to measure income (Wassall & Alper, 1985; Elstad, 1997; Throsby, 2001; Jeffri, 2004) and the importance of other considerations, for instance shared concepts and conventions resulting in “integrated professionals” (Brighton & Pearson, 1985) that provide access to social networks and job opportunities. Therefore, the open-ended nature of membership in popular music in this study is based on the use of a self-proclaiming definition of being musicians.

Moreover, considering that this study is focused on popular music artists, thus narrowing down the study to certain music genres in the popular music industry, for example pop, rock, reggae, hiphop and electronica genres (Lilliestam, 1998; 2009), other aspects of music work need to be considered. In order to grasp the scope and scale of the strategies employed to cope with contemporary working conditions and to facilitate the process of selecting individual musicians, it is necessary to consider different prerequisites.
for music careers. I have dealt with these potential differences of various career paths by making use of roughly divided categories of musicians in this study based on the characteristics of contemporary music work.

First, potential disparities in working conditions give rise to a wide array of strategies used to support music careers. It is argued that such distinctions are dependent on contractual relations, comprising various possibilities of music industrial support and services (Hraes, 2009; Tschmuck, 2006; 2009). However, these distinct career paths also reflect individual career choices for instance that some musicians put much value of working independently from record labels and intermediators.

Roughly, artistic labour and career paths in the music industry are distributed in professional and independent categories. On the one hand, professional musicians are those in contractual relationships with record labels which during the length of record deals can draw on the benefits of various career-supporting opportunities such as regular income, distribution of music, tour support and different promotional activities (Tschmuck, 2006; 2009). On the other hand, the working conditions of fully-fledged independent musicians, represented by extensive use of the “do-it-yourself” model, causes an occupational precariousness characterised by irregular income and uncertainties due to individual abilities in finding jobs (Menger, 2006; Gill & Pratt, 2008).

However, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between professional and independent musicians. Music work has always been subject to an alternation between professional and independent work. To use an example, a musician can be signed by record labels for a certain period thus receiving regular income and support; when the job is finished, the particular musician will return to the independent sector again. Moreover, this dividing line is not only caused by relationships between record labels, musicians and the non-renewal of record deals but also based on individual career decisions of “going independent“ in which there are intrinsic values of independent career decisions (Brown, 2012). In particular such choices are easier to make when personal networks and resources grow over time and some musicians improves the skills needed to manage their music careers, thus being able to circumvent record labels and costly intermediaries. Therefore, many musicians alternate between professional and independent work models during their careers.

However, although the music profession always has been characterised by such irregular stability, many musicians in the contemporary music industry emphasise an increasing “irregularity” due to fewer opportunities of getting record deals with labels or career support because of the developments of the music industry in the beginning of the 2000’s, in particular the record label crisis and changes in album sales (Bjerkoe & Sorbo, 2010; Young & Collins, 2010). That is, today many musicians find it increasingly important to acquire the necessary skills for self-management of music careers. Therefore,
with respect to these roughly categorised work models and the differences as well as dynamics of work strategies and methods, it is significant to consider both work categories when selecting respondents. Therefore, in this study I have made a rough distinction between professional and independent categories of musicians.

2.2. Pilot study

This study began by identifying the research gap by exploring the structural changes and the consequences for music work by conducting a pilot study. Prior to the interview session in this project, I conducted a study at four major Swedish popular music festivals in the summer of 2012 in order to build on information from music professionals concerning work pattern dynamics and time for creative work. During these festival sessions, 24 Swedish musicians participated in conversations on changes affecting work and creativity in the music industry. These conversations should not be confused with regular interviews. Instead, they were the result of spontaneous meetings in the festival backstage areas, basically through direct face-to-face connections with musicians by discussing the changes of the music industry in relation to new working standards and how these changes had affected work and creativity. These discussions specifically targeted the experiences of changes in the Swedish music industry and contributed to greatly pin down the research field. As a result of the spontaneous nature of meetings, these conversations were not structured in themes or even digitally recorded.

Moreover, the reason why these meetings took place in festival backstage areas was to gain access to many music actors. Drawing on personal experiences of “dense clusters” of music actors’ I considered festivals to be “perfect sites” for gaining access to a large pool of musicians because they gather a wide array of music actors during a few days of work and leisure. Thus, the decision to locate to music festivals in order to conduct the initial pilot study was based on work efficiency and the opportunity to find many musicians rather than pinpointing the festival as a study object; at this stage of the study festival backstage spaces had yet to be identified as important gatherings of the contemporary music industry.

However, rather than starting in literature and ongoing research on concepts and themes in the research field I wanted to refrain from fixed ideas on developments and changes in the music industry. Approaching the research field drawing on inspiration from such grounded theory procedure is particularly useful when the research field you want to examine is yet to be identified and thoroughly explored (Glaser & Strauss, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). By frequent comparisons of collected data during the pilot study, and the following in-depth studies of related research, the process of identifying patterns of major changes building on musicians’ and informants’ experienc-
es was made possible. This procedure made it possible to pin down specific key concepts regarding changes of music work and how these changes how affected how, when and where work and creativity are performed. Using this approach of key concepts for collecting data, defining and refining them whilst conducting the pilot study, it was possible to generalise my findings into specific themes.

The experiences of changes of music work resulted in the following main topics that were used to design this project:

- Work practices are fragmented in many different tasks/additional non-creative tasks.
- Work practices are mobile and flexible and necessitate intense “touring” schedules to carry out all these tasks combined.
- Music work requires longer working hours.
- Music work is characterised by a drop in earnings.
- Music work has to a great extent become online.
- Difficult to concentrate music creativity only to studio environments.
- Difficult to find continuous periods of creative work.
- Not possible to only focus on music creativity.
- Shifting importance of space for work; temporary permanence important to speed up work efficiency.

The result of the pilot study consequently helped me to pin down the study objects and research questions of this study.

2.3. In-depth interviews

As an approach to understanding new conditions for work and creativity in the music industry, qualitative in-depth interviews can offer much insight into respondents’ experiences and impressions on contexts of artistry. Considering my attention to changes of work and creativity across time and space necessitate understandings of individual experiences and personal opinions on shifts and transitions in the music industry. Experiences, narratives and stories are crucial in order to find information and knowledge based on the subjective understanding of these changes.

When conducting a study based on in-depth interviews stresses the importance of trust-building to establish contact with musicians in order to access experiences and opinions on work in the music industry. Drawing on some personal understandings of social network relations in the music industry my strategy was to establish face-to-face contacts with potential participants.
Interview sample

To find participants I used a snowball sampling methodology to identify and first establish contact. Applying this technique is particularly useful when it is difficult to identify specific individuals or to gain access to members of a research field (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). This snowballing procedure relied on multiple entry points in the identification process by using gatekeepers in order to establish contacts with musicians from various music genres. Although it has been widely argued that such a methodology is a barrier to unbiased samples and the risk of producing inaccurate results due to narrow circles of friends (Bryman, 2011; Flowerdew & Martin, 2005; Jeffri, 2004), my arguments for this procedure rest on two starting points.

First, I initially used four former project partners – informal gatekeepers – from personal music networks, working in various occupations of the music industry, to which I pointed out the importance of providing multiple entry points and non-connected musicians. Two gatekeepers are involved in the record label sphere of the music industry, work at both several independent as well as major record labels; yet another contact have experiences of work at seven major music festivals in Sweden and the UK; and the last gatekeeper has widespread experience of work as a booking agent at several European booking agencies. These gatekeepers are explicitly linked to certain music genres, thus facilitating a broad set of possible respondents.

In the process of identifying potential participants I asked the gatekeepers to provide information on potential respondents not linked by former music collaborations, thus avoiding several respondents from same networks. In addition, I specified the interview sample to only comprise “the music creatives” and not use freelancers such as studio musicians hired for a specific music project. However, although many of the interviewees also engaged in freelancing in terms of job opportunities, their roles in the interview sessions were based on their experiences of their artistic profession and personal artist brand. Thus, to ensure a broad set of non-linked music actors this strategy proved to be fruitful since musicians of distinct music genres in general were located to different spaces – specific festivals, clubs and online spaces - depending on “scenes” and level of professionalism.

Second, in the process of selecting potential respondents and to explore the contents of the rich information provided by the personal connections in the music industry, I made direct contact to potential respondents by telephone in order to communicate the nature of the research project and to set up meetings. In the process of obtaining the sample, I considered it essential to avoid using formal gatekeepers when establishing contact with potential participants. The gatekeeper holds the position of facilitating or denying access to potential participants (Bryman, 2011; Flowerdew & Martin, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In the case of the music industry, and based on the experiences of getting access to musicians in the pilot study, gatekeepers rarely intermediate requests for interviews. Therefore, by making use of
informal gatekeepers I circumvented such obstacles in the research process in order to gain access to specific participants.

In order to narrow down the research field and to grasp the changing dynamics of work and creativity in the music industry I selected musicians with particular experience of music work. In the Swedish music industry, the impacts of technological change and the major transition to short-term contract workers became evident in 2001-2004 as a result of digital technologies for distributing and sharing music came into everyday practice (Johansson & Larsson, 2009); album sales decreased rapidly, thus terminations of many long-term record deals were initiated. Therefore, to grasp the experiences of these changes and the impacts on work patterns and creativity, I consider it important to build this study upon musicians engaged in professional and independent music work since the paradigm shift of the music industrial organisation.

Interview structure

In order to be able to explore the evolution of spaces for work and creativity in the Swedish music industry, my primary interest was to interview the artistic workforce of the music industry. However, information concerning spatial changes and network relations also involves the participation of informants, in particular festival organisers. Considering the interviewed musicians it should be noted that this only included individual musicians not musicians as representatives of specific bands. Creative work in the contemporary music industry necessitates participation in many parallel projects in order to avoid periods of unemployment (Gill, 2002) and musicians often appear in different bands of such reasons. Thus, to learn from individual experiences and opinions it was vital to conduct individual interviews.

Drawing on the results of the conversational interviews in the pilot study, interviews were semi-structured and organised in themes divided into main questions, follow-ups and probes, in turn based on open-ended questions. In total, I conducted 26 interviews with Swedish musicians of which 6 were women and additionally 6 interviews with informants representing the music industry, in particular festival organisers.

Interviews with informants provided information on organisational change and the experience of how these changes affect music work. Such information was invaluable for understandings on the reconfiguration of the music industry in Sweden, thus contributing to the analysis of this project.

Moreover, in consent with the interviewees I have digitally recorded these interviews except in two cases in which certain participants did not allowed digital recordings to be made. In contrast, the interviews in the pilot study were not recorded because of their unplanned and “conversational” character; with the exception of two participants, informant (festival organisers and
record label actors) interviews were conducted by phone and consequently were written down.

The interviews with musicians ranged from 40-80 minutes and were organised in themes with reference to the research questions. The first theme focused on music industrial changes and the impacts on music work concerning both work practices and creative work. In this context I put emphasis on the spatial dynamics of contemporary work processes in the new music economy. Against this backdrop of change the next theme pinpointed networking and transfers of network resources. This involved meeting spaces, mediation of jobs, knowledge updating and network formation and how, when and where these activities occurred across time and space. In the last theme, the focus of interest was the musicians’ emphasis of festival backstage areas and online communities for coping with contemporary working conditions and their contribution to speed up work efficiency as well as being mediators of creative partnerships.

The interview sessions were digitally recorded and transcribed shortly after each interview. However, capturing the richness of languages and giving words to experiences can be complicated when translating languages, in particular by using verbatim transcriptions. In this study, the interviews were conducted in Swedish and translated into English. One major challenge has been that concepts, words and, in particular, expressions can lose their meaning when being interpreted (Van Nes et al., 2010) and lead to risks of inaccurate understanding of the experiences shared by the interviewees (Lopez et al., 2008). To cope with these language challenges I have checked the initial interpretations of verbatim translations in contexts by going back to the situations in which specific experiences are manifested in expressions. This strategy is useful in order to adapt translations to broader contexts of conversations thus allowing for cultural content and meaning (Van Nes et al., 2010). Using this second stage of re-writing initial translations involved a “cleaning up” process of translations and the removal of “thinking noises” and stuttering such as “uh – um – ah” in order to increase the readability and to facilitate the understanding of the interviews.

Moreover, although the location where the interview takes place should be convenient to the participants (Seidman, 2006), it is important to negotiate spaces if the participant suggests a noisy social spaces lacking the opportunity for privacy. However, adopting the principle of equity, and my suggestion to conduct the interviews in the participants’ creative spaces, resulted in that the interviews primarily took place at studio or rehearsal spaces. Such environments allowed for the conversations to be conducted without disturbances. Interviews at festival sites took place in specific interview rooms.

In addition to digital recordings, I made handwritten notes during the conversations. Taking notes was necessary in order to allow for open-ended interview conversations and later on was to great help in the process of remembering details from the interview sessions. Moreover, the procedure of
taking notes also allowed for “jotting down” follow-ups and even probes to be used later in the interview. Such working notes have been invaluable for the analysis due to much information mentioned after interview sessions. Drawing on such experiences, respondents frequently continued the conversation after the recorder was turned off. For instance, when gathering the recording equipment many respondents were “chit-chatting” and often disclosed new information. With the consent of the participants, I dealt with this by never switching the digital recorder off.

**Interview environments**

The reason for conducting face-to-face interviews was the opportunities to “step into” a variety of creative spaces such as recording studios or rehearsal spaces, during the interview sessions. My aim to explore respondents’ work environments rests on the assumption that it encourages narratives on life stories and disclosures of work experiences (Esaiasson et al., 2012; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participation in the respondents’ work spaces facilitated conversations on “highly emotional” issues such as economic conditions, cultural politics, relations to social actors and impacts on working lives. Narratives and experiences on changing conditions for music creativity and sustaining artistic careers can be considered emotional, in particular considering the impacts and obstacles to practice creativity in the contemporary music industry (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

To adapt to the constraints of the contemporary music industry I suggested locating the interviews to various day-to-day work spaces. Adopting such a strategy has facilitated access to many musicians in this project considering that interview encounters “only” required a break in activities at hand and not interrupted daily work schedules by adding an appointment to another location. In suggesting locating the interviews to musicians’ creative spaces it facilitated trust-building and an opportunity to learn to know the interviewees prior to the observation studies conducted at different music festival sites; since my aim of the triangulation of data builds on repeated interaction with participants in different working environments. As Fangen (2005) assert, the importance of trust-building to gain access to encounters of different social groups emphasise the benefits of interaction between researcher and respondent in advance. Such meetings will assist in “sensing the commonalities” (Fangen, 2005) and provide support in the decision to continue the researcher-respondent partnership. Therefore, to facilitate the observation sessions at festival backstage areas, I considered face-to-face meetings crucial to gain trust.

Moreover, because I had the opportunity to meet 23 of the 26 respondents more than once at various festival locations during the observation study, I had the possibility to clear out uncertainties or ask about new information. Repeated face-to-face interaction in both online and physical spaces contributed to unpredicted outcomes and access to rich and comprehensive narra-
tives on personal life stories not anticipated from the start. Several of the musicians in this study were encountered in face-to-face environments as much as six times, each time adding some information concerning personal life stories in music careers.

2.4. Participant observations

The extent to which it is possible to understand a certain phenomenon through in-depth interviews can be limited considering the differences in what people say and what they actually do. Personal experiences and understanding of work patterns or changing conditions of network relations can be difficult to explain or communicate, or even considered “common knowledge,” thus obscuring the information to outsiders of the research field (Jorgensen, 1989). Observing behaviours of social actors in their cultural contexts can contribute to reduce such differences between verbally communicated information and actual behaviour (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). Thus, observing the social contexts of musicians to identify quality aspects of various network relations and strategies to access network resources support the production of more accurate representations of network relations and strategies in the contemporary Swedish music industry.

To cope with these diversities of verbal communication and actual behaviours, as well as the dynamics of network relations and strategies in time and space, I have explored work and creativity in the music industry by employing participant observations in addition to the interview sessions. The relationship between networking and processes of information and knowledge transfers, stimulated by temporary encounters at festivals, was the target for the observations. In order to understand transfers of such flows in temporary music communities, I needed to explore festival environments because of the highlighted importance of these spaces for finding jobs and planning for ongoing and future projects.

Explicitly, the purpose of my participation in temporary music communities was to identify the type of information and knowledge shared at such events, the role and function of various network communities and the transparency of these music communities considering different aspects of access (exclusive-inclusive relations).

Observation dilemmas

Advocates of personal involvement in participants daily life argues for the necessity of becoming familiar with social contexts, norms and behaviour of the respondents to gain understanding and apprehend the meanings of respondents’ actions in different sociocultural contexts. Accurate findings are only possible to achieve if the researcher becomes personally involved in
and get access to respondents’ everyday lives thus refraining from social and physical distance and the associated misunderstanding of sociocultural contexts (Jorgensen, 1989). In contrast, becoming an insider may result in the issue of the researcher lacking objectivity. Dealing with these extremes of insider-outsider relations as well as aspects of access, observational research can be confusing. However, I will argue for exploring network relations and the associated flows of information and knowledge using observational research, in two ways.

First, considering my background in the music industry, the crucial issue of gaining access to networks and, in particular, the backstage environments staging relations in different networks was never a concern. Shared identities and common interests have resulted in access to people and resources and contributed to exchanges of important information. The nature of such researcher-participant relations, based on common backgrounds, can be considered a unique opportunity to approach the research field, thus making the researcher an insider of the observed environment (Given, 2008).

Being an insider can, however, create tensions due to expectations and disclosures of “sensitivities” which in turn require constant awareness of the need for clear boundaries and professional attitudes. In this sense, the observational approach clearly makes me an insider considering the experiences of work and creativity in the music industry. However, the risk of lacking objectivity as a result of insider roles rest on the assumption that such close researcher-participant relations are founded on observing and participating in “the everyday rhythms and routines” (Crang & Cook, 2007) in everyday environments. Such is the work of the ethnographer. Although I had the opportunities to meet the participants face-to-face in the interview sessions, thus building trustful relations prior to the observation sessions, I did not participate in their everyday life. Rather, my role as observer was to participate and observe certain aspects of musicians’ work processes at popular music festivals.

Second, connecting to a large pool of musicians does not necessarily imply access to various working spaces. According to respondents in the pilot study, new conditions for work and creativity spurred by flexible labour markets and spatial diffusion of job opportunities have weakened the associations between space and place, thus reconfiguring the geographies of social relations in the music industry. As a result, in their efforts of making work practices more efficient musicians argue for the importance of temporary locations and adopting mobile technologies to manage work in the project-based music economy. Music festivals and a variety of computer-mediated social network spaces have developed into important “meeting spots” and are considered crucial to reduce risk and uncertainty. The backstage environments of festivals accommodate a large number of musicians and industry professionals and contribute to maintain efficiency and the circulation of information and knowledge flows.
However, backstage areas are controlled environments, requiring privileged access and specific backstage passes in general restricted to the musicians, their management and the crew. Therefore, to observe musicians in these environments clearly address the issue of negotiating access to specific spaces. Basically, managing such difficulties involved a negotiation process with gatekeepers of the backstage settings. I approached the problem in two ways. Initially, I relied on personal relations due to working as a sound technician at several Swedish festivals resulting in multitude of connections, thus facilitating access to those festivals. In contrast, when trust and connections did not exist I negotiated access supported by the musicians being part of this study which in turned proved to be fruitful and resulted in access to all the festivals of vital importance for my research.

Observation environments

Arguably festivals have become “hot spots” for occasional interaction in temporary settings gathering numerous of musicians and other professionals in the music industry. Such temporary music community gatherings have started to be considered crucially important for information flows and knowledge sharing (Klein, 2011). Based on the pilot study, musicians emphasised the importance of music festivals to find job opportunities and to facilitate face-to-face networking, thus coping with contemporary working conditions. Backstage/VIP areas of music festivals represents the local micro-spaces staging the meetings between music professionals. These arenas for interaction and learning processes can be considered the equivalent of more permanent environments though clearly defined in time and subject to intensified networking. In particular, the bars, restaurants and cafes used for planned and spontaneous meetings of those spaces can be seen as akin to similar settings in permanent locations. These particular temporary rooted meeting places are the social backbone for information and knowledge flows (Maskell et al., 2004). However, in terms of work and creativity, the backstage areas are poorly understood and are yet to be explored.

In this study I located myself to the backstage areas of nine Swedish music festivals and participated in conversations between musicians and other social actors. These environments exhibit many similarities with more permanent locations such as clubs and bars in urban areas and are designed to serve as settings for relaxation and work. In these temporary environments it is possible to schedule planned or spontaneous meetings in the wide range of social microgeographies - bars, restaurants or a variety of lounges. Moreover, there are spaces for the media actors, Internet communication opportunities and press rooms in which to conduct interviews in quiet environments.

During the everyday activities music professionals alternate between backstage areas, artistic work on stage and occasional visits to other artists performances to find inspiration. At nights, the backstage areas turn into nightclubs in which “people conduct business to the sound of some pumping
beats” (Informant 1 2012, festival organiser) performed by different DJ’s. In a sense, such areas can be considered micro-festival spaces due to the many spontaneous performances and momentary collaborations between artists.

Depending on different organisational arrangements and the ability to support artists, festivals offer various services and “hospitalities” for instance backstage performances, specially invited celebrity DJ’s and playgrounds involving computer game competitions among backstage actors. Festivals Backstage areas are in general located in physical proximity to festival stages and interconnecting transport routes to facilitate immediate transfers. Although they share similar characteristics and activities they can be located to different physical locations depending on the nature of specific festivals - temporary built-up areas (e.g. Sweden Rock Festival), hotel lobbies (e.g. Storsjöyran) or already existing on-site facilities (e.g. Way Out West).

Conducting the field study: Festival locations and work patterns

Considering my strategy to observe in festival environments attended by music actors from the interview sessions, potential festivals were narrowed down to twelve possible locations for conducting the field study. Two festivals were omitted because of conflicting schedules thus contributing to further limiting the possible choices. Considering the scope, scale and consumer sizes, these festivals are amongst the biggest in their genres where many music fans go on their “annual pilgrimage” to enjoy the performances of favourite artists. For instance, the Bråvalla festival is the biggest Swedish festival of all times in size and attracts a wide range of music genres; Sweden rock festival is the largest rock music festival. Therefore, attending the major festivals also involved access to a wider range of musicians and social actors.

Moreover, due to my intention to explore the Swedish music industry I prioritised festivals rich on Swedish artists in order to gain access to a variety of Swedish music contexts. The following festivals and the associated backstage areas have been used to conduct the observation studies:

- Bråvalla Festival 2013, Norrköping
- Electronic Summer 2012/2013, Gothenburg
- Hultsfred Festival 2012, Hultsfred
- Hultsfred/STOXA Festival 2013, Stockholm
- Manifestgalan, 2012/2013, Stockholm
- Sabaton Open Air 2013, Falun
- Storsjöyran 2012/2013, Östersund
- Sweden Rock Festival 2013, Norje
- Way Out West 2012/2013, Gothenburg
The process of designing the observation study required considerations on when to conduct the observation sessions (day time/evening/night time) and technological approaches to register data. The first field study sessions were organised in two two-hour sessions a day at the first visited festival. However, I realised that working on the basis of predefined sessions was unrealistic due to much information collected by being “drawn into” conversations in the backstage area “off-session.” Rather than emphasising the duration of observation sessions, different aspects of time of the day were crucially important in order to gain access to a variety of musicians and networks simultaneously; during daytime, the backstage areas were sparsely populated. Therefore, to conduct the observational studies and to participate in network conversations I adjusted observation patterns to nightlife activities and musicians timetable. Moreover, because my strategy was to accompany musicians involved in the interview sessions it was necessary to adapt to their backstage hours.1

My participant observer role during the observation sessions was “actively engaged,” not dominating the conversations by controlling the progress of various interactions. In general, many of the target themes in my study represent everyday issues in music industrial contexts. For instance, initiating conversations on changing working conditions, in particular the highlighted attention to non-creative work and the impacts of file sharing on income and earnings resulted in extensive discussions without the need for interfering in the conversation. Such issues of contemporary working conditions concerning everyday practices frequently occupy the attention and the conversations of those working in the profession.

Field study data collection: Themes and technological approaches
In addition to adopting artist work patterns, conducting the observations enabled the themes and issues arising from the interview sessions to be probed further. Basically, I started from the themes used in the interview sessions and initiated conversations based on various issues emerging during these sessions. However, because my main interest was to identify the types of resource flows being exchanged I explicitly focused on three areas - information and knowledge transfers and network connections. These three variables were divided as follows:

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1 In some cases this “hangaround” also involved joining musicians in other activities at the festival grounds.
Table 1. Types of resources of interest in the observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>▪ Regular jobs (secondary jobs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Contacts (e.g. phone numbers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Music projects (songs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>▪ Technical support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>▪ With who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ How many? (how many meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ How often? (time spent on meetings backstage)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this context, it should be noted that this template was only used to create reference points when participating in the conversations. In some cases it is also difficult to confine certain interactions to these simple categories. However, considering all these observations combined, these reference points allow for distinguish patterns of communication contents as well as contributing to grasp the nature of network ties in the contemporary music industry.

To register field notes I created an electronic form making it possible to use different technologies to write field regularly while conducting the observations. Thus, field notes could be registered on mobile technologies such as smartphones or tablets. However, to openly writing notes in the presence of the participants can result in that some actors becomes offended or upset in particular when field notes clearly appears to focus on the current activity. Therefore, employing different technologies allowed me to register observational data without interfering in the conversations.

Although the key actors were aware of my observation study, using my smartphone to write keywords did not cause field note dilemmas and awkward situations in which participants were made aware of my role as an observer. “Fiddling” with your smartphone can be assumed to be a socially acceptable behaviour, even during ongoing conversations, and especially so if conversations involve several participants at the same time. My assumption was that mobile technology is part of everyday life and does not attract particular attention when being used in everyday activities.

Considering the aim of my research, my observations were focused on network relations and the information and knowledge flows between participants in different network ecologies. I did not register body language, expressions or descriptions of realities on-site. In addition, I used a system of jotted notes (Jorgensen, 1989), writing down keywords and phrases while
observing in the field, which greatly facilitated speedwriting. Notes were translated in short breaks by frequent use of the media offices in the backstage areas. However, I did not reconstruct details of my observations in writing. Instead, assuming a two-step model and a more efficient methodology when working in backstage areas, I used my digital recorder to verbally reproduce observed activities. In the next step, such field reconstructions were transcribed after returning to my office.

2.5. Netnographies: Online observations of music actors

While ethnographers still conduct studies in the physical world research focused on online realities – known as netnographic studies – has started to gain understanding (Hine 2004; 2005; Kozinets, 2006). Researchers can gain access to information through “lurking” on experiences and opinions in various online communities. The growth of such non-fixed contexts and online relations for coordinating work and creativity serves to connect individuals. Popular sites as Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn demonstrate the power of new communication technologies and the opportunity to gain access to multiple relations supporting the conversation of “intricacies” of everyday work and social life (Murthy, 2008).

To cope with the spatial dynamics and reconfigurations of the music industry, I will argue for two aspects to involve information and communication technologies in the interaction with participants. However, prior to the arguments and explanations of using online methodologies, it should be noted that netnographies are not the dominant methodology in the research project. An initial problem was to get access to private online community spaces and the fact that those spaces of interest were temporary by nature which only made it possible to participate in closed project spaces for a very short period of time. Rather, I have used these spaces to supplement data since it allows for the triangulation of information collected through interviews and observations, which in turn provided for more rich and comprehensive data. In particular such triangulation of data can be compared to data collected in interviews and observations if re-using music actors in new contexts of data collecting. Consequently, the netnographic studies build on respondents from the interview sessions.²

First, given the wide range of choices of online environments, the multitude of opportunities to observe interaction and communication are considerable. Data from various computer-mediated online communities is textual and can easily be copied and transferred to the researcher without the need for spatial re-location (Kozinets, 2006). Because of real-time technologies

² It should be noted however that none of these actors were part of the observations.
allowing for immediate person-to-person (peer-to-peer) conversations there are vast opportunities to observe such interactions in front of your computer. In addition, observing and interacting in several online communities simultaneously can contribute to make work and research more efficient.

Second, my intention to conduct netnographic studies initially rested on the assumption that information from interviews and observations are constrained by the physical presence of the researcher (Fangen, 2005; Jorgensen, 2004). For instance, if people consider you to be an outsider in the observed environment, it can in turn result in behaviours of suspicion, indifference and the rejection of participating in the research. Although such insider-outsider difficulties largely benefited from previous encounters during the interview sessions, information may to some extent be affected by the presence of an observer (McKechnie, 2008). However, involving ethnographic studies of online social network services may allow for data to be collected without the distinct presence of an “observer.” Thus, conversations and interaction in different online environments may provide for the collection of “non-affected” data.

**Netnographic procedures**

Primarily I have used the netnographic methodology to participate in online projects but I have to some extent also been monitoring certain aspects of communication gained from the interviewed musicians’ official online spaces, particularly how many and which online spaces musicians employ in their online communication. This has also involved to “follow the tracks” of certain musicians and examine those environment in which they interact with social actors on the Internet.

In consent with four of the interviewees, I gained access to four different online communities and was allowed to copy and save textual conversations. These communities were however temporary, ranging between 6 and 37 network members and established to complete different joint projects - two compilation albums, one artist album recording using worldwide guest artists and one community focused to resolve difficulties with new music software technology (learning support).

Initially, I was invited to each community by the pinpointed interviewees from the interview sessions. Although such initial invitations can reduce uncertainties of identities, it is vital to adopt specific community norms to gain access to information (Core Garcia et al., 2009). While face-to-face interaction requires physical presence, online communities provide opportunities for “lurking without interacting,” thus enable the researcher to stay undetectable (Kozinets, 2006). Such behaviour can cause community members to object to participate in the research project. Therefore, to be acknowledged as a member of different music communities my strategy was to engage in dialogues with community members which proved to be advan-
tageous to gain access to offline communities as well. It should also be noted that I rarely interfered in textual communications. Rather, my role was the detectable non-participating researcher taking notes on different aspects of conversations.

The online music communities in this research project were located to Facebook and LinkedIn and were configured to be exclusive, not allowing for open access to information and data. At first I considered to plan regular visits to different communities using a schedule spending 2-4 hours weekly examining conversation flows. However, because of the opportunity to adjust technical settings in such communities I subscribed to notifications from these sites and made the process of collecting data more efficient. Therefore, notifications on activities in different communities made it possible to reduce my presence and observations of activities to, roughly, one hour a week. Likewise, considering that textual communication is permanently inscribed at the web sites, it did not necessitate constant monitoring of activities or interactions.

The collection of data in online environments was based on the same template and reference points used in the observation studies in the festival backstage areas.

2.6. Positionality: Personal experiences of professional music work

After spending nine years of being involved in the British music industry professionally and an additional eight years as a semi-professional studio technician in the Swedish music industry, my role as a researcher needs to be clarified. Between 1992 and 2008, I worked as a freelance musician, music producer, sound technician and performance designer, sometimes in long-term contracts with record labels but more often in many short-term projects, in particular at popular music festivals. Music festivals and many other environments used for various purposes in this study were therefore familiar social environments already from the beginning of this study; thus, these “familiarities” result in the advantage of a pre-understanding of the different contexts. In fact, when conducting the pilot study I used my own experiences of music work in order to identify which spaces musicians use to perform their creative and non-creative tasks.

Moreover, participating in a wide array of music work environments have above all contributed to build comprehensive personal network relations in the music industry – to some extent used in this study – thus facilitating the process of getting access to many musicians. Indeed, one major advantage of these relations has been the opportunity to make direct contact without using gatekeepers which have contributed greatly to speed up the interview process and facilitated access to music actors in the observations studies.
However, because of my background and experiences of work in the music industry there is a need to consider the concerns that this study may be considered to be biased based on personal perspectives and viewpoints (Gadamer, 2002; Geertz, 1993). Conducting research in familiar environments and by making use of personal connections in the music industry, concerns may arise in terms of insider/outsider status and the impacts when carrying out research, in particular concerning my position in relation to the participants in this study (Bryman, 2011; Fangen, 2005). I have dealt with this disadvantage in two ways.

First, to avoid bias, I have refrained from using personal network relations in the interview sessions and observations. Although many relations have grown deeper during the study, in particular in those cases where I have followed specific musicians in the observation studies, this strategy also reduces drawbacks from engaging in personal relations. Fangen (2005) even pinpoint that it is impossible to avoid a certain level of friendship between researcher and participants; rather it should be considered an opportunity to access crucial information. Secondly, Gadamer (2002) pinpoint the drawbacks of ”going native” in particular when conducting observation studies, and the risk that the researcher identifies herself with the researched object. At the same time Geertz (1993) argues that it is important to get close to the participants and their work environments to gain fuller understanding of the research field.

As a result of my background in the music industry, it was impossible to avoid involvement in the research environment as well as in the participants’ work processes. For instance, on one occasion during the pilot study I was asked if I could serve as a last-minute stand-in as a sound technician due to sudden illness; in another situation I helped a musician to set up some electronic equipment in the studio. However, these deeper understandings of the music industry are not similar to become part of the studied phenomenon (Geertz, 1993). In fact, knowledge about social codes and jargon contributes to better understanding of the participants’ situation (Fangen, 2005) and have resulted in better access to experiences and opinions of work in the music industry. Instead, it has been crucially important to continuously reflect on the relational ties to participating musicians and their activities in specific environments in order to avoid biased research.

2.7. Ethical considerations

Concerning the ethical aspects of this study, I have followed the guidelines as specified by Codex (2014) rules and guidelines for research. However, these guidelines have been used in different ways due to the triangulation of methods in this study. Therefore I will present the ethical concerns based on the different methodologies.
Interview sessions

In conjunction with the interview requests I informed the interviewees about the aim and objectives of the study and the role of their participation. In line with the principle of confidentiality I emphasised that the participant will not be identifiable in any way by a reader, thus I withhold information on, for instance, band names, hometowns and characteristics of music genres in this dissertation. This principle was used in all the different methodologies in this study.

With the consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded digitally. After the transcription process I coded all interviewees with numbers and have only categorised participants into male and female musicians as I also wanted to examine if the contemporary music industry involves different working conditions for different groups of musicians.

In addition, in order to avoid misunderstandings and minor conflicts, I offered to send the quotes and the contexts in which they are used to the participants for their consent to be used (Fangen, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). My purpose for doing so was to ensure the participants my intentions with their participation and maintain good relations as it would facilitate further contacts in the future; this strategy in particular proved to be much appreciated and was helpful when engaging in many recurrent conversations in the backstage areas. Two of the interviewees welcomed this offer and quotes were e-mailed quotes to them.

Participant observations

Concerning informed consent with the field studies and the participant observations in festival backstage areas, such information sometimes involved conversational barriers. My intention at the festivals was to observe what type of resources were being shared between music actors and with whom my observation participants engaged in conversations with. Although I often introduced myself and my intentions, at some occasions it was not possible to interrupt the flow of the conversation. Moreover, because I was interested in observing the interplay between music actors, how they collaborate and share information in networks, it can hamper the contents of the discussion if the observed participants had been informed of explicit key variables of the observations. Fangen (2005) pinpoints many reasons for not “telling the truth,” i.e. about revealing too much to the participants, in particular considering the risk of participants adapting their conversations because of the presence of outsiders. In fact, the observation environments often made it difficult – in some cases even impossible – to inform many social actors due to sudden intrusions in conversations. Thus, my starting point was to inform the pinpointed key music actors about the aim of my study.
Netnographic sessions

Unlike the barriers of informing each and every one of the participants in the backstage areas, the observation studies of information and knowledge flows in online communities facilitated such informed consent. In those Facebook groups allowing for my participation I published my aim at the group wall and asked the group members about permission to use the activities in the study. It also proved to be that one of the major advantages of observing online communities was that the presence of outsiders were not experienced as intrusive; the members never took any notice of my presence due to the non-physical nature of such participation.

2.8. Summary: A triangulation of research methods

In this chapter I have presented the methodological approaches in this study. Prior to this project I conducted a pilot study in order to identify changes of working conditions in the music profession as well as key concepts related to such changes. By using a triangulation of methods I was allowed to explore different aspects of musicians’ experiences and opinions of changes in work patterns and artistic work practices.

Following the pilot study, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 26 Swedish musicians and 6 festival organisers, taking the starting point from individual experiences of those changes of music work identified through the pilot study, above all the changing geographies of how, when and where artistic work and creativity in the contemporary Swedish music industry is performed. The locating of the interviews to musicians’ work spaces was to some extent based on the fact that many musicians today are dealing with stressful and fragmented work schedules, alternating between creative and non-creative work in a multitude of geographies. However, this strategy was also useful in order to step into musicians work spaces and facilitated more relaxed interview sessions thus obtaining access to personal spaces and opportunities to interact in various different creative spaces. This approach proved to be valuable when conducting the observation sessions in festival backstage areas since I “bumped” into most of the interviewees on several occasions at festivals. Thus I had the opportunity to “chit-chat” with the persons being interviewed during repeated interactions, build trust-based relationships and this facilitated being able to ask more questions during such interactions which result in greater access to much valuable information.

Second, in order to fully understand how musicians engage in network interactions at importance work spaces, I conducted an observational study at popular music festivals. Since personal experiences and opinions on changing working conditions, for instance, can be difficult to explain, my aim with
the participant observer sessions was to observe how networking was carried out in practice and the type of information exchanged between networking actors. In the pilot study, many musicians emphasised the growing importance of co-locating with other music actors in festival backstage areas. Therefore the observation sessions were conducted at 9 Swedish popular music festivals. By following the festival schedules of musicians participating in the interview sessions I found it very easy to get “drawn into” conversations in the backstage areas due to the “open and friendly atmosphere” between Swedish music actors. Above all it facilitated access as well as acceptance of being present in my role as researcher gathering information concerning networking.

Third, to cope with new music geographies of work and creativity my aim was to get access to these new spaces, in particular various Internet based communication medias. By conducting netnographic studies in online communities such as Facebook and LinkedIn I was able to observe what kind of information and knowledge music actors exchanged and which online communities they preferred in such interactions. However, because I initially found it difficult to access online communities based on memberships I did not use the netnographic studies as the bearing methodology in this study. Rather it should be considered as supplementing the interviews and observation sessions, in particular focused on the type of information and knowledge flows being transmitted in these communities.

To conclude the chapter, I present my position in relation to the music actors in this study based upon my experience working as a professional musician.
3. Theoretical framework

In this study, I explore a theoretical framework for the analysis of how, when and where musicians carry out various occupational tasks in order to cope with fragmented work patterns. The contemporary music profession requires musicians to employ a wide range of “music geographies” for performing many tasks, in order to cope with the reconfigured music economy. Spaces for networking and knowledge transfers have been subject to pressures for spatial change and therefore affect the geographies for network formation, resource flows and creative work.

To analyse the working lives of contemporary musicians, I need to consider the roles of these new geographies for musicians’ efforts in carrying out many creative and non-creative tasks. I build the analysis of this study upon three theoretical points of departure that taken together facilitate the understandings of contemporary music work in relation to various music geographies. As a point of departure, the idea is that networking and network relations are important to understand how skills and competencies are “put together” to form collaborative projects in which resources are transferred between social actors. Second, in networks, musicians can share crucial information and knowledge resources, in particular tacit knowledge, which serves as important drivers for new knowledge creation and innovation. Thus, knowledge transfers can be viewed as crucially important drivers for music innovation. Third, there is the idea that putting together existing knowledge into new combinations also requires creative thinking. The contexts and relationships are important to spur such creative thinking thus making creativity related to collective networking processes. These three theoretical concepts are used as analytical tools in order to understand the roles of the contemporary music geographies for music work.

In the next three sections, I outline these theoretical starting points.

3.1. Networking in the music industry: Towards individualised social networks

To analyse economic activities, economic geographers have started to consider the economy as a set of personal interactions between regional actors. This approach emphasises relationships rather than highlighting the role of
different kinds of economic actors (Glückler, 2007). The concept of social networking has become widely accepted in order to explain how social ties affect economic outcomes in regional clusters (Granovetter, 2005). In comparison to organisational networks created to last for specific projects, personal networks evolve and expand over numerous project cycles (Grabher, 2002a; Pratt, 2006; Watson, 2012). For individualised workers in the cultural industries, networking is crucial in order to support the identification of project partners to provide information on job opportunities and for knowledge transfers (Neff, 2005).

In order to understand the basics of networking, Mitchell (1969) pinpoints that social networks build upon “a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole can be used to interpret the social behaviour of the persons involved.” With respect to Mitchell’s definition of social networking and considering the importance of personal networks in the cultural industries, there is a need to examine the individual experiences of musicians networking as contemporary music work no longer enjoys the learning support of music institutions. That is, to understand networking in the context of the individualised music economy, it is necessary to go beyond the firm level of network relations.

In this section, I explore the relational aspects of networking and how different network typologies exhibit distinct qualities of network ties. In doing so, I will make use of Grabher & Ibert’s (2006) network typology and Granovetter’s (1973) discussion on the strength of ties.

A network typology: The strength of personal relations

With respect of personal networks, Grabher & Ibert (2006) identifies three types of networks involving various degrees of strength in ties between the network members. Communality networks are founded on strong, intense and long-lasting ties between participants in the network. However, access to communality networks is restricted to a few regular members. Participation is formed by mutual experiences and common social values, and usually members of the network are located in close proximity. Typically, this kind of network originates from family bonds or friendships from school or the work place and can easily be turned into trust (Sennett, 2000). Communality networks are exclusive, small-scale and static, and are characterised by conformity and hierarchical structures (Wittel, 2001). The social realm and learning regime of communality networks benefit from the thick web of personal information flows which ultimately transforms into strong ties (Granovetter, 1973) with former colleagues, work mates and long-term clients (Grabher, 2004a). However, as the networks always are composed of the same members, there can be limits to the flows of resources and information across networks due to lock-in processes (Grabher & Ibert, 2006; Hracs, 2012) when members becomes too much focused on existing ties.
Second, while communality networks can be perceived as exclusive, sociability networks are career-oriented and based on regular face-to-face interaction. Social ties are primarily based on information flows and knowledge transfers between a diverse set of relationships (Grabher, 2002a) and do not pay much attention to mutual experiences or common history (Grabher, 2004b). The contemporary short-term project economy does not allow time to be spent on developing personal ties; the nature of sociability networks are based on hanging out in informal settings to get inspiration. Thus, it leaves no time to establish closer personal contacts. Instead, links between members of sociability networks are driven by long-term professional motifs, involving ephemeral connections. However, since learning processes are disrupted by the continual switching between projects and different network relations, trust is based on roles rather than individual characteristics and long-term friendships (Wittel, 2001). As suggested earlier, such processes often come in the shape of private interaction in informal settings (McRobbie, 2002; Wittel, 2001), such as bars and clubs, and various private arrangements. Grabher (2002b) demonstrate the contrast between communality’s social coherence methodology and sociability’s non-personal ties by stressing that “hanging out in the city stimulates creation [sociability], staying in the neighbourhood benefits re-creation [communality].”

Short project cycles necessitate stakeholders to continuously search for new projects and connections and thus new networks. Strong ties, shared values and social coherence are less important compared to the opportunities of getting access to extensive networks and a plethora of connections. Sociability networks are focused on “catching up” key information, and to “know-whom” prevails over “know-how” (Granovetter, 1973; Grabher & Ibert, 2006; Hracs 2012). Thus, “sociality’s” underpin individual entrepreneurial ambitions, promoting superficial attitudes and weaker ties between participants (Grabher & Ibert, 2006). In addition, this type of network design requires significant investments in terms of time and money.

In the modern music industry, personal connections and access to strategic networks are essential to the contemporary musician (Hracs, 2012). For the restless creative worker, sociability networks provide key information on job opportunities which can be transformed into a multitude of potential projects if time is invested in a diverse set of networks (Ekinsmyth, 2002; Grabher, 2004a). Such investment will assist in interpreting local buzz and act as a tool for “catching up” on information and knowledge.

Third, in contrast to the personal agendas and private facets of the sociability networks, the notion of connectivity focuses on the specific project and utilises strategic network connections to untangle momentary problems. While communality networks emphasise strong relationships based on long-term friendship restricted to a few regular members, and sociability networks connect business agendas with private facets, the main attribute of connectivity networks is the weak ties among its contributors and pure in-
formational relationships (Grabher, 2004). Personal ties are insignificant and interactions are not dependent upon systematic face-to-face interaction; the main mode of communication is different with online connections. Online relationships are based on a social practice tied to “software professionals” supporting “logging on” attitudes (Grabher, 2004). Participants benefit from the large number of members contributing to a vast and comprehensive knowledge base that transforms into new short-term projects and, hence, new job opportunities.

Such ephemeral social practices and projects affect the evolution of trust. Personalised trust is abandoned in favour of projects based on swift achievement of trust and professional roles rather than on individual characteristics. Connectivity networks act to support the progress of individual skills and characteristics, and transform them into professional roles and entrepreneurial aspirations.

3.2. Knowledge: The driver of economic activities

In economic geography, knowledge production and the significance of knowledge spillovers are thought to be central to understanding economic activities and new innovations. Knowledge creation and learning processes are the result of interactions between social actors in which information is shared in order to solve problems, develop products and, above all, sustain competitiveness in specific markets (Bathelt et al., 2004; Rychen & Zimmermann, 2008). In this interaction, firms and individuals exchange information and knowledge which results in spillovers and ultimately contributes to new knowledge and increased productivity. This means that knowledge has been recognised as the driver of productivity and growth resulting in that exchange of information, and knowledge plays a central role in the overall economic development. Therefore, it can be argued that innovation is the result of combining different competencies and elements of knowledge in new ways and serve as the main contributor to economic development (Edquist, 2005).

Geographies of knowledge and learning

In much research on knowledge and innovation, and the exchanges of such elements in networks, there is a common belief that the production of new knowledge has a spatial dimension. There is a long list of insightful literature that considers geographical space to be a vital condition for supporting knowledge production and innovation.

In order to benefit from information extracted from these processes, economic geographers have long argued for the importance of geographical co-location of social actors for communicating information and knowledge, in
particular to enable transfers of tacit knowledge (Torre, 2008). A strong argument for clustering of social and economic activities is the need of face-to-face interaction in order to facilitate the formation of network relations and exchanges of knowledge (Florida, 2002). Larger urban regions draw on concentrations of talents and competencies in order to spur activities ultimately resulting in innovations, competitiveness and regional economic growth.

Numerous studies demonstrate that spatial proximity underpinned by repeated interactions between clustered actors serve to support trust-building and long-lasting commitment in network relations (Glückler, 2007; Malmberg & Power, 2006; Porter, 1998; Rychen & Zimmerman, 2008). Face-to-face interaction is even considered to be the prerequisite for trust-building and commitment between firms and individuals as well as the backbone of social network relations. Trust is often mentioned as the key element of relationships and associated with personal interaction patterns, in particular in the context of collaborations between various social actors. Trust-building reduces uncertainties and vulnerabilities between individuals about the involvement and engagement in common projects (Watson, 2008). Therefore, trust is believed to facilitate social interaction and collective action supporting the transformation of initial project ideas into successful outcomes (Bathelt & Turi, 2011; Grabher & Ibert, 2006, Maskell et al., 2004). Hence the emphasis is on cluster economics, co-location of activities and face-to-face interaction between locally-rooted actors, since this will facilitate the formation of network relations, knowledge and learning processes, and transfers of tacit knowledge (Asheim, 1999; Bugge, 2011; Malmberg & Power, 2006; Maskell & Lorenzen, 2004; Storper & Venables, 2004).

In the context of the cultural industries, Banks et al. (2000) and Wichmann Matthiessen et al. (2011) stresses that the result of frequent face-to-face interaction in local contexts is articulated in commitment, long-lasting and well-established network relations contributing to create new knowledge and project opportunities, which in turn reduces risk and job insecurity. Thus, it is argued that in order to gain advantages of tacit knowledge, cultural workers have to engage in face-to-face to build network relations and to access important network resources (Asheim et al., 2007; Bathelt & Turi, 2011; Florida, 2002).

However, recent research argues for a misleading conceptualisation of face-to-face, information and knowledge flows and innovation which ultimately lead to the exaggeration of metropolitan networks (Bathelt & Turi, 2011; Asheim et al., 2007; Klein, 2011). Such arguments suggest that the formation of network relations is not necessarily dependent upon fixed locations or physical space (Maskell et al., 2004; 2006, Torre, 2011, Urry, 2003, Walther et al., 2005, Wellman, 2001; Wellman et al., 2005). Notwithstanding the need for the spatial proximity of social actors, these arguments have not considered the opportunities for temporary contexts to support social
actors (Asheim et al., 2007). In fact, it is suggested that progress in information and communication technologies in combination with temporary settings of spatial proximity serve as potential sites for economic activities and goes beyond the need for permanent co-location of social actors (Bathelt & Turi, 2011).

In research on temporary co-location of firms and individuals, global buzz assists in the circulation of information and knowledge and generates access to new potential partners from different parts of the world (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2005; 2008). Such temporary hotspots of information and knowledge circulation in combination with intense face-to-face interaction can assist in transfers of tacit knowledge, similar to transfers in more permanent geographical locations (Maskell et al., 2004; Schuldt & Bathelt, 2011). Similar to formal and informal encounters in local environments of permanent locations, these temporary clusters of firms and individuals give rise to learning processes and knowledge dissemination (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2010). The asymmetries of non-proximate relationships can be reduced by such intense face-to-face interactions, allowing for inputs through body language and gestures (Bathelt & Turi, 2011). Therefore, these temporary gatherings are suggested to support the circulation of information and transfers of tacit knowledge, in turn strengthen or creating new network relations between business partners.

Moreover, in technologically networked societies, social network relations and the creation of trust are not confined to particular places; they are stretched out in space and to temporary places (Wellman, 2001; Wellman et al., 2005). The increasing fragmentation of work patterns that are the subject of examination in this study, results in low interest to spend time on social networking in traditional face-to-face environments due to the numerous creative and non-creative tasks at hand. The wide array of non-creative tasks to be operated by musicians in different work spaces and the continuous search for new projects, diverting time and energy from creative work, result in longer working hours and less time spent in local informal settings (Gill & Pratt, 2008; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Hracs, 2009; Menger, 2006). Indeed, these studies stress that individuals on global labour markets actually perform their daily routines in the “timeless space of flows of global networks” (Castells, 2004) and communicate important information in such networks (Bauman, 2007). Glückler (2007) even argue that higher intensity of mobility on labour markets, “the more likely are they [workers] to find non-fixed contexts of mutual encounters […].”

Highlighting technological developments and considering new mobile technologies, online networks and temporary collaborations have started to gain greater understanding (Grabher, 2002a; Maskell et al., 2006; Torre, 2008; 2011; Young & Collins, 2010). Blogs, e-mail and various social spaces on the Internet, for instance Facebook, Twitter and Soundcloud serve to connect individuals and contribute to screening processes of potential project partners. Supported by such technologies, networking based on face-to-face
conversations and verbal communication in formal and informal environments can be transmitted in online communities (Rychen & Zimmerman, 2008; Tillema et al., 2010; Torre, 2011; Walther et al., 2005). As a result of technological developments, individuals are “mostly connected no matter where they are going or staying” (Urry, 2012) making it possible to sustain network ties even while being on the move. In fact, these theories suggest that information and communication technologies have advantages in the formation of online network relations and are well suited for knowledge transfers (Hancock & Dunham, 2001).

Contrary to the assumptions of spatial proximity for acquiring knowledge, these relational aspects of networking can also be transmitted digitally in online networks and in temporary project-organised industries (Asheim et al., 2007). Such arguments of various flows and transfers rely on the premise that “spaces of knowing” are the result of how firms and individuals are organised and adopt contemporary working conditions. The assumption that face-to-face interaction only involves direct and physical co-location has not considered the opportunities of information and communication technologies (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2005; Maskell et al., 2006; Power & Jansson, 2008; Torre, 2011).

In this study, the idea of going beyond permanent geographical proximity and exploring similar forms of network flows and resources in temporary geographies as well as in digital online services is central. Music professionals operating in increasingly global labour markets and alternating between creative and non-creative tasks are suggested to be required to adapt to new conditions of the music profession such as relying on computer mediated solutions to organise various interaction processes and to co-locate at temporary gatherings for intense periods of face-to-face interaction. The organisational ecology can involve a synthesis of global networking, spatially mobilised individuals, online communities and face-to-face interactions in permanent or temporary spaces (Amin & Cohendet, 2005). Co-located face-to-face interaction can be supplemented by contemporary communication means to create trustful relationships, enhance network relations and support information and knowledge exchanges (Walther et al., 2005). Interaction in online communities and frequent face-to-face communication are suggested to contribute to the flows of tacit knowledge across space (Bunnell & Coe, 2001). Thus, depending on the conditions at hand in the new music economy, at-distant networks, online communities and temporary face-to-face interaction are suggested to generate trust and commitment which in turn can result in buzz and involve transfers of tacit knowledge in the contemporary music industry.

Buzz and learning in networks

In the context of knowledge exchange and innovation, a topic of considerable importance is the concept of buzz and its significance as an “information
and communication ecology” (Asheim et al., 2007) for exchanges of information and knowledge (Storper & Venables, 2004; Törnqvist, 2004). Buzz is a key element for coordinating and communication problems in volatile labour markets and the backbone of memberships in various networks (Asheim et al., 2007). When sharing similar views, traditions and organisational frameworks in the process to interpret local buzz, new information and knowledge can easily be identified and extracted to support industrial-specific characteristics (Bathelt & Turi, 2011), thus contributing to innovation processes.

To define buzz, Storper & Venables (2004) argue for a definition of buzz as the ecology of information and communication exchanges in face-to-face interactions and the outcomes of transfers between co-located people and firms working in the same industry. In short, local buzz is specific information and knowledge and the continuous updating of such specific elements, transferred as a result of “just being there” (Gertler, 2003) since social actors are surrounded “by a concoction of rumours, impressions, recommendations, trade folklore and strategic misinformation” (Grabher, 2002a). Participation in this buzz does not require specific investments, and this is because of the omnipresent web of information flows, knowledge transfers and interpretations resulting from non-deliberate exchanges (Bathelt et al., 2004).

In contexts of network formation and the contemporary cultural industries, buzz is vital for coping with the interpretation of information flows and knowledge transfers between networking actors. The cultural industries are based on the production of symbolic goods, for instance designs, adding to the economic value of aesthetic products (Lash & Urry, 1994). The outcome of work on symbolic goods appeal to consumers’ imagination through the creation of products of, for example, sounds and images rather than producing physical products. To be able to interpret symbolic goods certain interpretative abilities, skills and specific knowledge on aesthetic symbols are needed. Asheim et al. (2007) argues that such interpretation processes are related to habits and norms strongly tied to a certain group of social actors and less related to formal individual qualifications.

Because of the involvement of social norms and behaviours of specific social groups for interpreting and acquiring symbolic knowledge, the literature on exchanges of information and knowledge in networks also suggest the presence of context-specific and highly valued tacit knowledge (Asheim & Hansen, 2009). Such knowledge is considered a significant driver for innovation processes and a crucial resource for successful economic outcomes.

In short, tacit knowledge is defined as we “know more than we can tell” (Polynai, 1997) in turn elaborated in that “collaborations tell more than we can know” (Lindkvist, 2005) – complex knowledge imitated through practical skills, observations, body language and learning and in need of social interaction for its dissemination (Bunnell & Coe, 2001). Such knowledge is
distinct from the codified knowledge based on scientific discoveries and technological innovations which are easily formalised and efficiently transmitted between firms and individuals (Amin & Cohendet, 1999; 2004). Contrary to the omnipresent and easily communicated codified knowledge, tacit knowledge cannot be communicated in signs. It resides within people and their everyday practices and behaviours in specific social contexts (Benner, 2002; Bugge, 2011; Torre, 2008; Van Heur, 2009). That is, tacit knowledge cannot be codified as information or transferred in at distance relations due to face-to-face learning processes and the articulation of knowledge through body language, practices and experiences; it necessitate participating in local buzz (Amin & Cohendet, 2004; Kloosterman, 2005; Torre, 2008; Cummins-Russell & Rantisi, 2011). Using an example of the music industry, musicians must practice together to communicate different aspects on music production since it is difficult to convey different views in writing (Cummins-Russell & Rantisi, 2011). Therefore and due to the social context of information and knowledge exchange, tacit knowledge can only be communicated and transferred among network “members” sharing social norms and values of specific social communities (Amin & Cohendet, 2004; Crossley, 2008; Gertler, 2003; Polynai, 1997; Torre, 2008; Van Heur, 2009).

However, because of the multitude of possible network connections and growing reservoir of potential project partners in the music industry, know-who has become crucially important in the screening process of finding partners which has the qualities and knowledge needed for successful collaborations (Christopherson, 2002; Coulson, 2012; Grabher, 2004b; Storper & Venables, 2004; Watson, 2012). Socialisation in networks is therefore crucial for acquiring know-who in order to identify potential project partners. According to Grabher (2002a), such processes are essential in temporary organised projects relying on skills and talents of individuals, combining knowledge “from a variety of sources to accomplish a specific task” (Grabher, 2004b). Thus, in the contemporary symbolic knowledge-based cultural industries, participation in the buzz serves to identify the right collaborators who will “do the job” properly in various projects (Asheim et al., 2007).

3.3. Creativity: The core component of music work

In attempting to better understand creative work in the music industry, it is important to consider and define certain characteristics of music creativity in this study.

Defining creativity and the boundaries of different contexts of creative work are frequently debated issues. Amabile (1998) considers creativity to be a process in which individuals demonstrate problem solving skills and their ability to recombine such solutions and existing ideas into new combinations; Throsby’s (2001) suggestion on different creative abilities based on
the production of cultural goods and using a concentric model to illustrate
the wide array of creative skills and talent, separates creative arts (e.g. mu-
sic, writers, dance and visual arts) from professions producing non-cultural
goods; and, finally, Negus & Pickering (2004) notion of creativity as one of
the “most used and abused terms” resulting in the argument of creativity as
reaching “beyond the point of becoming competent where skills and capaci-
ties are raised to a level of practice that attains its own dynamic rhythm and
movement.” The latter can be acknowledged as representations of cultural
creativity, in particular when considering experiences and opinions of artistic
labour and the “sense” by which their professional practice is accomplished
unconsciously and not based on learning practices.

In much literature on creativity there is an emphasis on the “impact of in-
dividual creativity on collective performance” (Bilton, 2010). In some part
creativity is the outcome of individual processes, in the other the sum of
collective actions and the impressions derived from being part of creative
environments. Amabile (1998) and Woodman et al. (1993) stress that vari-
ous contextual components such as how the social environment affect indi-
vidual creativity. This kind of creativity is the outcome of collective action
of various social groups and result in new innovations.

However, in the context of individual creativity Tschmuck (2006) sug-
gests that individual creative processes relying on interaction with social
actors within the same social field are embedded ”in collective processes
and, in a wider sense in a social context.” According to Woodman et al.
(1993), creativity and creative solutions are the outcome of collective pro-
cesses embedded in pre-structured sociocultural contexts. Creativity is in
fact determined by social creativity (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008); therefore,
creativity “is not only attributable to individual thinking and acting, rather it
depends on input from other individuals” (Tschmuck, 2006). Amabile (1996)
emphasises a clear distinction between these different features of creativity:

All innovation begins with creative ideas. […] In this view, creativity by in-
dividuals and teams is a starting point for innovation; the first is a necessary
but not sufficient condition for the second.

Considering creativity in the music industry, it is suggested that in order to
convert creativity into innovations it is necessary to collaborate with others
(Wilson & Stokes, 2005). Wittel (2001) even argues that continuous rela-
tionships and face-to-face communication with many other creatives are
prerequisites for the reproduction of individual creativity. That is, in the
music industry music actors needs input from other creative sources to be
able to create music productions as well as to reproduce creative thinking.

In line with Bain (2005) and Törnqvist (2004), close proximity between
artists are assumed to generate new creative ideas due to the enriching at-
mosphere arising from the co-location of creative individuals. As highlighted by Törnqvist (in Bain, 2005):

Creativity flourishes when different specialties and competences are squeezed together on a small surface. What is needed is a meeting-place for more or less random contacts and new combinations of pieces of information and fragments of ideas.

Moreover, the artistic workforce in the Throsby model (2001) acknowledge the demarcation line between “artistic creative work,” embraced by qualities similar to the “beyond competence” skills and expressive power evoked by Negus & Pickering (2004), and non-creative labour in the cultural industries for instance technical personnel and booking agencies. Although this demarcation of creativity as a craftsmanship can be somewhat arbitrary, it is in general consistent with common observations of creative workers in the music industry. Producing and performing cultural goods in the music industry are based on the distinction between laboured work and “doing the same thing naturally” (Negus & Pickering, 2004). The nature of these specific creative elements contradicts other modes of creativity stimulated by collaboration and co-creation. Thus, in the context of this study creative work in the music industry will be considered as the result of “authenticity” and certain skills that goes beyond common professional knowledge and practice, combining individual processes and collective input.

3.4. Summary: Theoretical approaches

In this chapter, I have outlined the theoretical framework to analyse networking and network relations in which musicans can exchange information and knowledge resources to support music creativity and build music careers.

At first and going beyond the significance of music institutions, the argument that personal network relations are of major importance (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008) in order to gain access to flows of information and knowledge resources in the new music economy, requires the exploration of a theoretical approach emphasising how such relationships are negotiated and constructed. To analyse the nature of how musicians’ engage in networks in this study, I have used a network typology building on three types of networks and based on the strength of ties between network members. By employing the network typology approach, I have been able to analyse the roles of various network relations and how these relationships underlie collaborative projects between musicians.

Networking is important due to the opportunities of exchanging crucial information and knowledge about, above all, job opportunities, thus support-
ing musicians in their effort of building and maintaining their careers in the music profession. In this context it has often been argued that networking actors have to participate in the buzz in order to be able to build trust between actors and for interpreting and identifying important resources and possible collaborators. In fact, face-to-face participation in the buzz is suggested to be vital to enable transfers of complex information and knowledge — tacit knowledge. Therefore, to be surrounded by the buzz “just by being there” is vital to be able to be part of “rumours and recommendations” thus facilitating the identification of important resource flows. However, in the context of the contemporary music industry it is argued that geographic co-location is not a necessary precondition for participating in the information and knowledge flows emanating from local buzz. Technological progress combined with temporary co-location of network actors are suggested to exhibit similar characteristics as more permanent clustering of social actors. By referring to temporary face-to-face hotspots such as trade fairs and to opportunities by employing digital online communities, it is possible to exchange information and knowledge in at-distant relationships. Thus, going beyond geographical proximity and local buzz by being getting involved in virtual buzz, social actors can organise fragmented and speeded-up work lives in similar fashion as in locally-rooted environments. Such approaches to information and knowledge transfers have been useful in analysing musicians’ fragmented work patterns and how they make use of physical as well as non-physical geographies to perform work and creativity.

Moreover, putting existing knowledge together into novel combinations and, in the context of this study, to create musical products requires creative thinking. To understand how music creativity works and how musicians engage in creative processes, it is important to explore the contexts of creative input. Although it is argued that creativity is an individual process, it is suggested that creativity in the music industry is the outcome of face-to-face collaborations with other music actors. Therefore to reproduce creativity musicians are dependent on the surrounding environments and the different social contexts in which they can meet other musicians in face-to-face settings. This approach to creativity, in particular the reproduction of creative thinking, is useful when analysing how and where musicians perform creative work.
4. Spaces of network relations

The significance of networks in relation to new working conditions in the cultural industries has been discussed at some length in economic geography research. Workers in cultural industries symbolise, more than any other type of worker, the transformation of labour markets and the increasingly irregularities and uncertainties caused by the neo-liberalisation of job markets (Gill & Pratt, 2008). In view of these changes, active networking is considered a dynamic and conscious process and regarded as crucial for contemporary musicians in order to access network resources at music labour markets. As the new music labour force have to be more risk-taking and accept increasing requirements of mobility and flexibility to support their career paths than previous generations, networking is considered a proactive strategy to enhance the opportunities to succeed in the new music economy (Coulson, 2012; Lash & Urry, 1994; Hartshorn & Sear, 2005; Neff et al., 2005).

In networks, music actors have opportunities to exchange resources which ultimately provide for access to information, learning and jobs. These resources are exchanged and transferred in networks by way of interactions which in turn constitute the relationships comprised by any given network; “networks are, in effect, networks of interactions” (Crossley, 2009), constantly re-designing the relationships of which they are made. By co-creating the spatial environments for building social ties in networks while simultaneously maintaining existing webs of relationships, musicians can improve their opportunities to gain access to information concerning job opportunities and knowledge pools (Coulson, 2012).

However, although geographers have started to examine the spatial dynamics considering work, employment and knowledge in networks, and in particular how the new networking arenas affect project work across time and space, the contexts of contemporary music networks are yet to be explored. The nature and role of “location” for network processes and to what extent information and knowledge can be transferred in physical and online typologies of networks need to be explored in order to grasp the scope and scale as well as the characteristics of contemporary patterns of work and creativity in the music industry.

In this chapter I examine the role of the geographies for networking and network relations. My arguments will proceed as follows. I start by examine the geographies of networking and the dynamics of how, when and where networking takes place. In section two I identify musicians’ interests for
engaging in networking while emphasising different attitudes to network relations depending on the career stage of music actors. In the following two sections I will take a closer look at how and where musicians build network ties directing attention to the new geographies of networking. This also involves an exploration of the strength of such ties in network relations. In the final section, I put attention to the tendencies of excluding certain groups of musicians from these important spaces of work practices.

4.1. The network geographies of the music industry

Cultural workers traditionally have sought-out locally-rooted spaces to build ties and network relations to gain access to a wide range of resources. In studies on locational patterns for networking, musicians make use of a wide range of urban face-to-face environments. Bars, cafés, clubs and other locally-rooted environments such as personal contexts, in particular recording studios, have served as input to creative processes as well as being crucially important for gaining access to network connections and resources. These locations and agglomerations of music workers and music industrial actors can provide for a “thick web” of information and knowledge widely known as the “buzz,” which in turn can provide for crucial information and knowledge pools (Bathelt & Turi, 2011; Neff, 2005).

Crossley (2009) explains the processes of network creation in such local spaces for the Manchester punk scene in the 1970s in which key actors met for the first time and formed bonds. When individuals with shared interests are drawn to the same places they are more likely to “bump into” one another and start discussions.

As a result of locally-rooted networking, musicians have been able to reduce costs, risks and uncertainties by, for instance, sharing equipment, recording studios and helping each other out with important music connections (Menger, 2006). Consequently, drawing from such benefits of “being there,” musicians gathers in places rich on social spaces providing for face-to-face interactions which ultimately can facilitate the exchanges of vital information and serve to connect potential collaborators. As this Swedish musician explained the benefits of moving from a small town in the north of Sweden to Stockholm in order to access networks and the necessary “music buzz”:

The major problem was to find the places or the clubs where you can get all the input needed to work as a musician. [...] I knew early in my career that if I wanted to work as a musician I needed to move to Stockholm [...] and when I finally ended up there everything changed quickly. There are actually a whole lotta clubs clubs and bars where you can find the important connections that have the power to help you in your career. [...] As a musician it’s increasingly important to have the opportunity to choose from a wide range
of meeting places in which you can access the connections that will get you jobs. (Interviewee 3, male musician, 2012)

As a result, many musicians move to the major urban regions, and in Sweden this would mean Malmo, Gothenburg or Stockholm, to enhance their personal networks, gaining increased access to connections and resources needed for building one’s individual careers as an artist.

However, the centrifugal forces propelled by technological progress, “just-in-time” working standards and growing income uncertainty have undoubtedly enhanced the mobility and spatiality of network relations. In turn, this allows for a wider range of simultaneous connections between music actors. Hracs (2009) pinpoint such decisions in his study on spatial location in Toronto where musicians abandon traditional cultural neighbourhoods due to lower earnings and, above all, more mobile working lives. Such alteration of spaces of connections has affected the structure and nature of networking, resulting in new ways of “locating” work within the personal network organisation.

Moreover, the role of face-to-face interaction for gaining highly valued trust in contemporary music networks is not clear. Patterns of flexible employment and increasing mobility necessitate the renegotiation of trust and the adaptation to new technologies which in turn can facilitate face-to-face interaction on spatially dispersed labour markets (Glückler, 2007). In fact, many of the interviewed musicians argued that success or failure of work in the contemporary music industry is increasingly predicated on how musicians are able to restructure networking routines and adaptation to new modes of trust-building and not only rely on gatherings in urban contexts.

Bathelt & Schuldt (2005), Maskell et al., (2004) and Power & Jansson (2008) pinpoint such temporary permanence in trade fairs, conferences and conventions; Bathelt & Turi (2011) emphasise the opportunities offered by contemporary information and communication technologies and online co-locations; and Urry (2012) highlight how “traveling technologies” can contribute to non-fixed “office spaces” in various transport modes. As a result of these developments and the associated imbalances of time distribution between various tasks, social actors involves in new contexts of networking, to some part transferring traditional face-to-face interactions to contemporary communication spaces and thus finding new ways of engaging in network exchanges.

Swedish musicians have started to adapt to these new conditions of work by transferring network processes to other spatial contexts and geographies, thus reconfiguring work across time and space; the need for interaction in networks have to be adapted to the flexible and mobile working conditions at hand.

The vast majority of the interviewees pinpointed the growing importance of popular music festival venues and the need to engage in online interactions to gain access to networks and resources. By exploring such temporary
locations, musicians have been able to engage in networking thus creating new connections which ultimately generate new job opportunities. As this particular musician explains these spatial changes in the context of contemporary working conditions:

After a gig with this band of young guys I toured with, we discussed earnings and working conditions in general […] and [they] said “we have to perform 240 gigs every year just to stay in business.” And they have more than a hundred thousand followers on Spotify. 240 gigs! You will never be at home, or it would not even be necessary to have a home. They have to go to all these different places, being connected to all those websites and yet they barely make it. That is the new deal in the music industry today. (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician)

As a result of such spatially dispersed work patterns, it was suggested that musicians in the new music economy need to combine multiple spaces of creative work simultaneously. In fact, the vast majority of the interviewed musicians emphasised a shift in focus regarding spaces for network transfers. Today, considering the reconfigured landscape of work patterns and creative practices, it is in particular important for musicians to explore these new spaces in order to maintain network relations and to gain access to crucial resources.

Considering these shifts in work patterns, in the following sections I will examine these distinct “ecologies of networking” and conditions underlying the formation of network ties in these geographies.

4.2. Networking in the Swedish music industry

The need to get involved in trust-building and network formation in contemporary network ecologies rests on positions in networks and the richness of connections and resources within the network environment. Contemporary musicians have to perform a wide range of tasks while being exposed to centrifugal forces and the constant pressure to travel between sites and spaces to support individual careers. As a result many musicians emphasised that they carefully “pick their spots” in which to engage in active networking. However, depending on the richness of social ties and resources, musicians demonstrate different approaches to networking. At least three such features for being involved in networking in the Swedish music industry can be identified.

First, the number of networks and personal relationships affect the need to collaborate as well as the significance of engaging in additional networking in order to establish new ties. In the Swedish music industry such incentives are closely intertwined and related to the length of individual music careers. Professional musicians participating in extensive networking and benefiting from a multitude of network relations, in general make use of
existing links and relationships rather than seeking-out new networks and relationships. Maintaining existing network relations require continuous attention and resources, the already established connections are sufficient for the important exchanges of information and knowledge. As this musician explains:

Networking is far more important than ever but I don’t need to be as active as before since I’m already involved in a lot of networks. If you have been involved in the music industry since the 1960s you rarely will find yourself unemployed. However, it doesn’t mean that I turn down an offer if some newcomer would ask me about collaborations. […] But you can for sure say that I don’t put a lot of effort into networking as I already have a large set of connections to maintain. (Interviewee 16, female musician, 2013)

As stated by this musician, a large set of network relations do not imply that large-scale personal network ecologies serve as barriers and result in ignorance of potential connections or that these musicians avoid spontaneous interactions in temporary organised face-to-face locations. Rather it can be viewed as these musicians do not need to be the active part in establishing new network relations. In the case of professional musicians enjoying support from record labels and managements in career decisions, they have little need and motivation for engaging in networking to gain information concerning job opportunities. Professional musicians benefiting from the efforts of managers, booking actors and record labels rarely need to make predetermined work schedules involving job searching or engaging in new network relations since they benefit from music institutional support. As this musician explains:

I have worked […] professionally for the last twenty-three years mainly by promoting music on my own. If you have stayed in the music industry for such a long time, you for sure have contacts – otherwise you wouldn’t have made it. I still “collect” new contacts, but I’m not so stressed out about it anymore. Just pull the strings of what you already have, that’s enough sometimes. (Interviewee 3, male musician, 2012)

Professional artists enjoying long careers as musicians and maintaining their position in the music industrial network ecology, tend to have extensive network connections comprising both strong and weak links; the “core relationships” commonly based on personal friendships and acquaintances that have enabled workers to cope with uncertainties and insecurities of precarious work, and the weak ties at the periphery of networks involving musicians with substantial networked reputation and which can be marginally included in projects. The latter set of ties, according to Granovetter’s (1973) suggestion, are often based on “sporadic contacts” and have never been very strong; “chance meetings or mutual friends operate to reactivate such ties.”
Moreover, the abundance of network ties in professional musicians’ network ecologies can result in “a point of saturation.” When there is access to a wide range of resources from a multitude of network relations the willingness to embark on new network ties tend to drop. That is, the ongoing network relations fulfil the needs of the individual music actors. Such findings of advantages are confirmed by Glückler (2007) who argues that they [actors with sufficient ties] “are more likely to receive new ties in the future than those with fewer ties.” As a result, musicians with extensive careers and a large set of ties and networks are well positioned to receive new connections without making much effort.

Second, considering the importance of reputation to gain access to networks and connections, and in particular those unexplored relationships regarding new potential partners, many of the interviewed musicians carefully consider how many connections they can manage and maintain at the same time. The greater the number of relationships, the more time needs to be invested in maintaining relationships, thus a more intense work schedule. As this musician argued:

> You need to be careful and avoid being the fool who says “yeah, I will fix it” and then you don’t. You have to consider if you will benefit from additional projects and if you have time to put your effort in every project. If you don’t, your reputation will suffer. (Interviewee 15 2013, male musician)

Because of the reputational aspects of work and employment, the number of network connections has to be related to how much time it takes to maintain these relationships within networks and the reputational gains it involves. In the end, some musicians consider networking merely as one of many different tasks to be performed in order to organise work and to structure their career paths. Considering such aspects of network relations this musician argued for being cautious when engaging in too extensive network processes:

> Just consider how much time it will take to have a chat with your […] network friends. This is an industry based to some extent on superficiality, meaning that you actually need to chat with all your contacts. If you are keen on “spreading your risks” and optimising your circle of friends, you really need to put some effort into it. […] Having too many connections may lead to bad reputation if you suddenly “don’t care” about [don’t have the time for] people in your network. (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013)

Therefore, although network relations are vital in order to access important spaces of information, it is essential to consider different aspects of time management in the process of maintaining network relations.

Lastly and referring to decreasing motivations of searching for new ties due to aspects of time management are the difficulties to identify and sort out which ties and information sources are useful in particular situations.
What might appear to be an advantage of enjoying a multitude of network relations can result in conditions of information overload in which it becomes “impossible to grasp the information and it will only cause poor decision-making” (Interviewee 3, male musician, 2013). Similar findings are found in the Bathelt (2004) study of the clustering of economic activity and how these activities are linked to spatial patterns of knowledge creation and interactive learning processes. In the empirical findings it is suggested that the spatial clustering of individuals can result in overcrowding and too much buzz. Information abundance is making it more difficult for social actors to make sense of the buzz, in particular what is important to “store.” Thus, it can be suggested that because of the conflict between requirements of a wide range of network relations and simultaneously the need to improve work efficiency, musicians need to find balance between “the vibrant buzz and information overload” in order to separate important and relevant information from irrelevancies. As this musician explained such difficulties to sort out important information:

It’s impossible to keep in touch with everyone in too comprehensive networks. If I would make use of every possible contact, I wouldn’t know how I’d find time to have a chat with each of them. And if I don’t keep touch regularly, how can I know which of my connections have the right information for me. (Interviewee 3 2013, male musician)

Therefore, the professional musician rich in connections and network relations in this study, in general, deal with this inherent paradox by confining themselves to a certain set of relationships.

However, in contrast to interactions that largely occur within a defined range of music networks and relationships, it has been shown that new independent musicians are more open to ideas, input and interactions in order to facilitate access to various network resources. This openness to new connections as well as adaptability to engage in communication with social actors, is in part related to the fact that it is necessary to establish personal networks since contemporary work practices in the new music economy go beyond institutional responsibilities (Grabher & Ibert, 2006). Considering the individualisation of work and the risky nature of cultural labour markets, Hesmondhalgh & Baker (2008) also argue that the difficult conditions under which creative work is carried out requires comprehensive personal network relationships in order to gain access to crucial resources, in particular information on work. Therefore, new and not yet established music actors are more likely to spend more time in important networking spaces.

3 Regarding the concept of “new musicians” in this context, it refers rather to musicians not yet involved in widespread networking, for instance artists recently finding their record deals terminated and therefore in need of organising work and creativity according to the “do-it-yourself” model or musicians in the initial stages of their career. “New musicians” in the context of this study does not necessarily involve an age specific component.
Keen on gaining connections and building a reputation, this unestablished independent musician explained:

Getting access to networks is vital when you are an independent. Just recently I was chatting with the guitarist from [band] and later I will meet with [artist]. We never met before the festival but he had listened to my music and knows about me, and if I talk to him I may get involved in his networks as well. Once you get the ball rolling, you will find new connections and jobs. [...] Just don’t be afraid to talk to people. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

For those still in the early stages of music career, the process of establishing network ties requires considerable time due to the essential face-to-face communication, especially in the initial stages of networking and collaborations. Indeed, in “being there” and drawing upon the benefits from a multitude of relationships, sharing information concerning work and employment, as well as receiving support in knowledge-related issues, it is paramount to spatially reorganise work and adding those new face-to-face spaces to already established networking spaces.

The management of network relations in temporary ecologies

Much like the importance of wide personal networks as Coulson (2012) describes in her study of the British music industry, Swedish musicians find it crucially important to locate to the dense artist-centric spaces offering a multitude of different network connections and resources. When working conditions are getting “worse than ever,” above all producing fierce competition for jobs, many musicians assert that they have to examine unexplored spaces to find new connections simultaneously as they are maintaining their existing relationships. Therefore many musicians have started to reorganise work and to some part relocate to increasingly important artist-dense spaces rich in music connections, which are especially temporary by nature.

Examples of such temporary interaction in face-to-face environments can be found at popular music festivals (Klein, 2011; O’Grady & Kill, 2013). As this musician put it:

Festivals have always been important, but their roles have changed. It’s not only about live shows anymore. Because much of people involved in the music industry have relocated to events like festivals, you need to find your way in there in order to get in contact with those people who can help you out. (Interviewee 15 2013, male musician)

In the field studies of temporary music gatherings, the findings from observations in festival backstage areas and at temporary music events underline in fact the importance of strong links between music actors for network relations. Although many musicians consider “openness” to engage in new rela-
tions as “part of the job,” the vast majority of the interviewees preferred working with social actors from previous projects rather than directing attention to “outsiders” and unfamiliar music actors. For instance, most of the time spent in temporary music settings was focused to existing ties and network relations which are considered to be part of the “inner circle of friends” or the “core team” from previously or ongoing collaborations; in general, they only made use of connections of “friends of friends” when other options are poor. In cases when “new” musicians are involved in projects, many of the interviewees emphasised the vital role played by recommendations and reputation. As this musician argued:

The time you can afford to spend in a specific place is not really much. Let’s say I have a gig at a festival. That means, I will go to the festival, perform and rarely have the time to stay for more than two days. In general there’s really not much time to engage in […] new collaborations. In my case I’d rather spend my time chatting with friends, giving interviews, trying to promote myself, etc. (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2012)

Using Granovetter’s (1973) distinction between strong and weak ties related to high and low levels of trust, most interviewees preferred networking within familiar network settings. Long histories of collaborations, partnerships and interaction in networks – communality networks – facilitate transfer of information and knowledge within such networks based on strong ties (Grabher & Ibert, 2006). As argued by Jansson (2011) in his study on Internet entrepreneurs and uncertainty, similar strategies in the context of music networks are considered to reduce risks associated with collaborating with “wrong” partners, in particular to avoid negative impacts to their reputation due to bad decisions vis-à-vis partnering.

However, such a communality approach to networking is not clear in the Swedish music industry. The rationale underlying such exclusion is rather the result of the speeded-up short-term project economy combined with concerns on work efficiency and costs of spending too much time in specific locations. Returning to the example of temporary music gatherings, the intensity of work in summer tour schedules only allow for short periods of time in at various events. Therefore, many musicians mainly devote time and effort to maintain established network relations. As this musician explained network ties and the interactions, in particular in music festivals:

Usually, I plan my meetings in the backstage areas in advance. It’s not like I have planned everything, but you cannot afford to waste too much time on leisure when you are on hectic tour schedules. Above all, festivals are workplaces in which you promote yourself and find new jobs. Sometimes I meet new people but you rarely get to know them well […] maybe if you bump in to each other several times during the summer. […] That’s why I primarily chat with people I already know. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)
Clearly, in the contexts of temporary permanence in popular music festivals, intense tour schedules and the enormous competitive pressure require a high level of mobility of individual musicians between various festivals in order to carry out various tasks. When working conditions do not allow for time being spent at specific locations, many musicians organise scheduled meetings in advance to improve the efficiency within already established networks. In fact, the need of co-location with specific musicians and the associated face-to-face opportunities for mediating information concerning job opportunities has been crucially important for many musicians. As stated by Gill in research on new media workers (2002), “flexibility was determined by these, rather than by the needs of the worker.”

There is however another important variable in this context. These scheduled meetings took place in temporary settings only after initial stages of co-location and trust-building took place in more permanent face-to-face environments. In research on temporary geographical proximity, trust-based relationships are in general not created in the context of the temporary settings in which those meetings occur (Rallet & Torre, 2009). In general, the formation of new network relations in temporary environments occurred when friends and established partners introduced new music actors into existing circles of friends, thus expanding network relations. As explained by this professional musician:

Since I usually just stay for one day at festivals I’m not going to spend those hours on trying to engage in discussions with people I don’t know. [...] Of course I’ll go to new artists’ live shows and I may exchange a few words with that person after the show. But when it comes down to business, it’s the people I usually hang out with in Stockholm who will receive my attention. (Interviewee 2 2012, male musician)

As commented, such strategies were not explicit or intentional, nor were they the result of increasing competition for work and employment, but rather the outcome of contemporary working conditions which in turn requires musicians to plan their visits in advance. That is, many musicians employ specific strategies\(^4\) when engaging in work and leisure\(^5\) in order to cope with time limitations due the increasingly mobile and flexible nature of the music industry. Launching new collaborations or engaging in networking with “unknown” musicians rarely happened if relationships had not been initiated in other social contexts prior to specific temporary gatherings.

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\(^4\) In the context of popular music festivals, some musicians refer to “backstage strategies.”

\(^5\) “Leisure” activities are considered crucial in order to maintain and improve network ties. However, many of the musicians who took part in this study do not necessarily recognise social activities as part of networking.
The management of network relations in online ecologies

In contrast to the previous points concerning networking in temporary face-to-face environments, it is suggested that online networking allows for instant connectedness and open access to information and knowledge. Although the tendencies for exclusive networks in temporary environments did not rest on competition for jobs or rivalry between music actors, this still result in limitations to participate in important flows of information and knowledge.

However, the opportunities of constantly being connected to other social actors in various online communities, sometimes even while co-located at the same locations, provide a sense of being continuously involved in just-in-time communications and resulted in that information, knowledge and social actors becomes globally connected despite geographical location. The social interaction in the new music economy can also be considered to enhance opportunities for co-presence of social actors in online environments much similar to face-to-face interactions in physical and more permanent spaces. As these musicians explained the large pool of information in online communities on the Internet:

If I need some information, I just connect to the Internet and use some websites I know about. [...] You can ask people everywhere in forums and there will always be someone providing the information needed. According to my opinion, it’s simply not a problem at all to access whatever you are looking for on the Internet. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

Another musician emphasised the informational anarchy on the Internet:

In a sense it [the Internet] has anarchistic characteristics. Information for everyone, and free as well, not confined to certain people. [...] I always have several tabs open at my computer to follow the conversations in forums that are important for me. You’d never be able to collect this amount of information by meeting people in real life. (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013)

With respect to the distinction between professionals and independents in contexts of online communication services, these types of musicians employed different approaches in online interactions with network actors. Musicians with long careers and comprehensive networks in generally rely upon already established working routines in face-to-face environments when collaborating with project partners. Therefore, rather than exploring new connections and extend networks they mainly collaborate within “familiar circles of friends.” Such interaction and collaboration strategies in online communities are explained by this professional musician:

The Internet is certainly a great tool to find some helpful information or to share files in Dropboxes, but your strong network connections have been ac-
quired elsewhere. For me, it’s impossible to work with people in online projects if I haven’t already met them in real life. (Interviewee 3, male musician, 2013)

Indeed, despite progress in communication and information technologies, face-to-face interactions remains crucially important for certain musicians due to trust-related issues in online environments. The vast majority of the professional musicians in this study did not find it necessary to engage in online networking with potential project partners, in particular regarding music work and sharing crucial resources. In the few cases where established musicians were actively involved in project collaborations, these partnerships were confined to established networks and ties within a narrow set of social actors who were familiar with each other. Despite the wide range of opportunities offered by online communication services, many professionals in this study rarely engaged in online networking regarding transfers of information and knowledge or project collaborations.

However, this does not imply that all established music actors rejected unexplored opportunities in online communities. Some musicians highlighted their participation in various temporary online projects involving “unknown musicians,” for example in the co-production of compilation albums in which information concerning project matters and support in technical issues were mediated in closed online communities between the participating music actors. In these few studied cases, the weak links between music actors however excluded “sharing of important resources” (Interviewee 16, female musician, 2013); these online collaborations and temporary networks only comprised information and support related to the common project.

Moreover, although these rare collaborations involve an online component, such partnerships had been initiated exclusively in face-to-face environments in which project members interacted in specific face-to-face locations to establish project frameworks before transferring further stages of interaction to online communities. In the example of the compilation record project, this musician explained:

Collaborating online is very different from meeting in real life. Of course I can participate in various projects, such as this compilation record we co-created last year but it doesn’t mean that it is the same kind of collaborations as with when working with close friends. Jobs and such stuff is something completely different, not something you share on the Internet with people you hardly know. (Interviewee 16, female musician, 2013)

In particular, such attitudes and practices towards participating in online interactions are related to career stage as well as the career portfolio of independent musicians, and to some extent also involve an age component. Established musicians with broad individual project portfolios and extensive personal networks displayed a strong affinity to the previous music industrial
regime and the associated conditions for work and networking, in particular networking in locally-rooted face-to-face environments. Because many of these musicians benefit, to some degree, from the opportunities to become supported by, for instance, record labels and managements, it was argued that they “are allowed to continue working in traditional ways” (Interviewee 14, male musician, 2013) and do not need to seek out new digital solutions to engage in networking. Indeed, there are even few incentives to adapt to contemporary communication technologies because of the richness of connections, low entry barriers to important face-to-face spaces and the support by music institutions:

I can certainly see some benefits [of online communication] but I really don’t need to participate. I know I’m very fortunate to have [record] deals and people helping me with things. There’s actually no reason for me to waste hours on the Internet. (Interviewee 16, female musician, 2013)

Therefore, considering the benefits of long music careers, professional musicians performed network tasks and the exchanges of resources in, preferably, familiar face-to-face environments. Even their personal artist or band pages on, for example, Facebook and Soundcloud are managed by various supporting actors and only sporadically involve active participation of specific music actors.

However, the vast majority of the independents yet to establish links to important networks frequently made use of different online communities to gain access to network resources by interacting with important social actors in a wide array of forums. Several musicians emphasised that online communication is crucial to circumvent the difficulties of formal organisational arrangements and practices of the Swedish music industry culture resulting in access barriers to important face-to-face environments:

I have met many independent as well as new artists never being offered performance slots at festivals, which is something very different from when I first started my career. The major problem is those organisers are saying “we would really like to book you, you are a great artist, but we need an artist with a certain fan base and established reputation” and they put all their money on this particular artist and everybody else gets nothing or will not even be booked. […] Considering such attitudes, the Internet is a way to circumvent these problems of finding jobs. […] In my opinion it is quite simple to get connected to great people there as well. I have not encountered any barrier to find great network connections on the Internet. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

Such new working patterns were the norm for many independent musicians in this study. Many of the interviewed independents emphasised the wide array of opportunities of getting connected to important social actors by making use of the abundance of information in various online communities.
Essentially, seeking out online communities and digital music spaces necessitate identification and learning processes to sort out which online communities and means of online communication that are “best practices” because of the “infinite” number of online spaces for sharing information and knowledge.

However, while such infinitude of online spaces primarily was considered a generator of resources, some musicians pinpointed the dangers of being involved in too many online communities at the same time and the association to increasing workload. Participating in online communities require a certain amount of social activity in order to become visible in the specific community buzz. Thus, too many memberships cause increasing workload:

You really have to be careful to not participate in every community you may find interesting. There is a limit of how much you can handle and you need to consider that every community requires your valuable time. In the end, you may find yourself chatting about music but never find the time to create music. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

Moreover and crucial in order to gain access to network connections, the richness and diversity of online communication spaces offer opportunities to reach new and diverse globally connected networks. The vast majority of the musicians perceiving themselves as outsiders and finding it increasingly difficult to gain access to important face-to-face environments, argued for the huge potential of finding similar relationships on the Internet. The wide array of global opportunities and translocal connections in various communities “open up” new avenues of exposure when networking and social relations can be communicated and performed at global music scales. These opportunities were considered unreachable by using “traditional networking.” As this fully-fledged independent musician explained, the opportunities offered by employing online communication and digital interaction strategies and how they diverge from established musicians’ approach to networking:

It’s very easy to get connected to people around the world instantly, and if you’re not open to such means of communication I really believe you will undermine many career opportunities. You can actually suggest an idea on the Internet and carry out the idea during the same day with someone on the other side of the world. […] The difference is that in general the older generation of musicians do not seize the opportunity to engage in online communication because it is not the conventional approach in their view. I find it stupid to resist such technological changes since they probably will be left behind. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

This approach to networking thus contrasts with the general arguments concerning the locational structures of the music industry, notably in Storper & Venables (2004), Asheim et al. (2007) and Cummins-Russell & Rantisi
Rather than focusing on the drawbacks of online collaborations, the benefits were considered to outweigh such issues of online interaction in particular when the organisation and structure of independent music careers rest on the abilities of individual music actors.

In line with Bathelt & Turi (2011), Mok et al. (2010) and Song et al. (2007) many of the interviewed musicians emphasised that online ties will be developed over time when participants seek out information and interrogate each other thus contributing to stronger future ties. Such initial stages of weak ties in collaborations are suggested to reduce uncertainties in online collaborations. As this musician put it:

In the beginning you send some pictures, for instance when you hang around the studio to generate, and I guess impress, a trustworthy image of yourself. After a period of e-mail interaction or Facebook chatting you will end up as friends. [...] Of course it’s still unconventional to not meet the person you are doing business with but what are the alternatives? It’s not cheap to travel to the US or around the rest of the world. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

As suggested by Grabher & Ibert (2006), such connectivity networks in which social actors depend on a multitude of weak ties and a large pool of connections, personal friends and strong ties become less important. Instead, the benefits of participating in comprehensive networks and a wide array of local and global communities are manifested in extensive access to information and knowledge and added opportunities to support music careers. For the independent music sector, new attitudes toward online networking combined with fewer options to participate in face-to-face environments result in the creation of ties between music actors at local as well as global scales. Thus, despite the risk-taking and uncertainties associated with online networking, independent musicians considered online interaction crucial in their effort to stay competitive in the new music economy.

**Added uncertainties and new opportunities**

To rely on online communication through new information and communication technologies also involve the ability to cope with the absence of verbal and physical cues (Bathelt & Turi, 2011). The diverse nature of online social spaces, ranging from open and closed communities to temporary and permanent arenas, require a wide array of competencies to identify and make use of the multitude of communication spaces employed by various social actors. Musicians need to develop technical skills as well as being able to identify the online communities that will serve to advance their careers. Depending on the context and the nature of relationships among social actors, the quality of ties in different online networks on the Internet can vary considerably among online communities.

However, because of the absence of geographic co-location of online actors it is argued that the development of trust is hampered due to the difficul-
ties of evaluating actors’ competencies, skills and personalities (Cummins-Russell & Rantisi, 2011; Storper & Venables, 2004). These musicians stressed the need of re-negotiating trust when networking in online spaces by highlighting concerns of the contemporary work mode of network relations:

[Among] the negative aspects of the relocation to the Internet is that it’s really difficult to know which spaces people locate themselves. It was so much simpler when everyone strolled down to Fylkingen [music club] to have a chat in real life. Today you need to travel more to hang out with your network. Second, people don’t have time to stay more than a day. How can you possibly get to know people then? It’s like speed dating, which only results in somewhat superficial friendships. (Interviewee 4 2013, male musician)

Before the Internet, it was easier to get in touch with people at pubs or in record stores. If you needed someone quickly you just went down to the place [pub, café, club] and found someone. I guess the progress of Internet relationships is inescapable but in my opinion such developments will only result in that people will collaborate with the ones they already know – the people they have gotten to know in the old-fashioned way. (Interviewee 16, female musician, 2013)

The added risk associated with engaging in online collaborations were perceived as a barrier to trustful relationships due to the absence of effective evaluation of actors personal characteristics. Some of the interviewed musicians compared online interaction to the ”speed dating dilemma,” implying that such relationships are considered superficial. Although this scenario applies to intense backstage interactions as well, the opportunity to engage in face-to-face interactions can support evaluations of actors’ skills and competencies, in particular when such interactions will contribute to make judgements on “personal chemistry” and the potential for effective collaborations (Cummins-Russell & Rantisi, 2011; Ettlinger, 2003; Tillema et al., 2010):

It feels a little fishy to work with someone you don’t know even though it may be a good person. […] But the main reason is that I belong to the generation who use the phone and call people if there isn’t any opportunity to meet. […] At the minimum, I need to here the voice of the person I collaborate with. (Interviewee 16, female musician, 2013)

These personality tests were considered crucially important in order to identify and assess the skills and talents of potential. The need to evaluate individual qualities and characteristics support Ettlinger’s (2003) suggestions on the presence of emotive trust and capacity trust in relationships between partners. While emotive trust is based on personal feelings between social actors, capacity trust consider the evaluation of “another’s capacity for competent performance in a workplace” (Ettlinger, 2003), for instance the skills and competencies of potential project partners. Therefore, considering the face-to-face component to prevent excessive risk and uncertainty, and in line
with the interviewed musicians, there are increasing tendencies in various online communication services toward weak links between social actors.

Confirming the necessity of such face-to-face evaluations some of the interviewees pointed to experiences of “serious complications “causing financial losses, thus perceiving themselves as “victims of partnership scams.” As this musician explained complications of online relationships with a Danish booking agent:

We made [up] a tour with a Danish guy that we got in touch with on LinkedIn and I started e-mailing him. […] He had great a reputation as well. After a few e-mails we suddenly ended up with this deal of ten gigs and fairly good money. But in the end it all turned out to be a scam and we had to pay for almost everything on our own. When everything was over we were almost broke due to some fishy Internet deal. […] It’s really difficult to get the right kind of connections on the Internet. (Interviewee 11 2013, male musician)

As a result, some musicians highlighted the risks involved in online collaborations and the need to establish a system that can make up for difficulties of “collecting information” about online actors in remote collaborations. Although many collaborations in the contemporary music industry rely upon word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and close project partners in personal networks, such “networked reputation” (Glückler & Armbrüster, 2003) is not sufficient to reduce uncertainties and risks when engaging in a project that originates online.

However, in contrast to these points on the disadvantages of online communication, such differences also need to consider motivations of engaging in computer-mediated partnerships. While technological advances and software developments certainly have facilitated the opportunities for online interaction and collaborations, many musicians still have limited knowledge about how to manage online communication services, in particular how to transform such interactions into efficient networking. The rapid technological changes require new knowledge on how to adapt to and capitalise on social online services.

In the process of adapting to the impacts of technological changes, in particular regarding new networking spaces, many musicians emphasised the struggle of reorganising social relationships and networks to non-physical communication spaces.

In explaining the different spaces of activities, this musician emphasised the significant generational differences in the management of online networking thus adding an age factor:

Of course it’s different to make contact to people on the Internet compared to meeting up in cafés. However, my opinion is that the Internet is a great thing. […] Just see how young musicians benefit from it. For them, making contact on the Internet and engaging in various collaborations is natural. […] They
have used Internet communities since they were kids and learned to identify what is good and bad. [...] My generation tries really hard to learn how to use Internet communities more often. [...] The major difference between us and them is that they are more open about everything in general. Not only when it comes to music but also how they expose themselves in other contexts as well. Maybe you can say that young musicians are more amenable to risk-taking [...] but in the end they will benefit from it. (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013)

Another musician emphasised the need of new technical skills:

You need to understand how to use the technology before you start. The Internet is great for distributing music to your fans or for engaging in collaborations with others. Although I don’t use it for such purposes, you cannot deny the advantages. Just consider the MySpace-generation which boosts their careers by promoting themselves on the Internet without intermediaries – that is brilliant. [...] Just because I don’t understand the full potential that doesn’t mean that I don’t use it. It is crucially important to collaborate on the Internet considering all the tasks you have to get done on your own. (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician)

To a considerable extent, younger musicians embraced new digital technologies and strategies with ease. These new network technologies provide access to information and knowledge spaces which they would otherwise not have. For example, many of the interviewed independent musicians with limited experience and few network connections found it increasingly difficult to access certain face-to-face environments thus being excluded from network resources. Instead, they have to find alternative routes to connections and networks that ultimately can result in project collaborations in order to ”advance their positions” in the Swedish network ecology. Therefore, they have intrinsic and personal motivations to negotiate trust and engage in online projects due to the career opportunities arising from “online risk-taking” rather than emphasising the flaws of online communication spaces. As this new independent musician explains:

To trust people [on the Internet] is actually rather easy. Today, it’s possible to check out every single person a thousand times and if someone misbehaves that persons reputation will go down the drain. Rather it’s more important to identify the communities where you will find out about the rumours. That is the best help you can get to sort out bad collaborators. So far I don’t have any bad experiences with Internet collaborations. [...] You know, my debut [album] did well because of the Internet which in turn resulted in widespread promotion in various communities and finally resulted in a breakthrough in the American movie industry. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

Clearly, “interrogation,” reputation and rumours serve as evaluation tools to assist in decisions on online networking. Such a strategy applies to all modes
of communication when incentives to overcome communicative imperfections are strong enough, in particular in the initial stages of projects. According to Hancock & Dunham (2001) and Olson & Olson (2003), digital technologies will not prevent access to relational and personal information such as emotive trust and capacity trust. In the process of behavioural adaptation, the online mode of networking and communication will be normalised. Social networking based on information and communication technologies will therefore become more comprehensive and incorporate personal information about communicators over time. Thus, when online members are driven by intentional motivations and under fierce pressure of balancing time between different activities, there are incentives to allow for new practices to emerge.

However, as highlighted by some musicians there are excluding tendencies in contexts of network relations resulting in the exclusion of musicians from important spaces. Certain groups of independent musicians are faced with the challenge to circumvent the difficulties of getting access to such resource spaces and are allotted to online interaction spaces. Therefore, in the concluding section of this chapter I examine the nature of these exclusive networks.

4.3. The dividing line: Are Swedish music networks exclusive?

In view of the characteristics of contemporary music work resulting in fierce competition of jobs, some musicians emphasised drawbacks of the modern networking mode. The new organisational arrangements of the music industry exhibit tendencies to exclude music actors from important spaces of network resources thus creating different conditions for supporting career progress. In line with recent research on contemporary cultural work, many findings in this study highlight rising competition of work and employment between music actors. As argued by Hracs (2010) in research on musicians in Toronto, the climate of fierce competition for work and employment due to contemporary working conditions have a strong influence on the openness of networks. Growing precariousness and increased competition for employment result in collaborations within a narrow set of networks and relationships and exclude outsiders (Cummins-Russell & Rantisi, 2011; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Watson, 2008). These competitive environments serve as barriers to trust-building and network creation and result in social conflicts, distrust and narrow sets of network ties. As this musician explained the increasing competition in the Swedish music industry:

The competitive environment of the music industry is very noticeable, as you need to put a lot more effort in getting hold of jobs, in particular the well-paid...
jobs. Basically, it’s only the festivals that are still paying good money. And such competition can manifest itself in some “dirty tricks” played out to prove how much better you are than some other artist, for instance by emphasising the size of your fanbase with reference to some “competitors.” It’s a game and the winner will get well-paid. (Interviewee 4 2013, male musician)

Some festival organisers recognised such competitive behaviour among Swedish artists and argued that it clearly shows “who is working with whom” and the growing tendencies for narrowing down network boundaries:

It’s always the same people hanging out together. They always stick to former collaborators and friends and people of the same record label, or with bands of the same genre. I rarely see these crossover collaborations between people and genres that used to be more common for a few years ago. […] I think it’s a combination of many things, but in particular hectic work schedules and too many musicians on the market/not enough jobs. (Festival organiser 6, 2013)

These developments suggest that growing competition for work affect the type of networking and patterns of preferred project partners. In line with Granovetter’s (1973) and Grabher & Ibert’s (2006) research on strong and weak ties concerning actors in networks as well as between networks, these tendencies help to understand why certain networks become exclusionary.

Therefore, in the next section I present findings of musicians’ experiences and opinions of exclusive network spaces in the contemporary Swedish music industry.

Gender exclusion

Female musicians increasingly experience exclusion from network spaces, in particular face-to-face environments such as festival spaces and the opportunities to perform at various festivals. The interviewed female musicians in this study emphasised that they have to put increasingly more effort in gaining access to those spaces and the associated labour markets since ”those in charge is an older generation of men which prioritise men” (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician). Such gendered exclusion result in both less job offers and reduced access to important network spaces and resources necessary to maintain career progress.

The female musicians in this study highlighted above all the increasing difficulties to access job opportunities on Swedish music labour markets thus finding themselves discriminated because of the structural male dominance in decision-making positions. This result in that men are ”rewarded” with employment opportunities. As this female musician explains it:

The major problem is that the booking agents and those who make the decisions in the music industry are an older generation of men exhibiting old-
fashioned views. They are not bad people but at the same time they are stuck in their old habits booking their male friends which in turn are just like them. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

Although the vast majority of the female interviewees emphasised that women have always faced major disadvantages on music labour markets, for instance lower earnings (Flisbäck, 2011), some female musicians also highlighted that they had equal opportunities to access networks and a wide range of connections but only as long as they adapted to the attitudes and “rules” created by men in decision-making positions (Interviewee 18 2013, female musician). However, fierce competition for jobs have resulted in reduced opportunities to access networking spaces, in particular to get access to important performance as well as face-to-face networking spaces. Festival environments and the associated backstage areas, in which many job opportunities in the contemporary music industry are mediated between various music actors, are perceived to be exclusive clubs for men and exhibit a form of gendered exclusion:

Getting job opportunities was never a problem in the eighties but today a whole lot has changed. It’s more difficult to get jobs at Swedish festivals today because of some kind of monopoly situation between booking agencies and certain festivals. And it’s really hard to get them [those responsible for booking at festivals] to realise “do you even understand that you prioritise men similar to yourselves because of buddy networks.” […] And added to that, male artists only pick guys to play in their bands. It’s just not fair. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

As a result, female musicians find it more difficult to establish network relations in the new music economy due to exclusion from important spaces of music buzz.

However, to circumvent formal organisational arrangements and gender-based exclusion from important network spaces, female musicians have employed online strategies to enhance job opportunities. One example of such dense online networking in the Swedish music industry involve several professional and independent women musicians gathered in a widespread and continuously ongoing mail conversation in which “all female musicians are allowed to participate” (Interviewee 18 2013, female musician). In this network, Swedish female musicians share information and knowledge, offer managerial support and help to promote each other in various music contexts in order to put pressure on organisers thus increasing the share of job opportunities. This female musician emphasised how these network relations have contributed to enhance the opportunities to get access to performance opportunities and music jobs:
If you want music jobs you have to create them yourself. Just watch various orchestras on TV-shows; the all employ men, men and men, and even women pick male musicians. […] Many male musicians, bands and artists do not consider women to be part of the rock and roll image. On the Internet however, we are very strong together and can put some pressure on festival organisers or club owners to book female artists, and it’s actually starting to get a little better. We are not half-way there yet but have at least we’ve crossed the starting line. (Interviewee 18 2013, female musician)

Another musician explained the strength of the female Swedish music network:

I have noticed that there is a really great sense of solidarity when you meet girls on the road [female musicians]. Everyone is more open and honest and there is no competition between us anymore. We are not a strong collective yet but we help each other collectively which will make us strong. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

Considering the exclusionary tendencies against female musicians due to social structures of the music industry, such collaborative networking in order to gain access to job opportunities are suggested to improve female chances of success. Therefore, and in line with Grabher’s & Ibert’s (2006) connectivity networking and Granovetter’s (1973) argument of the strength of weak ties, female musicians in Sweden have started to organise themselves by making use of technology and online communication medias to enhance job opportunities in the Swedish music industry.

“Family ties”: The Swedish model of inclusion

Moving beyond the boundaries for female musicians to access networks and network resources, many male independent musicians also experience themselves as being excluded from important network resources due to the protection of work and employment in the new music economy. Access to crucial network spaces and connections are confined to certain musicians and networks in attempts to maintain market positions which in turn enhance the exclusionary nature of contemporary networking. This independent musician emphasised such exclusionary tendencies and the frustration of “competitive safeguarding”:

It’s tough already and will probably become worse, especially so for new artists and independent musicians, in particular to get access to festivals. The power relationship between labels or booking agencies and the festivals makes sure that it will be tougher. […] I’m not saying that you are not allowed to participate, people have always preferred to engage in projects with friends, but the trend is that established networks are trying to protect their members’ interests. (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013)
However, notwithstanding these arguments on exclusionary tendencies of networking, many musicians also pointed out that barriers to access important network connections and resources have not been a major problem in the Swedish music industry because of “the [Swedish] culture of collective action in which people help each other out, not by competition” (Interviewee 18 2013, female musician).

As most of the Swedish musicians in this study asserted, networks and important connections are rather accessible because of the Swedish nature of “collective actions” and collaborative behaviour. The competitive nature of work and exclusive network relations is rather confined to professional career paths, in particular due to record labels’ and managements’ pursuit of key marketing sites in order to secure returns on their investments. Instead, the vast majority of the interviewed musicians argued that there is a “tradition of mentoring” in which experienced artists “take care of new artists and make sure that they get connected into the “right” networks.” (Interviewee 8, 2013) Such mentoring systems are particularly evident in music niches and subgenres, for example reggae, metal and indietronica. In music niches, musicians interact “like a big family” (Interviewee 17 2013, male musician) and communicate crucial information and knowledge within specific genre networks as well as helping each other out with joint promotion strategies. For instance, in some music niches artists and bands offer a “package of several artists and bands” of a specific sub-genre to festivals:

Of course we are helping out each other. We love our music and certainly want more bands in the same genre at the festivals. In general we are like a large reggae family trying to go in the same direction every summer. It’s the same in other genres as well, […] the same kind of people hanging out together in festival backstages within their networks. (Interviewee 17 2013, male musician)

Conforming to Grabher & Ibert’s (2006) typology of communality networks, many network relations are based on a core team of relationships. These “network cores” are shaped by the musicians’ interactions in several collaborative projects thus creating shared values and common views on working methodologies. However, in contrast to the drawbacks that might emerge from possible “lock-in” processes of clearly defined networks limited to a few memberships, the collaborative Swedish music culture combined with a mentoring system is essential to provide access to networks and connections for new musicians. Indeed, such revitalisations of music networks and the

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6 A common understanding among interviewees is that the fierce competition for labour market positions is the result of the booking agencies’, managements’ and record labels’ desire to boost their profits. Former professional artists confirm that competitive strategies often were subjects of discussion in meetings with labels and booking agencies.

7 Genre names as suggested by the interviewed musicians.
incorporation of new music actors can contribute to new music collaborations and support music “innovations”:

In general, I allocate 90% of my time to work with the people I already know. They are more than collaborators, friends I would say, and I know for sure that we always help each other out. But I don’t close any doors to new collaborations. The Swedish scene is too small to exclude people from possible collaborations. […] Just look at this guy I met four years ago. I didn’t know anything about him but the turned out to be a great multi-instrumentalist. He may not have anything to do with the music production but I cannot perform on stage without him. (Interviewee 2 male musician, 2013)

Although many musicians stressed increasing competition for job opportunities, and the fact that there are considerable fewer musicians ”making it from the studio to the scene” (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician), the general view of such limited access to work and employment was that these exclusionary tendencies rather reflect the excess supply of musicians arising from new opportunities by using technology and new distribution channels for music creativity. The increasingly competitive environments and the associated exclusion or marginalisation of certain musicians in the Swedish music industry are rather suggested to be the result of “too many attempts” (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013) to establish music careers. Therefore, as emphasised by many of the interviewees, the perception of growing competition and exclusionary networks can be considered a Malthusian mechanism; too many individuals to “feed” results in conflicts for the resources available. On the one hand, the labour market for music job opportunities has grown; on the other, the sheer number of musicians has grown even faster.

However, since the contemporary music industry put increasingly pressure on musicians today to be self-promoting and self-marketing in line with new work modes and fewer options to be supported by record labels, some musicians might find themselves excluded from important network spaces because they experience significant hardships to comply with contemporary modes of networking. Such concerns are suggested to be viewed as transitional difficulties arising from structural changes of the entire music industry and can be related, however not exclusively, to the aforementioned difficulties to adapt to new working conditions, in particular to involve new music technology in seeking-out contemporary network spaces. As explained below, this reorganisation of the music industry of how, when and where networking is performed has caused exclusion of social actors from networks and new networking spaces:

Too many of my friends have dropped out [of the music industry] because they found it too tough to adapt to all these changes. They just couldn’t cope with the new conditions, in particular the requirements of performing several days a week, the need for lengthy periods on the road and all this traveling between places as well as involving technology in the line of work. Young
musicians get the point from the beginning, compared with many older musicians’ efforts who stick to old-fashioned work patterns. (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013)

This musician explained:

Get out on the road for god sake. You cannot stay at home and wait for someone to give you jobs. No-one finds their contacts solely at the local clubs anymore. This is the main problem; people working under the old music industry regime want to go back to a system in which someone else managed everything for you. Adapt or get off the train – that is how it is today. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

However, exclusionary tendencies based on structural change are not considered barriers of networking and connections to social actors. Rather, these changes and adjustments are suggested to be attributed to the result of the overall post-industrial changes affecting how and where artistic work is performed, in particular the erosion of opportunities to get support by music institutions. As demonstrated by Christopherson (2002) and her research on changing working conditions for new media workers, those who learn to master the digital revolution and the associated changes affecting networking processes may find themselves drawn into the network buzz.

Despite these recognised difficulties referring to larger structural changes and the fact that many musicians emphasised “good accessibility” to various networks due to attitudes and cultural tradition of solidarity and openness between musicians in Sweden, some musicians indeed point out increasing difficulties to access crucial network spaces such as festival backstage areas, in particular important face-to-face spaces due to growing competition. These types of exclusionary tendencies are in particular evident when comparing networking opportunities between male and female musicians.

4.4. Summary: How do musicians approach networking?

In this chapter, I have examined networking spaces in relation to the impacts of the reconfigured Swedish music industry. In step with these changes, traditional networking in locally-rooted metropolitan spaces is subject to change. When flexible and mobile music actors explore new spaces for communication and transfers of network resources, the arenas for trust-building and buzz flows need to be negotiated in new geographies. Temporary face-to-face locations and online communities are suggested to play important roles in the context of networking in the new music economy.

However, there are increasing differences in the need of engaging in networking in these new geographies. While professional musicians with multi-
ple connections and ties do not need to engage in networking due to existing network relations, many independent musicians put much effort in gaining access to resources, specifically in certain forms of networking. Most importantly, musicians rich in connections confine their networking to a certain set of connections in order to make work more efficient. Above all, these groups of musicians rarely engage in online networking due to long-established working routines which preferably are performed in face-to-face environments.

However, some musicians find themselves excluded from important network spaces. Although the majority of musicians considered access and participation in networks as open, certain groups of music workers face increasing difficulties to access important resource spaces. Exclusion based on gender has hampered participation in network negotiations and the backstage buzz for independent musicians and above all for many female musicians.

Female musicians and non-established musicians yet to establish connections and network ties spend a greater share of their time and efforts in online communities. Although many of these musicians highlighted risks with online networking, they also placed a great emphasis on the role of online communities in order to gain access to important network connections. The issues of trust in online networking will be resolved over time when network partners learn more about each other through processes of online interrogation and evaluation. Therefore, drawing on career stage and opportunities to access networks and network resources, it is suggested that professional musicians with long careers preferably interact in face-to-face environments while, in particular, female musicians find themselves excluded from professional networks, thus spending a greater share of their time in online networking spaces.

As outlined in this chapter, many musicians have started to spend more time in temporary environments to engage in networking. In the next chapter I will elaborate specifically on this temporary permanence and the role of these environments for artistic work processes.
5. The geographies of non-creative music work

As highlighted in the theoretical chapter, the highly valued information concerning job opportunities and transfers of tacit knowledge requiring long periods of face-to-face location have been propelled by interaction in local environments. Combined with specific infrastructural and institutional agglomerations in urban centres, the need for music actors to co-locate in cities was often cited as important (Power & Jansson, 2004). Work under contractual agreements with record labels, managements and booking actors facilitated the co-location of musicians to the permanent agglomerations of cities where they could participate in the local buzz and transfers of information and knowledge. Although the music profession in the popular music industry always have been subject to spatial fragmentation due to periods of hectic touring and characterised, in general, by low income, many musicians have been able to devote the bulk of their working time to creative tasks. Today, musicians face the challenges of a growing pool of music labour due to new technologies for distributing and marketing music thus increasing the competition for music jobs. At the same time, music job markets have become global and offer a wide array of opportunities to promote artistic brands at new labour markets.

However, the new music economy exhibit some recurring features regarding contemporary working conditions – low incomes, flexibility and mobility across time and space, fragmentation between various creative and non-creative tasks, less time spent on creativity and increasing levels of stress and anxiety (Banks, 2007; Jarvis & Pratt, 2006; McRobbie, 2002; 2006).

Considering extensive tour schedules and the burden of many additional non-creative tasks, the spaces for transfers of the important resources needed to establish music careers and make a living have changed and accompany the ecologies in which these resources are being transmitted. Consequently, facing the challenges of additional risks and uncertainties of being “squeezed out” from urban-centric music agglomerations, musicians have started to examine new spaces in which they can speed-up the “conduct of business,” thus being able to allocate more time and effort on creative work.

During the interview sessions two types of ecologies of networking were frequently emphasised. The interviewed musicians put considerable attention to temporary and online ecologies of work and creativity which have started
to become increasingly important in order to perform different music tasks under flexible and mobile working conditions.

First, adapting to the demands of flexibility and mobility, and the explicit need of geographical proximity, temporary face-to-face gatherings of music networks are found at popular music festivals. More explicitly, musicians in this study emphasised the importance of gatherings at popular music festivals, in particular in festival backstage areas, because of shifting co-locations of music actors. In contrast to permanent clubs and music venues, music festivals comprise several performance stages, a wide range of lounges, and numerous spaces for interacting with fans and other music actors. For many musicians, festivals allow for a combination of network interactions in the backstage areas and opportunities to get feedback and creative input from visiting other festival spaces. As this musician explained, in terms of such opportunities at festivals:

Festivals are forums for meetings and feedback. Compared to ordinary tours, the festival audience is much bigger. Sometimes a single festival gig attracts more people than an entire tour and in the end it will be worth more going to festivals than arranging these shitty tours; it’s the festival gigs that make music life worth going for. You can check out other bands’ performances and get together for a few beers backstage, you for sure will hang out with other bands at the festival area and spontaneously meet fans or at planned happenings. Everybody hangs out with everyone else and in the end you have got so much great input on new ideas or feedback from fans to change a few things in your shows. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

The opportunity to find balance between multiple creative and non-creative tasks during a few intense days – similar to those tasks being carried out in urban spaces – contribute to enhance music work and work efficiency.

The vast majority of the interviewees underlined the crucial need of a multitude of connections and meeting spaces. With respect to such demands, Klein (2011) consider festivals and similar short-term music events to exhibit many of the characteristics of trade fairs and conferences. The presence of a wide range of social spaces for interaction such as bars and lounges, “exhibition” opportunities, “product comparisons” and creative input through a wide array of live shows and the formal as well as informal business meeting areas in festival backstage areas can, taken together, be considered similar to the flows of music activities going on in more permanent urban environments.

Drawing on the highlighted importance of face-to-face communication in symbolic knowledge industries, such gatherings of skills and talents are crucial to gain access to the buzz and the transfers of information and knowledge (Asheim et al., 2007). In order to identify important skills and knowledge to specific projects, workers in the music industry need to participate in this buzz. As argued by O’Grady & Kill (2013):

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They rely on buzz for knowing who is relevant, available, and interested in participating in a particular project. Moreover, acquiring the right person involves much subjective, context-related, knowledge concerning taste, trends, and the latest gossip. At a festival, activated by sociability, catalysed by festivity, embodied knowledge is developed and transmitted between participants who characteristically view themselves as “festival virgins” or “festival veterans”. The transmission of embodied knowledge from expert to novice manifests in exaggerated visual practices.

Combined with more specific activities performed in permanent locations, these new spaces for interaction serve as “music knowledge communities” (Klein, 2011). Consequently, they play the role as new key spaces for networking and transfers of network resources.

Second, the spatial landscape of work and creativity in the music industry also involves new non-physical communication spaces. The paradigm shift in information and communication technologies have affected how, when and where musicians can perform the multitude of tasks needed to cope with the flexible and mobile nature of work in the contemporary music industry. According to many of the interviewed musicians new spaces have been added to the already existing workspaces, serving to facilitate work processes and work efficiency for musicians whilst, at the same time, adding to the fragmentation of work patterns. Online communities such as Facebook and LinkedIn as well as specific communication software or apps, for instance WhatsApp and Google Hangouts, offers opportunities of instant connectivity within different networks despite interacting actors’ geographical location (Thrift, 2000; Urry, 2003). Therefore, considering the reconfigured landscape of work patterns it was considered particularly important for musicians to explore these new spaces in order to establish network relations and to gain access to crucial network resources.

Explicitly, in the context of contemporary network formation, in this chapter I examine those temporary face-to-face environments and the online spaces identified as crucially important for getting access to information and learning under present conditions of work in the Swedish music industry. In doing so, this chapter put attention to the identified importance of temporary permanence in popular music festival backstages and the non-physical co-location in online communities. These environments were considered as the most important new contributors to facilitate contemporary work practices in the Swedish music industry.
5.1. Behind the scenes: Buzz and work in festival backstage areas

Designing for backstage buzz

Considering the new approaches for organising music work practices, many of the interviewees underlined the importance of access to backstage areas. These areas have started to become increasingly imported and serve as “centripetal forces” for a broad set of actors and not only capture the attention from artists performing at the specific festival.

By spending more time and effort in various festival backstage areas, musicians in this study emphasise that they have facilitated face-to-face encounters and gained access to information and knowledge transfers similar to those resources derived from frequent interactions in locally-rooted and more permanent spaces. Recognising the growing importance of festival backstage spaces this musician pinpointed the major transition to professional meeting areas:

Actually, festivals gained more attention already by the end of the 90s when the [music] industry started to hang out to a greater extent. [...] Our first record deal was signed in the backstage area of the Hultsfred festival. However, the importance just seems to increase because many more people more and more bands prioritise festivals because you have to work so much, from being this area of leisure to involve the whole industry. It’s a crucially important change. Today, you meet people from other cities, find yourself starting projects together [...] or just go there to promote yourself. No one has time to spend in cafés [in cities] like we used to do before. (Interviewee 4 2013, male musician)

From being areas which largely were considered sites of leisure and relaxation, which at best included “a couple of chairs, tables and some crates of beer” (Interviewee 5 2013, male musician), the backstage areas have become hotspots of interactions. Back then, the ambition was merely to create spaces in which musicians and other music industry actors would have the opportunity to relax and “have a chat” with one another (Informant 3 2012, festival organiser); today, these spaces “bring together leading, as well as less well-known, actors from an entire value chain or technology platform for the primary purpose of exchanging knowledge” (Schuldt & Bathelt, 2011).

However, to enable for similar transfers of resources, these environments have to be adapted to the features of how and where musicians’ interaction and communication patterns in urban spaces takes place, in particular the spatial contexts of interactions supporting such transfers. Regarding the spatial framework, Schuldt & Bathelt (2008) argue for the importance of the “structural level of framing conditions for the exchange with other groups of actors” in their study on exchanges of information and knowledge in trade fairs. The various face-to-face settings represent a necessary component in
the process of building trust which is required for transfers of information and, in particular tacit knowledge.

Acknowledging the need of specific settings to support important resource flows, this festival organiser explained how music festivals tries to create backstage environments coping with the need of interaction spaces:

We have put a lot of effort into creating a pleasant and comfortable setting which hopefully result in pleased artists. Because the vast majority of us [the festival organisers] have formerly worked as musicians, we clearly know how tough the work is today. They don't have time enough to manage all the various tasks and therefore the most [musicians] try to be more efficient. […] We are trying really hard to create a forum for interaction between musicians and other music actors. (Informant 3, festival organiser, 2012)

This musician pointed out:

They [the organisers] understand our need to meet. Therefore they arrange for these social activities pushing strangers together into a very small space. That is incredibly important. From being part of this limited network of friends, you may find many opportunities to bump into many new connections. (Interviewee 16 2013, female musician)

As a result of greater concentration of music actors to festivals, many of the interviewed musicians stressed that added risks and uncertainties in the profession, and the need to find crucial connections, increase the importance to gather at the backstage areas of festivals even when they are not performing at certain festival. Therefore, musicians consciously seek out these spaces to benefit from the many potential connections and opportunities offered at music festivals today.

**The microgeographies for work practices in the backstage areas**

Changing working conditions for musicians and the music industry have played crucial roles in reshaping these face-to-face spaces in order to grasp the needs of combining pleasure and work. The contemporary backstage areas have, in certain festivals, transformed into artist villages combining microgeographies of work, leisure and knowledge creation. Today, backstage areas offer a wide range of activities and social spaces designed to facilitate face-to-face interaction.

In addition to traditional features such as bars, media spaces and interview rooms, a multitude of new spaces have been added to increase the opportunities for interaction and learning. Such spaces are making use of the characteristics of more permanent spaces in metropolitan environments and contribute to the transformation of backstage areas into temporary spaces of creativity, learning and consumption, thus generating a sense of community:
Maybe you could see it as a small community in a way. The thought have
struck me many times lately on how it resembles living conditions at home
where you have the cafés and bars around the corner and where you can go to
the clubs [dancefloor] at night. If I want to have a nap and don’t have time to
go to the hotel, I just take a nap in the relaxation room. (Interviewee 3 2013,
male musician)

This musician emphasised the importance of backstage areas to get jobs:

You will have the opportunity to mingle with great many people, not only
your friends. You will always meet your fans which are the main reason for
going to festivals, but today you will also meet many other people from the
[music] industry as well, however under completely different circumstances
than before. […] If you plan things and make use of all the different areas
[microgeographies] at the festival, you can actually get a good start in the
[music] industry. This is how I plan jobs for the future and I believe many
more do it like this today. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

As highlighted by a festival organiser (Informant 3 2012, festi-
val organiser) the backstage areas comprises actors ranging from performing and non-
performing artists, record labels and booking actors and, above all, a grow-
ing pool of non-music actors – “outsiders” – exploring the opportunities for
new types of partnerships and contribute with new labour markets. In this
context, many of the interviewees pinpointed how the various microgeogra-
phies in the backstage areas – the spaces within space – contribute to facili-
tate interactions with network friends and other actors. Most importantly, the
vast majority of the musicians strongly emphasised the advantages of high
densities of “insiders” (music actors) and “outsiders” (external actors from
other industries) making it possible to interact at a high frequency under
face-to-face conditions. As this musician explained the microspatial interac-
tions in backstage areas:

Usually you know who’s going to which festivals and I always try to plan in
advance and book meetings with friends. It’s really important to have time to
catch up with people you haven’t seen in a while. I always try to find out like
“are we still friends” or “is he pissed at me because I didn’t help him out last
time.” People, especially friends, in this business easily get grumpy and turn
their back on you, so these places [backstage] are perfect for catching up on
personal things. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

Getting access to the backstage buzz of festivals and the large and diverse set
of social actors can make it easier to cope with new risks and responsibilities
of music work. Cafés, restaurants, beer gardens and lounges providing for
leisure activities and face-to-face communications interplay with profes-

cional and entrepreneurial activities such as marketing, learning (e.g. workshops)
and creativity (e.g. studio sessions). When combining these structures of
spaces of social activities and interactions, musicians can create opportuni-
ties to support career-building (Watson et al., 2009). In particular, spaces related to personal familiarity and social coherence were frequently used for exchanges of network resources. Often, there were references to the “informality” of meetings in bars and lounges resembling the familiar “night time settings” in urban spaces thus generating a specific sense of atmosphere. This musician explained all these impressions by referring to the images and sounds surrounding the backstage areas:

It’s not all that different from how it is when meeting with people in club settings. You have the dimly illuminated lounges, the dancefloor which only the hangarounds use, the bars, the restaurant on daytime [...] and all these settings is tucked into a wall of sounds from artists performing on different stages. It’s an amusement park while being at your workplace. [...] It gives you a feeling of being ‘home’ although you know it’s two days of madness where you try to have fun and network to get some jobs. (Interviewee 18 2013, female musician)

Another musician continued:

You have been looking forward to going to certain festivals for a year and when you finally get there and see all the people […] you just want to run around talking to people. They are your touring friends and since everybody is in work mode and simultaneously wants to have some fun for two days, you actually need to like speed-date everyone [...] or you have to wait for the next festival in line and hope that the people come there too. (Interviewee 3 2013, male musician)

By making use of these social environments, the networks of relational ties and structures can flourish when different talents and skills are squeezed together in a small and limited space. Consequently, considering the opportunities for high meeting frequency and that these microgeographies serve as bridges between networks, musicians can speed up work efficiency by engaging in face-to-face interactions in the microgeographies of backstage areas at festivals.

To summarise the variety of microspaces used for interaction in festival backstage areas, the following communication spaces were found in all of the festivals used for the observation sessions in this study.

- Bars (how many depends upon the size of the festival)
- Café’s
- Chillout lounges (sometimes combined with bars)
- Restaurants
- Press rooms/interview spaces
- Rehearsal spaces
- Clubs/dancefloors (DJ sessions at night)
- Resting spaces
Backstage areas as labour markets

The primary findings from the backstage observations clearly suggest the role of these spaces as job mediators. Building networks of industry contacts by exploring the temporary gatherings of music actors in festival backstage areas serve as “substituted support” to fulfil the new roles of music actors. Although festivals mainly have served as opportunities to market symbolic goods in interactions (live shows) with potential consumers (fans), the increasing precariousness in employment standards and the associated individualisation of risks have resulted in increasing attention to the role of festivals for networking and coping with individual responsibilities for transfers of information and knowledge. Those musicians employing “the backstage methodology” and who puts considerable effort into gaining access to festivals emphasised the issue of job seeking. As this musician put it:

My opinion is that festivals are the best of places because everybody, and I really mean everybody, goes to the festivals. If you find your way into the backstage areas you may get new jobs easily. Today, everyone in the music industry wants to go there but there are fewer big festivals now and great competition to get access to those areas. (Interviewee 15 2013, male musician)

In the context of employment, these temporary environments of buzz are vital for contemporary musicians. Firstly, they offer wider musical infrastructures and network agglomerations due to the relocation of a multitude of music actors. Secondly, considering the network resources in place, the backstage areas provides for a wide array of familiar as well as potential connections, job opportunities and even contracts in unexplored labour markets due to the diversity of social actors exploring novel forms of connections in the backstage areas. As pinpointed by this musician:

Many new kinds of jobs have been found. I’ve been signed for a couple of soundtracks by connecting to the backstage people, which for me is a much more pleasant job category to network in. I don’t like the kind of networking that is about getting more gigs or being employed by other bands. But today, you don’t need to put up with things you don’t like. The new deal [new music economy] is more diverse. (Interviewee 3 2013, male musician)

As a result of the new spatial concentrations of the music industry, a vast majority of the musicians in this study emphasised that they consciously seek out these spaces to benefit from the many potential connections and project opportunities offered in order to make a living.

Considering the importance of backstage areas as “negotiation spaces” serving as intermediaries of potential partnerships and job opportunities, serving as bridges between networks, there are at least three ways in which
musicians in this study found these to be important contributors to improve work efficiency in the context of job searching.

**Spaces of job information**

The shift to post-industrial working standards has resulted in a music labour market increasingly characterised by short-term projects where employment uncertainty is high and earnings are low (Kindstrand, 2013). Although the music industry always has been subject to precarious working conditions and a project-based economy (Caves, 2000), contemporary developments in working standards have led to increasing precariousness and uncertainty. Combined with a growing pool of music labour, it creates needs for spatial concentration to dense artists-centric spaces in order to reduce high costs associated with new responsibilities (Menger, 2006). To cope with the risks of contemporary working lives in the music industry, musicians in general need to be involved in several projects simultaneously in order to get by financially. These project combinations come in different combinations and shapes. As illustrated by these musicians:

As we speak, I’m involved in three different projects, […] two which will finance the third. That is, releasing a new EP and maybe getting a good start for recording a new album. The money I get from other projects, which are also about music but have nothing to do with my artistic career and would not be something I would prioritise if I could get enough money from “my own” music. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

Another musician playing in five different bands continued:

You can use many different strategies but I’m not at all interested in working with some music-related job like making music for commercials. I love to play music and be on stage, and I decided from the beginning that I should go for a true music career. It’s tough since there is more competition to get gigs which in turn have reduced the earnings. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

As a result of co-locating to festival backstage areas musicians take advantage of the flows of information concerning employment, jobs and cultural projects thus trying to cope with uncertainties of the new music economy. However, many musicians did not consider festival environments as “novel revolutions” in the context of job searching; rather they represent one of many features of music work. According to some musicians, the contents of interactions in festival spaces have not changed in large. It is the sheer number of social actors in the backstage areas that are subject to change:

I hang out more often in [festival] backstage areas because most of the friends and contacts go there more often. Still, it’s the same kind of “rendezvous” as usual, it’s nothing new really. We are talking about the same things. […] To me they are “payments” for hard work in the studio the last year, get-
ting credit for all the effort I’ve put into creating music. That’s my time in the limelight. […] The major difference is the number of people backstage. It makes it easier to have a chat with new people. (Interviewee 3 2013, male musician)

A widespread opinion concerning such statements was that involvement in music festivals in general is “evidence of well-known reputation” and “artistic success” (Interviewee 2 2012, male musician). In order to reap the benefits of such reputational aspects of work and maintaining status, festivals are important in terms of promotional spaces. For some musicians, job opportunities associated with interactions in backstage areas were merely the consequences of the organisers’ interests in booking certain artists/bands due to their present popularity: “I go there to perform and for promoting purposes, not necessarily to find jobs.” (Interviewee 21 2013, male musician)

However, as outlined in the chapter on network relations, there were different attitudes in regards to participating in the buzz, depending upon the level of music professionalism. Although sometimes not considered as job searching, the vast majority of the independent musicians dedicating work practices to festival locations strongly emphasised how backstage “hangouts” often resulted in new job offers:

I don’t think we really consider it to be job centres, but that’s actually what it is. Sure, you don’t go to festivals thinking “I wonder what jobs there will be for me this time” but somewhere in the back of your head it’s actually what you are looking for. […] I remember when I came home from the Hultsfred festival last summer and didn’t take home any jobs with me […] and I was both annoyed and to some extent stressed out about it […] I think that says it all, how festivals are our employment agencies, in a way, so to speak. (Interviewee 4 2013, male musician)

In line with Menger (2006) it is suggested that “do-it-yourself” musicians are increasingly subject to job insecurity in need of “steady strains of searching for jobs [in order to] gather information about new projects and of manoeuvring.” As a result of an increasing pool of self-employed musicians, there is a growing need to seek-out these hubs of cultural and institutional agglomerations in order to improve job searching in order to avoid unemployment or to consider the need of several secondary jobs. Thus, for independent musicians, festival locations serve as important mediators of jobs.

**Accessibility and time efficiency**

Considering the reconfigured patterns of work, many of the interviewees pinpointed the concern of accessibility and how dense festival spaces is a key factor for coping with such matters thus adding to the attractiveness of festival participation. The backstage space in itself is an important component in order to cope with a wide array of individual responsibilities and work practices. Many of those interviewees recognising the crucial role of
festivals as labour markets, emphasised the strong effects of the centripetal forces attracting a wide array of social actors into physically proximate communities. Due to the richness of social spaces and key actors available on just-in-time basis some musicians found the accessibility aspects of festival backstage locations as crucial for coping with job insecurity:

I like to see them [festivals] as train stations where people get squeezed into a small area watching each other behind books […] buying things in cafes and talking to strangers in restaurants [and] which may lead to new acquaintances with strangers. And just like in train stations, the short distances between spaces supports your attempts to find time to chat with people you never would have otherwise had the chance to have contact with. (Interviewee 21 2013, male musician)

Another musician concluded:

The huge supply of connections is the main reason why I go to festivals where I’m not performing. […] There is a great need to be more efficient today and I’d rather visit fewer places with far more people than wasting time on bar nights, thus I find more time to work with music. That’s how you build up contacts, how to get jobs. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

Indeed, the temporary permanence of music actors combined with high density of connections and short physical distances provide for many opportunities to improve work efficiency.

There is also a second facilitating feature drawing on high accessibility and synergies of cultural agglomerations. Although many musicians attend festivals with different ambitions and, in particular, different roles, they are interconnected by the commitment of finding support. Aside from aspects of cultural density resulting in speeded up work efficiency as well as opportunities to build ties with unfamiliar actors, these “get-togethers” represents a break in day-to-day work. As suggested in Bathelt & Schuldt (2008) and research on temporary gatherings at trade fairs, “to be away from the normal workplace creates time slots that are normally not blocked with particular tasks. These time slots allow for unique communication without interruptions.” Similar to the firm representatives in such research, the schedules of musicians’ everyday activities are filled with tasks and routines carried out under severe time pressures. Therefore, festivals can contribute to create time slots by allowing for shorter access times to important connections.

During the festival, musicians can devote time and effort to networking in various festival spaces, ignore “routinised” everyday work and dedicate their focus to actions taking place in these well-defined communities of work. As this musician explained:

Here it’s more open and relaxed working conditions and you can easily go back and forth between your hotel and the festival area to carry out what you
need to do. Often you end up with friends and strangers with a pint chatting about nothing important, and then all of a sudden, by accident I would say, you’re talking jobs, projects, performances and god knows what, but in the end you have find new connections for yourself. The point is, especially for being on the verge of getting burned out, here I can relax but still be in work mode. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

Clearly, the opportunities of dedicating exclusive focus to specific tasks of music work practices while being able to ignore stressful day-to-day activities adds to the place attractiveness of festival location. This musician concluded:

The reality is that you can’t find a better place for work and relaxation. Here you have the people, the live shows, the meetings, your fans of course, media [...] and all those funny activities set up by organisers to divert your thoughts on leisure and relaxation. It’s a party for me as well as for the visitors and I really need this kind of holiday, while simultaneously as I earn some good money. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

As a result of all these opportunities, many musicians in this study pinpointed the growing importance of festivals as intermediaries for performing many different tasks – creative as well as non-creative – while playing the role as spaces for “deliberate” breaks in day-to-day work. Therefore, the attractiveness of festivals for musicians is shaped by decisions contributing to improve accessibility and work efficiency simultaneously as allowing for leisure and relaxation.

Connections to new labour markets
A number of studies on self-employed artistic labour or freelancers suggest that musicians tend to hold multiple jobs (Elstad, 1997; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Robinson & Montgomery, 2000; Throsby, 2007). Irregular work, short-term projects, uncertain income and fierce competition for music jobs necessitate many musicians to supplement artistic incomes with secondary jobs. In holding multiple jobs, many musicians prefer to seek-out artist-related job opportunities, for instance working as music teachers, studio technicians or in record shops, or is more usually the case, many musicians find their income in the non-creative labour market such as in bars and restaurants8 (Menger, 2006; Robinson & Montgomery, 2000). When traditional income sources from album sales and live performances are decreasing and the pool of musicians competing for jobs and earnings are growing, “multiple job holding shows a general upward trend, and artistic workers rank among the highest in the percentage of all workers who have secondary jobs” (Menger, 2006). As this musician explained the growing pool of “colleagues” competing for music jobs:

8 As pointed out by some of the interviewees.
Combining the sheer number of musicians today competing for their share of gigs and record deals, it’s no wonder that it all ends up in peanuts. The musicians who made it financially because of some kind of controlled market fifteen years ago have to get other jobs. The reputation and credibility you’ve earned as an artist is worth nothing when organisers only compare how much money they have to pay to different artists. […] They actually think like “yeah, they comparing artists are almost equivalent, let’s go for the cheaper one.” (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician)

However, the growing number of non-music actors in the backstage areas searching for novel combinations of partnerships to present and market their products, offer new types of secondary jobs, in particular music-related job opportunities. Many of the interviewees emphasised the changing nature of secondary jobs and the transformation of the contents of such jobs. Work in bars, grocery stores or as music teachers can be ignored in favour of more creative jobs. The expansion of the music labour market to unknown creative markets involved many new job opportunities for musicians, for instance commercials, fashion shows, computer games and even unexpected markets such as fitness clubs. As these musicians explained the wide range of social actors and the potential job offers:

Today it’s a touring circus which you cannot afford to miss when you don’t have a [record] deal. […] It’s a job market that maybe, if you put some effort into it, can get you employment for the next three months. There is a myriad of various sponsors and you may end up with a […] contract for MQ-commercials. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

The most exciting stuff is all the new job opportunities you can get by just being here. I have gotten contracts for three music commercials just this summer, which means four months of full-time employment, and I know that [artist] has been making music for e-games competitions as well as jobs for some fitness clubs. (Interviewee 2 2012, male musician)

Clearly, as stated by these musicians, the traditional forms of music work and secondary employment in the music industry have been extended into broader creative labour markets which involve a wide range of new job opportunities. In addition, these new jobs are perceived to be creative and related to the “true artistic work” (Interviewee 3 2013, male musician). Therefore, composing soundtracks to movies, music for fashion shows or DJ-mixes to fitness clubs were considered creative by contemporary musicians although the outcome of such collaborations may not contribute to traditional artist careers. However, compared to employment in the former mode of secondary jobs, these new job opportunities are considered acceptable solu-

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One of the interviewed musicians pointed out that he has teamed up with a well-known Swedish fitness club, signing him for music to be used in various choreographed fitness sessions and equivalent to three months of “standard income.”
tions in periods of artistic unemployment. Thus, although some musicians highlighted issues of different social codes affecting the overall atmosphere in backstage areas, there was a general acceptance of the presence of many sponsors and non-music actors due to the job opportunities they may offer.

**Backstage areas as learning environments**

While network relations and information transfers on jobs can be supported by participation in the backstage buzz there are also increasing needs of finding input for learning and updating skills. Many of the interviewees pointed how the new mode of work organisation requires new skills and training in order to cope with new conditions for work and creativity. The result of added responsibilities for a wide range of non-creative tasks highlights the importance of learning and education. Above all, musicians stressed insufficient skills on career management, legal issues, financial planning as well as coping with the constant stream of innovations in music technology. As Hracs (2010) points out in the case of independent musicians in Toronto, they are “required to perform business tasks, which they are often not suited or trained for” to shape and govern their music careers. Such findings highlight the need of formal skills and training to individually construct and maintain music careers.

In terms of learning in the music industry, geographical proximity of firms and individuals has long been considered necessary to facilitate knowledge transfers by capitalising on activities in localised face-to-face networks (Florida, 2002). However, because of changing geographies of work and creativity the time for engaging in learning and updating of skills in traditional spaces are hampered by fragmented music work lives. Considering these new responsibilities, many musicians strongly emphasised the need of learning and training opportunities targeting spatially fragmented work patterns. The need of such support is in particular crucial for independent musicians facing the challenges of acquiring and updating skills that can provide for income stability from music work and being less dependent on secondary jobs. Therefore, to stay competitive many musicians seek out new opportunities for gaining knowledge on how to independently perform such activities.

In the context of the backstage areas at Swedish music festivals, organisers in collaboration with specific “workshop” groups have started to offer opportunities for updating of skills and learning.

**Learning processes in workshops: Services for updating skills**

In exploring the opportunities for learning support in backstage areas some festivals offer workshops in order to facilitate updating of certain skills which may play an important role in order to streamline the management of music work. As explained by this festival organiser:
Ever since we started, we have offered various workshops, for instance on new music software. You know, to learn things that one usually won't have the time to do. (Informant 2 2012, festival organiser)

However, festivals are in general not involved in the operating process of these workshops because “it’s time consuming and expensive to also plan for workshops” (Informant 3 2012, festival organiser). Considering the organisation of such “public” workshops, they usually are provided through collaborations between organisers and workshop organisations, the latter being responsible for workshop activities. For example, Popkollo has co-arranged workshops targeting young female musicians and learning support for software for music production at, for instance, the Way Out West festival and the Hultsfred festival; Studiefrämjandet has provided support with a variety of workshops in conjunction with music festivals, above all at the former festival in Arvika; and the re-started Peace & Love festival in Borlänge combines workshops, lectures and activities in a wide range of cultural knowledge areas during the festival days. As this festival organiser explained:

Our fundamental basis has been that we may be a helping hand to musicians who don’t have control of what they really need to have help with. Indeed, there are already several other workshops during the festival but they are open for people in general and may not attract musicians which are here to work. They target certain people, like this Popkollo which has offered workshops on music production for young female musicians. However, our goal is to offer a variety of workshops in the future and we always look at SXSW as inspiration [South by Southwest music festival] but don’t have the financial resources to offer such large-scale events. (Informant 2 2012, festival organiser)

Although some festival organisers provided workshops, it should be noted that most of these workshops did not only target music workers exclusively. In most cases, they were open to anyone and everyone, and not specifically addressed to musicians; nor were they located to the backstage areas. Only two of the visited festivals specifically offered workshops targeting musicians in the backstage areas. In these cases, one workshop pinpointed music technology in a “trial-and-error” fashion with support of studio professionals; the other workshop addressed legal issues, explicitly on how to sign deals when working in a “do-it-yourself” fashion. Only a very few musicians in this study have participated in backstage workshops during their visits at festivals, but consider that such features of festival events can facilitate certain issues of music work. In particular, training on new music software has been of help to some according to this musician:

They had this workshop on the new Cubase software, and since I’ve just started using it in the studio, I thought it would be a great start to get help
with some basics that otherwise would take me hours to figure out on my own. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

Another musician continued:

It could be helpful in the future if there would be more and a wider range of workshops. I’ve been to many festivals in the UK which have supported artists with a wide array of workshops for many years and it seems to be much appreciated. […] So far, I’ve just tried this software workshop and it actually helped me out quite a bit as you got the time to ask specific questions while testing it on-site. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

However, although some music festivals have started to offer various workshops contributing to learning, there is still not much interest in participating in these workshops. Many of the interviewees, in particular the independent musicians, pinpointed that backstage hours are limited because of hectic tour schedules. With a few exceptions of longer visits at specific festivals, touring schedules will only allow for, at most, one or two days to be spent in various backstage areas before going to the next “worksite.” These time constraints combined with the rise of digital technologies have, preferably, resulted in that the performance of certain activities has been transferred to the Internet. By employing digital technology and online communities, it might open up new opportunities to access information concerning both job opportunities and learning, and above all serve as more efficient mediators of work practices.

For these reasons, I examine the role of digital online communities for certain practices of music work in the next section by making use of online buzz. These new geographies for performing work practices include opportunities to gain control of work schedules by accessing job information and quick updates on learning. Therefore, participation in online communities can facilitate the need to balance time between competing interests.

5.2. Music work practices in online worlds

Most connections are on the Internet. You cannot ignore such realities […]. The world is your market, you can get in touch with someone on the other side of the globe in seconds and new arenas are constantly being created. Hanging out in bars confines you to local places […] but to connect to someone in the US instantly is something new and was out of the question back in the days. […] If the competition only gets a little bit rougher it will just be a matter of time before all work will be performed on the Internet. (Interviewee 15 2013, male musician)
One of the most striking features of the contemporary music industry is how musicians increasingly make use of technology for accessing information and communicating knowledge. The scope and scale as well as the nature of digital online medias can take many different forms comprising a multitude of ecologies which are different from physical places. They exist in open or closed configurations, as permanent or temporary structures and serve as hubs for various exchanges or offer promotional opportunities. Such spaces of interconnections where the market for music products and services converge can serve as gatherings for producers and consumers interacting socially as well as economically in defined online spaces.

As the world becomes closely connected through a vast web of complicated social networks across a wide range of both real and online worlds, the organisational “ecology” of social relationships has been subject to change. Digital technologies serve as both permanent and temporary spaces for online face-to-face interactions and connect individuals in a multitude of online communities simultaneously (Bugge, 2011; Grabher, 2002a; Torre, 2008; Young & Collins, 2010). Thus, it is argued that such “death of distance” has affected the place of production, leisure and economic activities and in turn contributes to make work more efficient (Torre 2008; 2011).

Considering the need to balance time between a multitude of tasks and the pressure from working long hours, and for some musicians limited access to temporary face-to-face gatherings, the examination of online spaces to access information and knowledge becomes crucially important to sustain music careers.

Digital online communities

As already noted in the theoretical chapter, the netnographic study does not play the major role in exploring contemporary patterns of work and creativity in the new music economy. However, by exploring activities in online communities and monitoring online communications in four online communities I was able to gain valuable understandings on how musicians organise work practices in online communities, in particular by monitoring the specific use of various online environments for performing different tasks.

Clearly, many musicians emphasised that online communities are not perceived to be part of the creative processes; rather they are intermediaries for sharing “pieces” of creative work. Rather than being spaces for production of music goods, the interviewed musicians emphasised the wide range of opportunities for performing many non-creative tasks by employing different online communities, thus facilitating the accomplishment of a “reservoir” of non-creative tasks while being subject to highly mobile labour markets.

The efficiency of work practices and the opportunities to benefit from the wide range of connections was considered to be the major attraction of online interaction by a vast majority of the musicians using online realities.
Above all, it is possible to perform non-creative responsibilities while traveling between places. Moreover, many independent musicians addressed the need of online spaces for access to labour markets and learning support. Such findings support Coulson’s (2012) argument that the accelerated speed of work in highly competitive environments requires more efficient organisational structures of relationships. Interactions in traditional spaces have become too time-consuming and distant from new work practices because of the many different tasks at hand. Most importantly, coping with risks of both creative and non-creative tasks across time and space, musicians need to balance where and when these tasks can be performed most efficiently. As this musician explained:

It’s quite convenient to be able to put one or two hours seeking-out various websites and communities on the Internet to see what’s going on [in the music industry]. There’s actually too many communities just targeting jobs and if you only put some effort into it you will probably find something (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician).

As a result, the wide array of online social medias and communication forums and the opportunities to access networks, jobs and knowledge are no longer confined to face-to-face interactions in physical environments. However, online communities come in different organisational forms and different online communities serve distinct activities. Considering these various opportunities for performing music work practices, three major features of “co-location” in online communities are listed below.

**Promoting and distributing music**

Online communities serve above all as sites for promotion and fan communication. Considering the growing pool of independent music workers, promotional strategies are necessary to “reach out” to fans and potential employers. Many musicians pinpointed these long-awaited opportunities to reduce the need of gatekeepers between musicians and potential fans. In particular “do-it-yourself” musicians without support from managers or booking agents emphasised the importance of making use of different types of communities for purposes of marketing and branding. Record labels, booking agencies and sometimes even managers controlled communication and distribution during the record label era (Tschmuck, 2006) and were necessary as supporting actors when ambitions went beyond local markets with goals of targeting national media distribution channels.

However, the advent of digital technologies brought fundamental changes to the system of distribution standards (Greffe, 2004). Open distribution channels such as CD Baby, combined with cheaper studio recording equipment, have reduced the role of intermediaries and resulted in a major shift in how independent musicians can reach new markets and fans. The relation-
ship between these promotional strategies and jobs is explained by this independent musician:

Today it’s a killer competition out there because of the number of artists and bands competing for gigs. It’s not enough to upload your music on Bandcamp if you want someone to find you. You need to use many different websites if you would have the slightest chance to stand out. I use Bandcamp, SoundCloud, LastFM and MySpace, and at the same time I use a blog where it’s possible to ask me questions or book me for gigs. Of course I use Facebook, but mostly to promote my gigs and as a link to my other websites. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

By exploring the scope and scale of many of the interviewed musicians’ online spaces and to what extent they were controlling the flows of promotional information themselves, it was possible to overview how many different online communities they were using for communicating with fans and other social actors. On average the observed musicians made use of 4-7 different online communication spaces without taking into account the “closed” spaces of communications such as interactions in Facebook projects. The main share of these websites was only used for promotional purposes. In the case of independent musicians with little or no support, they put considerable time and effort in managing all these online spaces. As this musician explained:

After a gig, in particular when you are on tour, there is no time to hang out in pubs or stay at the venue. I need to get back to the hotel, update the website, my Facebook page, check out new information in the spaces of ongoing projects in various Facebook groups and finally answer some questions in the blog. That will take a few hours, but it’s becoming increasingly important in order to serve people with information as well as looking for new gigs. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

Several musicians make use of combinations of online medias to initiate interactions with ”gatekeepers” such as journalists of important fanzines or festival organisers. Independent musicians in particular employed a comprehensive repertoire of strategies and routinised activities for each situation. For some of the interviewed independent musicians, the use of targeted action was crucially important to improve the outcome of specific activities. For instance, prior to the festival season certain festival organisers gain access to exclusive artist material; when releasing albums some musicians invite important fanzine journalists to download not yet released songs. As this independent musician explained:

By coincidence I found the Facebook profile of [fanzine journalist] and I thought that his way of writing about rock music would fit my purpose well. So I finally decided to send him a “friend” request and a download link to my
Dropbox so he would be able to access new stuff from the upcoming album. He replied “hey, it sounds really great and if you send me some more songs I’ll write a review of your album” and of course I sent him the whole album. One thing led to another and because of that “friendship” I have a full [festival] tour schedule this summer. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

Employing such intense self-promotional strategies in various online social medias demonstrate the new relationship of time and space in the contemporary music industry. Thus, when time and costs are high, various online spaces were considered crucial to maintain dispersed and large-scale social networks, connecting both at-distant and local social actors.

However, although many musicians initially pinpointed the opportunities for circumventing intermediaries by employing such self-governing strategies they also highlighted “how the situation is escalating” (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician) because of demands of participating in the promotional circus and being present in too many online spaces. While using new technologies was considered beneficial, there was also a need to find balance between online presence and performing creative work; “in the end you really have nothing to promote if you don’t find the time to make the music.” (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician) Therefore, to conclude, although the promotional opportunities in online communities to a great extent have helped musicians in organising day-to-day work practices, there is also a pressing need to find efficient strategies for coping with the plethora of possible online communities.

Job-seeking

By exploring social networking services, some musicians in this study have made use of specific communities to find employment. Although there is a plethora of communication opportunities to seek-out, LinkedIn have been the most frequently used for job searching. LinkedIn and several similar services are based on interest groups and organised in different professional fields and categories to facilitate searching for specific topics. For some Swedish musicians in the independent sector of the music industry, getting involved in such groups\(^\text{10}\) have to some part resulted in wider job networks thus increasing the potential for getting access to jobs and, above all, new labour markets. As put by this musician:

Before I joined this community, I was always phoning friends asking if they could arrange a gig [for me]. But on this platform [LinkedIn] I found myself connected to many other people from all kinds of cities and suddenly I’ve got so many contacts which have resulted in jobs in places I never been to before. […] Just recently I’ve started to connect with some British [Internet] com-

\(^{10}\) It should be noted that some musicians favoured other communities for job mediation. However, most of those using online ecologies to support their job search frequently participated in LinkedIn groups because of the sheer number of potential connections, both in local and global labour markets.
munities, hoping to get some gigs abroad. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

As a result, these types of services connecting different kinds of music professionals in a thick web of information and potential collaborators can serve to establish or maintain music careers in ways that would not be achievable by seeking-out traditional ways for access jobs in the Swedish music industry. However, in the context of online services for job mediation there is however few communities targeting the Swedish labour market. Rather these groups are focused on international labour markets. This musician explained such difficulties as follows:

Let’s face it. Nobody knows who I am anymore and won’t bother to waste time on some unknown old musician trying to approach them at clubs or in desperation sending e-mails begging for just one gig. For example, I tried to get a gig at the Bråvalla festival but this really too young booking manager wasn’t born when we released our last record. […] Not a chance. LinkedIn is ok, but is more about the American music industry. Many of us here in Sweden prefer to use other forums like “ViMusiker”, “Bandfinder” or “Stage-Pool”. I’ve gotten several jobs from there. (Interviewee 4 2013, male musician)

In addition, while a few musicians in this study have started to make use of digital services for job seeking, they underscored that the kinds of jobs mediated in Swedish online communities rarely involves professional music jobs. Rather, the main share of job offers are based on bands or artists “in the demo tape phase of their careers” (Interviewee 18 2013, female musician) searching for potential band members or, at best, trying to find musicians for a “one-gig-only” job.

One common explanation to the lack of presence by music professionals in Swedish job mediating communities was that those connections are managed in other social contexts. Bands, artists and record labels rather make use of personal networks and if they by chance use online communities in contexts of job mediation these offers are transmitted in closed communities such as e-mail conversations. As explained by this musician:

Professional job offers on the Internet are rare, at least in Sweden. In fact, it reminds me a lot of when I was young and posted notes on the notice board asking for a bass player, giving you the feeling of being back at the youth recreation centre and not something supporting the progress of your music career. There is rarely any money in such job offers. (Interviewee 18 2013, female musician)

As such findings suggest, this kind of job mediation in Swedish online communities can be viewed as a contemporary version of “the message
board system” – or announcements in magazines – used in the search for potential artists and band members prior to the evolution of the Internet.

Perhaps even more important, the common belief is that professional musicians and established independents share important resources within their personal networks, preferably by connecting in face-to-face settings – “why should they even bother to use non-professional communities” (Interviewee 11 2013, male musician). Therefore, by addressing recent research on impacts of contemporary working conditions in the symbolic producing industries, the lack of professionalism in certain job mediating communities can be explained by the need of comprehensive personal networks and word-of-mouth recommendations in order to gain access to professional money-earning job resources (Coulson, 2012; Cummins-Russell & Rantisi, 2011; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008).

However, despite these opinions on the nature of jobs in online communities, employing such technologies can indirectly serve as job mediating services. As emphasised in the aforementioned section on the primary usage of these communities, the main share of time spent in online communities were focused on promotion and distribution of music. Musicians in particular emphasised the multitude of opportunities to reach new markets for music resulting in larger consumer bases. In fact, based on a good set of marketing strategies concentrating much effort to online promotional campaigns and music distribution on international markets, this can indirectly result in more jobs. Sometimes such efforts can contribute to international success and transform music workers with secondary jobs into professional musicians with considerable income:

We had this band which didn’t get anywhere. Even though we performed at the major Swedish festivals, nothing happened; I never earned any money and had to work at ICA [supermarket]. But I decided to really try it out [a music career] and left the band by the end of 2012 to produce music I really liked myself. [I] learned to play all the instruments to get in control of the work process and finally – only after three months – released this ‘famous’ debut album. At the same time I started a quite fierce marketing campaign on the Internet, first on Facebook but later – by recommendation - in targeted groups on LinkedIn and followed by the distribution of music on SoundCloud and Last.FM. […] I think that at most I updated information in 12 to 15 communities every day, working at ICA durin the day producing music and updating sites at nights. […] And it paid off a lot more than I would have ever dreamt of. Four songs from the debut album ended up in top American movies and after my second album, released just a few months later, another two songs were picked for movies. Just recently I wrote a contract for two full film scores. […] The point is that this would not have happened if I hadn’t put so much effort into all these different communities. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)
Therefore, considering the success of such entrepreneurial endeavours strategically employing online communities for promotional purposes, building connections on global labour markets indeed can result in access to new job opportunities. Although this example should be considered as exceptionally successful, it also demonstrates the enormous potential of using online communities to promote, distribute and, ultimately, access employments on new labour markets. Thus, those musicians finding difficulties to access face-to-face environments in their search for job opportunities can circumvent such issues by making use of different strategies in online communities.

**Knowledge support**

In the sense of learning and updating skills, independent musicians can now easily participate in various transfers of knowledge. Explicitly, learning focused on updating skills in, above all, career management and technological developments have been greatly facilitated due to various online forums targeting specific problems.

The wide range of knowledge supporting communities has grown enormously. Today, online communities offer endless combinatorial opportunities for self-driven music management exploration and the possibility to support continuous updating of skills and activities on music labour markets. There is a comprehensive range of “how to” communities addressing issues on self-management above all on promotion/marketing, tour planning, fundraising/crowdfunding, financial advice and cost efficiency, legal rights and music distribution – and to a great extent many supporting communities are open for everyone.

Being a former professional musician supported by a major Swedish record label for more than fifteen years, this musician explained how new opportunities have contributed to sustain career progress without the support of music industry institutions:

I was one of the first to be the victim of the record label crisis and found myself “on the street” five years ago. But I knew I had a huge fanbase and knew that if I just could find the money to record an album there would be no problem to work as usual. [...] I used almost a year to learn about how to manage things on the Internet starting with a crowdfunding campaign and simultaneously learned how to set up touring schedules. It wasn’t easy in the beginning but necessary and now I run almost everything on my own and to some extent I find it more rewarding. (Interviewee 21 2013, male musician)

As record labels have become cautious and carefully “pick their choices” when signing new artists, independently career-driven musicians need to cope with new responsibilities and work models. As a result, learning communities on the Internet have started to play crucial roles for organising independent music careers.
Moreover, as commented in the section of promotional strategies and the drawbacks arising from the time-consuming nature of online presence, some independent musicians have started to deal with these problems by collaboration and bartering. In fact, the flows of information in the observed Facebook projects extensively involved help and support in issues previously managed by record labels or managements. Some independent musicians have even started to specialise in specific non-creative areas, helping and coordinating other musicians in return of other favours. As explained by this musician:

We [the band] have always paid for a really expensive booking agency in order to save time. [...] However, the kind of people working as booking managers today have changed from being retired musicians to these young non-music-related boys with no experience in the music industry but with good education in business management and finance. They don’t know shit about efficient tour schedules or anything about our fans. But I realised that I have some good skills for tour planning, so we got rid of this agency and now I plan everything, not only for this band but also for friends’ bands as well. It’s actually a kind of creative job. (Interviewee 16 2013, female musician)

Another musician continued:

Of course we trade services. How would it otherwise be possible to make it? This has been done for ages, but there are some more demanding new tasks to carry out now as well. [...] If you have the motivation to stay in business you need to create new ways to manage all these tasks and here [musicians in Facebook project] we have some kind of a system where we help each other out with all these practicalities in particular when trying to write applications for funding and in organising minor tours. (Interviewee 3 2013, male musician)

Such systems of collaborating and bartering of services therefore draw on personal networks to make work more efficient. As a result, by combining hard work involving fierce promotion campaigns in a multitude of online communities with the example of the “bartering system” proposed above, independent musicians can be fully self-contained and self-sustainable in constructing their career paths and reduce the importance of certain gatekeepers. In line with Coulson (2012), Urry (2012) and Wellman (2001) such findings once again pinpoint the importance of engaging in active networking to expand and diversify relationships in order to be able to make use of the virtues of such trading systems. Therefore, to gain learning support, thus contributing to cope with time constraints and lack of specific knowledge, independent musicians in the contemporary Swedish music industry can make use of online networks and seek-out the multitude of knowledge pool offered in various online communities.
Table 2: Work practices in online spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Main activities</th>
<th>Open/closed, free/paid service</th>
<th>Temporary/ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Artist/band page</td>
<td>- Fan communication</td>
<td>Open, free</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Groups</td>
<td>- Job information/technical support</td>
<td>Closed (essentially), free</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Projects (albums, remixes, cover art)</td>
<td>Closed, free</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>- Job information/technical support</td>
<td>Open, free</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Monitoring job opportunities</td>
<td>Closed, paid</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SoundCloud (Pro)</td>
<td>- Promotion</td>
<td>Open, free</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fan communication</td>
<td>Open, free</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communication with actors</td>
<td>Closed, paid</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandcamp (Pro)</td>
<td>- Promotion</td>
<td>Open, paid</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Music distribution</td>
<td>Open, paid</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropbox (Pro)</td>
<td>- Creative work/exchange of music productions</td>
<td>Closed, paid</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an attempt to summarise the nature of online transfers and the roles and functions of the different spaces at hand, I have compiled these environments below. Although there are many other online communities such as MySpace and Twitter serving as hubs for connecting people, they were rarely considered important for music work practices in this study. Facebook was in general “the leading online social network” because of the opportunity to perform a wide array of activities in “simple and multi-functional spaces” (Interviewee 5 2013, male musician) and for reasons of simplicity, in particular in the context of finding new connections. That is, musicians emphasised user-friendly online social networks.

11 The online communities represented in the table are considered, chronologically, the most important spaces for different activities according to the interviewees. However, it should be noted that only two of these were subjects of netnographic explorations.
As a result, the increasing range of online spaces providing for exchanges of jobs and technical problem-solving and the need of physical face-to-face interactions can be further reduced. LinkedIn, Facebook and SoundCloud channel information and knowledge in project-specific groups; Dropbox and Bandcamp work as intermediaries in creative collaborations by their file sharing files features. Therefore, the vast opportunities of speeding up work process in digital worlds thus facilitating the implementation of many non-creative tasks can be a crucial competitive strategy for music workers in their effort to cope with fragmented and mobile work lives.

5.3. Summary: A new division of work practices

Work in the contemporary industry requires musicians to perform a wide array of different tasks. While a common belief is that musicians spend most of their time on music creativity; the reality rather demonstrates the enormous workload invested in non-creative work in order to build strong artist brands, in particular in the independent music sector. Because many of these tasks contribute to work fragmentation across time and space, musicians have started to explore new contexts in which they can combine creative work and the performance of non-creative tasks.

In this chapter, and based on the experiences of music workers, I began by identifying the new spaces of music work practices which contributes to speed up work efficiency. Festival backstage areas and digital online communities have started to affect musicians’ decisions on “locations” for performing a variety of work practices. Although backstage areas also have started to offer learning support, such services has not gained foothold due to intense work schedules and time limits when visiting different festival locations. These temporary clusters of music actors rather represent job negotiation spaces in which musicians explicitly engage in job searching by making use of many co-located network actors.

However, due to different motivations and preconditions, musicians co-locate to backstage areas for different reasons. While professional musicians find themselves embraced by a web of institutional support and do not experience the various pressures of individual music careers, many independent musicians emphasised the crucial importance of these new spaces in search for connections that ultimately result in job opportunities.

Moreover, because backstage areas exhibit exclusionary tendencies thus affecting access for many independent musicians, online spaces have been suggested to serve as intermediaries of network resources. In contrast to perceptions of exclusive networking, participation in online communities was considered open and exhibits no entry barriers. Although online communities allow for job searching it was often pinpointed that such job offers rarely involve professional job opportunities. Instead, many independent
musicians make use of the promotional opportunities offered by a vast amount of communication services. In doing so, some independent musicians have gained access to international labour markets and therefore have started to build music careers. Therefore, concluding on these different work patterns and considering different career status, it can be suggested that established musicians and independent musicians at large make use of different work modes.

However, although musicians have identified the crucial role of temporary geographies and new online spaces, little is known about the roles of these specific spaces for processes of music creativity. Therefore, in the next chapter I will examine these new spaces and their roles for helping musicians in their efforts to perform creative work while being faced with the challenges of a more mobile and flexible music industry.
6. The spatial dynamics of music creativity: Conditions for creative work

As outlined in chapter 4, the geographies of networking and exchanges of network resources are subject to change due to pressures of mobile and flexible work patterns which leads to spatial fragmentation and co-location of network members at temporary gatherings, above all at popular music festivals. In chapter 5, I demonstrate how musicians carry out many non-creative tasks in festival backstage areas, such as negotiating job opportunities, networking with other music actors and promoting themselves. In addition, some of these non-creative work tasks have also been transferred to online communities in order to facilitate networking between actors at great distance. However, the nature of the new music economy not only affects the spaces for networking and artistic non-creative practices. Lack of concentration due to the addition of multiple tasks have also resulted in less time spent on creative processes which have resulted in difficult conditions for carrying out creative work (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010).

According to many of the independently working musicians in this study, the increasing fragmentation of work across time and a multitude of geographies have reduced time for reflections on music creativity significantly. Contemporary working conditions require exploration of new geographies of creative work in order to support increasingly individualisation of career-building in the new music economy.

However, considering the fragmented nature of contemporary music work, many researchers emphasise the negative impact on creativity due to the never-ending pursuit of new job opportunities in order to adapt to the requirements of the new music economy. McRobbie (2002), Gill (2002) and Ross (2008) pinpoint the issue of reduced time for individual reflexivity and face-to-face interaction in local milieus, which in turn have affected the reproduction of creativity. The vast majority of the interviewees strongly emphasised conflicts of interests that arose from not finding time for creative work:

It’s tough when you know about all the other things [non-creative tasks] you need to do and which you, strangely, always put high on the agenda before you take care of the creative stuff. However, it’s a never-ending story of things to do and finally you have to say “it’s enough for now.” It’s all about limits. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)
Considering this statement, when time for individual reflexivity and creative work become limited the issue of how, when and where music production takes place is crucially important. Although the new music profession require high geographical mobility and the ability to cope with various tasks while being on “never-ending tours,” music ideas are still generated despite the distance to familiar creative spaces.

In this study, the interviewees identified a wide range of spaces for creative and reflexive artistic work practices, combining traditional work spaces with new creative “touring” spaces which ultimately can contribute to improve work efficiency. In the table below I have summarised those spaces highlighted as important and serving as spaces of inspiration, reflexivity and experimenting in both permanent and temporary spaces.

**Table 3. Spaces of musicians’ creative processes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of space</th>
<th>Usefulness and functionality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permanent</strong></td>
<td>Idea generation/inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording studio</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home studio</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafés/libraries/exhibition areas, etc.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs/bars</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary, mobile and online spaces</strong></td>
<td><strong>Usefulness and functionality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea generation/inspiration</td>
<td>Music experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling spaces</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music festivals (various spaces at festivals)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site studios/&quot;rehearsal spaces/other spaces</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online spaces</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 The statistical data illustrate how many musicians that emphasise the importance of certain spaces for the various components of creative work.
It should however be noted that the table only includes those spaces of creativity emphasised as important by the interviewed musicians. Also, not all of the interviewed musicians identified these spaces as important in their working practices. For instance, only eleven musicians emphasised on-site spaces. Therefore, starting from the table summary, I examine in this chapter how and where musicians carry out reflexive and creative work. This exploration of creative work is divided into permanent urban spaces, the new temporary face-to-face spaces particularly rooted in popular music festivals and both the permanent and temporary organisations of online communities.

6.1. Time and space of creative work

The spatial reorganisation of work and employment in the new music economy has resulted in higher geographical mobility for musicians simultaneously as they are required to “stay in touch” and being accessible while traveling between geographical locations. Many musicians talked about how such sudden shifts in geographical locations affect creative work when time spent in “reflexive and creative environments” has been reduced due to intense and hectic working lives. Thus, because of lack of sufficient time to carry out music creativity, due to increasing pressures and responsibilities, the vast majority of the interviewed musicians find themselves under severe pressure and experience anxiety:

> It’s just so stupid to have all these connections with everyone and everything [non-creative connections], and that you need to always promote yourself, being an entrepreneur in the mornings and then try to go back to the “creative me” trying to write music. Because of this I have become extremely stressed out and have started to have some serious [stress-related] problems. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

As outlined in the introduction, the creative spaces supporting music production have traditionally been locally rooted in urban metropolitan spaces due to the cultural diversity and the presence of many cultural actors (e.g. in Florida, 2002; Florida & Jackson 2010; Leyshon, 2001; Markusen 2006). These urban advantages and social spaces comes in a wide range of forms and structures, comprising formal spaces such as recording studios and rehearsal rooms, to informal spaces of clubs, bars and street corners (Connell & Gibson, 2003; Klein, 2011; Wall, 2003; Watson et al., 2009).

However, music ideas and productions are not only made in urban-centric spaces. As a result of technological shifts, greater workloads, and longer working hours, music creativity has to be performed in new music geographies, spatially distributed across multiple spaces and non-fixed locations, as well as in various online communities.
While some musicians found it easy being creative in traveling spaces between destinations, others specifically pinpointed the erosion of time for reflection thus affecting creativity and quality. As this musician explained the difficulties of being creative during tour travels:

No, no and no! It’s really difficult to be creative while being on tour. It doesn’t work well for me at all. I cannot do it. I need to be undisturbed and uninterrupted, find a calm and quiet place, if I am to find my creativity. I really don’t know anyone finding the inspiration to be creative or being able to produce something of decent quality. (Interviewee 3, male musician, 2013)

As a result of the constant flux of work and employment, and faced with the time pressures imposed on artistic practices, such changes hamper creative work in particular the creative component of self-reflexivity. Consequently, the new work modes of the contemporary music profession result in the erosion of creativity and certain quality aspects of music goods. Therefore, the new music economy necessitates reconfigurations of work practices and the working lives of musicians.

To illustrate the different spaces of creative work practices and artistic experiences of creative work in these music environments, I examine the role of the various contexts within these temporary and online music ecologies in the next three sections. In the first section, I pinpoint musicians’ preferences on staying in traditional creative spaces in urban regions, in particular focused to the recording studio and the home studio as well as the public spaces used for reflexivity and contemplation.

In the next section, I explore the temporary spaces of work while, for example, being on tour. This section involves the increasing attention on performing creative work at popular music festivals. Also, while being in traveling mode musicians can make use of non-fixed spaces for creative processes. Therefore, the second section will explore various opportunities for creative processes to take place while traveling between destinations. The last part of this section on creativity on tour, places attention on making use of on-site spaces in order to speed-up work efficiency due to hectic tour schedules.

The third section explores the online opportunities of creative practices and is focused to the role of social online communities as contributors to creative input.

6.2. “I rather stay on my home turf”: Creative processes in urban-centric spaces

In economic geography research, cities privileged positions as focal points for cultural actors and artistic creativity is widely known (e.g. in Florida, 2002; Florida & Jackson 2010; Hracs, 2009; Markusen, 2006). The agglomeration effects of dense cultural neighbourhoods are considered to spur crea-
activity and cultural innovation through reciprocal relationships of competition and partnerships between cultural actors.

Specifically, urban metropolitan areas offer various spaces organised for music creativity and reflexivity, contributing to music innovation and for the creation of symbolic goods. Connell & Gibson (2003) emphasise the importance of home studios, garage spaces and even bedrooms organised for creative purposes; Sjöholm (2013) demonstrate the interplay between creativity and the reflexivity of cultural actors in London, resulting in the “reinvention” of creativity in work and studio environments; and Crossley (2008) pinpoint the early UK punk movement in Manchester and the spaces for networking and creative input from “punk nights” at bars and clubs. These spaces of creative and reflexive processes have long constituted key spaces for cultural actors and the production of symbolic goods.

However, creativity is a complex process divided in distinct features and components, and sometimes in need of different work spaces. Many musicians pinpointed distinct components of creative work. According to the interviewed musicians they need input and inspiration (“idea generation”) to process ideas (“reflexivity”) thus being able to compose musical pieces (“music experiments”). Taken together, these components of creativity ultimately end up in new music productions. That is, while experimenting is considered the “sum of all ideas” and “hands-on” creativity, a single idea does not necessarily result in creative work because ideas are dependent of circumstances and environments in order to result in music.

However, to fulfill the needs of these different creative components, many of the interviewees emphasised the importance of a wide range of artistic production spaces, although most musicians pointed out that they “try to and prefer to stay in a few certain spaces if possible” (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013). On the one hand, musicians employ several spaces because intense working schedules do not allow for spending work days only in specific spaces. On the other hand, musicians use different spaces for specific purposes. Some spaces are used mainly for what is considered creative or innovative purposes, such as finalising music productions; others are employed as “think tanks,” self-reflexiveness and as resources of creative input; and for some musicians certain spaces involve the performances of all these purposes combined.

Music studios: The key spaces of creative processes

In Chris Gibsons’s (2005) research on spaces of creativity in urban regions, the recording studio serves as the key site for creative processes and constitutes the production-site for music end products. Understanding musicians’ working lives involve the exploration of the key production spaces to grasp the scope and scale of essential work spaces. Such perceptions of work spaces are widely shared by the interviewees of this study. The most important space for idea generation, creativity and reflexivity are those “personal”
spaces allowing for peace and quiet and contemplation; spaces to reflect on impressions and experiences of creative input simultaneously as providing for closeness to music equipment and various tools facilitating “sudden outbursts of creativity.” According to most musicians in this study, the music studio was considered the single most important space for artistic practices and procedures and contributes to the interplay between creative work and critically reflexive thinking.

Reaping the benefits of visiting musicians’ studio environments in connection with the interview sessions, I was given the opportunity to experience how various creative studio environments have been designed based on distinct individual preferences and tastes. The studio is the essential site for music workers and crucial for artistic practices and creativity. In discussions on the importance of specific creative spaces, one musician explained the relational aspect of studio spaces:

If I have time for it, I would really like to stay in my studio for longer periods where I have all my equipment. […] Mostly I’d rather think about music than create something. [I] need to reflect on various impressions from watching other artists’ shows [and] can spend hours on reflections and listening to new music and suddenly, when you get this idea, I walk over to the laptop and add a few simple chords before I go back to my thinking corner again. I need this kind of process to be creative, let these chords go over and over while I reflect on the next parts. This can go on for three hours or two days, but that is how it has to be. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

According to many of the interviewed musicians, home studios are the most informal of all spaces of creative work when working in permanent environments. Studio environments provide refuge from the cruel world of work, a space offering peace and tranquillity and ”a setting free from the risks and uncertainties of [music] work […] in particular a space free from stressful working realities” (Interviewee 3, male musician, 2013). Central to the numerous of vivid portrayals and descriptions of creativity and reflexivity in studio settings are the opportunities for relaxation, peace of mind and “a space where things end as well as originate or are reinvented” (Sjöholm, 2013). In line with Watson et al. (2009) “studios are privileged to the most intimate moments of music creativity and emotive performance” and allows for the combination of creative work, relaxation and leisure while creating music goods.

The experiences and perceptions of ”creative atmospheres” in studios were also similar regardless of experiences from professional studios or home recording studios. These distinct spaces however exhibit similar characteristics, in particular the “moments of silence,” opportunities to reflect on ideas and contributions to creative input and processes. The small distinctions between spaces are mainly demonstrated in that professional recording studios support music workers with studio personnel who act as additional input to creative processes through their expertise and ability to connect
various music ideas. Indeed, studio engineers and studio musicians can serve as intermediaries of ideas for creative outputs. According to Gibson (2005), music production is not solely an individual process, rather it involves “a whole chain of production” and relationships between artistic work and creative input from a wide range of music-related actors, for instance music producers, advertisers and artist managements. Scott (2000) even argues that performers “do not necessarily represent the most critical ingredient of what is actually realised on the final recording,” thus adding a possible difference between professional recording studios and home studios.

However, while professional recording studios may involve external input of creativity, home studio environments do not necessarily confine creative work solely to individual artists and studio owners. The latter is true in particular in the final recording stages when “home studio musicians” often need external support, for instance studio musicians, recording engineers or other knowledge and expertise that they themselves do not have. Thus, considering the experience of musicians working in both these environments, and although Gibson (2005) essentially examined professional recording studios, it is suggested that they exhibit characteristics somewhat similar to home studios:

[…] studios are concrete spaces where one can more easily imagine musicians experimenting with instruments and music compositions, toiling with their art and inspiration – they are more permanent reminders of a fleeting stage in a short-term production process. They differ from other, perhaps equally significant activities like marketing and publishing that occur in anonymous offices, and are unable to be remembered through associations with unique material spaces.

Regardless of benefiting from professional recording studios and the creative input of studio personnel or exercising music creativity in individual spaces filled with various personal objects, equipment and materials, the studio spaces explored in this study were considered particular spaces allowing for experimenting and combining music ideas under creative and reflexive conditions. Indeed, all of the interviewees emphasised the crucial importance and the precondition for creative processes of having their own private studios in order to be able to reflect on new ideas and impressions that subsequently can be transformed into creative outputs.

The studios related to the interviewed musicians in this study were in general owned by the musicians themselves or rented on long-term contracts. Many musicians pinpointed the importance to avoid ”being tossed around” between premises because it causes stress and ”generates feelings of uncertainty” (Interviewee 19 2013, male musician) which can divert attention and thoughts needed for creative processes. In research on studios as central sites for artistic identity construction and maintenance in visual arts, Bain (2004a) and Sjöholm (2010) confirm the significant role of private and permanent
studios as contributors to occupational identities, reflexivity and creativity.

As Bain (2005) suggests:

Although an artist can be inspired or feel nurtured by other artists, interaction with others is variously sought and restricted at different times during the creative process. For at the core of artistic practice is the need for occupational solitude and alone time, where an artist can physically withdraw from others as a necessary ritual for artistic self-actualization. [...] Artists seem to prefer to maximize their time by working undisturbed in contemplative isolation. [...] Thus creative work tends to be perceived as an introverted exercise that takes time and demands an intense level of involvement and discipline with few material rewards.

Clearly, and considering the experiences of the interviewees, a studio environment is the prerequisite for reflexivity and creativity. Because of the “interaction between thinking and doing” (Interviewee 18 2013, female musician) private studios facilitate such interplay parallel to fulfilling the indispensable need of having as secure and fixed point allowing for contemplation and thinking on creative work. Due to the requirements of lengthy periods of work and processing ideas in order to achieve creative outcome, musicians explicitly express a strong need for privacy (Sjöholm, 2010); they need “undisturbed space for contemplation and time to be alone” (Bain, 2004a). In fact, despite the requirements of adapting to a highly mobile and flexible labour market, many musicians pinpoint the pressing need to spend time in specific studio environments because of the context-specific feelings stimulating creativity and the intrinsic studio characteristics generating a sense of security, protection and spatial control:

[It is] essential for creative processes to have a somewhat fixed point. There is this general view that as soon as [music] ideas pop up you just pick up the guitar wherever you happen to be at that moment, play a few chords and record some tracks. But hey, here is the secret; it doesn’t work like that. […] At best, I can hum a few ideas into the handy recorder but I really need to spend time in a setting where I feel at home. It [inspiration] is “in the walls” of such settings. I cannot create much without it. (Interviewee 19, female musician, 2013)

Therefore, considering these requirements of creative work combined with the conditions for reflexivity and creativity in the contemporary and flexible music industry, many musicians worry on how to maintain creativity and to find spaces where they can work uninterrupted and undisturbed in longer continuous periods. Thus, the vast majority of the interviewees, and in particular the independents, emphasised feelings of frustration when trying to raise the awareness of problems of music production and time constraints:
There is a huge lack of understanding of our profession. Too many people actually believe that musicians compose music for an hour or two and then spend the rest of the day [hanging out] at a café. However, if you want [music] quality you have to understand that it requires time for reflection and time for production. Because with each day that goes by the time for oneself is decreasing for each day that goes by, I get worried about how new musicians will ever get something out of the studio. I don’t have this problem because I’ve been doing this for a while and have started to organise work into different periods based upon what is on the schedule. (Interviewee 3, male musician, 2013)

However, although many musicians highlighted the crucial importance of permanent studio spaces, the process of idea generation and reflections on new ideas can also take place in other environments. Musicians in this study also emphasised the importance of other urban spaces for inspiration and reflecting on creative inputs. In the next section I present these other important spaces for input and reflexivity.

Urban spaces of inspiration, idea generation and contemplation

Besides identifying music studios as indispensable spaces for reflexive and creative experimenting, urban regions offer several important spaces which serve as inputs and inspiration for these processes. Urban areas comprises the supportive music infrastructure both informal and formal in which musicians can perform at various venues, network with social actors, exchange information or contemplate and reflect on impressions captured by their senses just “being there.” Although most of the interviewees pointed out the value of studio spaces, inspiration and the generation of creative ideas were rather stimulated and extracted by frequent visits to other musicians’ performances, hanging out in stimulating and inspiring club environments or finding the calm and quiet public spaces allowing for reflections on new experiences and influences.

However, different urban spaces serve different functions and fulfil specific levels of input to creative process. In my findings, many musicians pinpointed the need of various music infrastructural spaces as well as urban social spaces to support reflexivity and creativity.

First, clubs and venues organised for performances and “creative feedback” by combining numerous of music actors and fans, are crucially important for generating ideas on music creativity. In particular music venues were considered crucial, not only as forums of networking and information transfers but also as input for generating creative ideas for instance on how to perform music creativity. Music venues and clubs are structured as “several spaces into one space” providing for fan interactions in the bar area, networking with other music actors in private lounge areas or the opportunities to socialise with friends and specially invited people in venue backstage areas. Most of the interviewees asserted that music venues and clubs are
similar to a “buffet” of creative input and ideas, and serve as inspiration for both musical productions and live shows. Frequently, many pinpointed that in the new music economy based on intense competition of consumers the whole process of music production is important to consider, in particular to reflect on how to “embody your music” in order to stand out in the buzz of the increasingly numerous artists and bands on music labour markets:

Back in the days, music was one thing and branding another. Gigs were rewards for a long period of [creative] work which you maybe could cash in on. Today, everything is connected. For instance, it’s not enough to produce great music anymore. You also have to create performances that enhance the impression of your music in order to get more fans. Just look at the Nine Inch Nails [American band]. You don’t actually believe that he would have made it without the light show, the backdrops and other things in his show? Today, the musician needs to consider every element of when working with music. (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician)

Clearly, musicians have started to examine every part of music productions to be able to create a symbolic image of music work and strong artistic brands. With respect to such understandings of contemporary music labour markets and the role of different spaces for building artistic brands, clubs and music venues are considered crucial for instant feedback from fans and other music actors as well as hotspots of impressions and input from other artists’ live shows. Therefore, considering the opportunities of input and feedback for inspiration, idea generation and other creative components, venues serve as loci for collective creative processes.

Second, inspiration and creative feedback are also found in the environments of studio complexes. The vast majority of the interviewed musicians shared a studio building with several other musicians. In general, most of the musicians found such working conditions and opportunities for creative processes satisfying. The visited studio buildings in this study comprised between ten and thirty artist studios used for different cultural purposes. Indeed, many considered it to be advantageous to gather numerous of cultural workers in the same studio area because of reduced costs and to facilitate practical tasks such as borrowing equipment or sharing vehicles. Such arguments for clustering of music actors also confirm Markusen’s (2006) notion of the benefits of co-locations of studios to a shared building in which “ideas and feedback circulate among informal friendship networks.” Such “cooperatives” and opportunities for sharing responsibilities serve to create stronger ties between co-located musicians. As explained by this musician:

For me, this is perfect because I can borrow some really expensive equipment which I cannot afford on my own. […] It’s also a good working environment since there are many other musicians here as well and we can help each other out with ideas or just technical issues, in particular when you need help to record master tapes. (Interviewee 3 2013, male musician)
These agglomerations of creative microgeographies contribute to creative processes, in particular the exchange of music ideas and instant feedback of music experiments\(^\text{13}\). The opportunities of being part of clusters of creative actors, allowing for exchanges of information and knowledge support as well as leisure activities in shared lounges, result in less need to escape studio environments to involve in reflexive processes.

However, and third, to process ideas and input, musicians also emphasised the need for “undisturbed space for contemplation and time to be alone” (Bain, 2004a). Many musicians highlighted that although clubs and music venues are hotspots for interactions and feedback and serve as input to various creative processes during short-lived intense music events, it is extremely difficult to make use of such spaces for reflections on impressions and input, in particular to organise reflections and ideas into mentally constructions of music. Additionally, studios in shared complexes can also occasionally act as creative cages in particular if it is located in a studio complex comprising several studios and cultural actors or spaces in musicians’ homes. As this musician explained the need for spaces of contemplation and reflection:

> All the surrounding noise and all the people become distractions and therefore I need to get out of the studio sometimes. In fact, when you need peace and quiet you will get annoyed by the slightest distracting sound or even on someone passing by asking if you want coffee. I have rather made it my thing to go to the beach or, how bizarre it may sound, to the graveyard or the library, to think. In a way, you could say that I choose places which have some kind of rules for silence, as the library. And on those occasions I bring my digidrive [equipment for recording and playback] to think and listen. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

As a result, many musicians have started to locate creative processes to private studios or combining such studio facilities with studios in shared studio complexes. Some musicians at distance from metropolitan music environments and studio complexes have preferred to combine personal homes and studio environments to enhance work efficiency and “avoid spending an hour on a bus to get to the studio” (Interviewee 14 2013, male musician). New music technologies and the substantially reduced costs of music equipment have made it possible to set up recording studios in home environments (Greffe, 2004; Leyshon, 2001). Although musicians making use of private studios in this study pinpointed the advantages of short distances to elaborate on sudden music ideas, the blurred line between music work and privacy sometimes also created conflicts. As in the case where this musician combines home and studio environments:

\(^{13}\) An interesting note is that many musicians consider and entitle the amalgamation of musical ideas for “a process of experimentation.”
The main problem is that you cannot force creativity. It’s not like working nine to five in which I start working at a specific time and stop working when the kids come from school. I certainly try, but with poor results. In a way, it would have been better to have my studio at some distance from home, but considering my family situation and work efficiency, in the end I find this much better. But of course there are problems that sometimes arise when the kids want attention and you have to be focused on studio work. (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013)

Depending upon the specific location of the studio, if it is isolated to musicians’ homes or part multi-studio buildings, the need of other spaces for reflexive processes differed significantly. Libraries, parks and many other public spaces indeed serve as “thinking spaces” and facilitate processes of reflecting on music ideas. In particular those musicians combining studios and homes, “escaping” the studio environment during reflective processes was therefore very important to find undisturbed, and in particular uninterrupted, spaces for contemplation. In Bain’s (2004a) research on the mechanisms supporting the articulation of female artistic identities, such drawbacks of home studio conditions is highlighted, in particular the lack of independence due to family ties. Those few musicians in this study making use of private home studio environments frequently used public spaces such as libraries and art galleries as reflexive spaces since they offer quiet and peaceful settings.

However, music and in particular music ideas are not only generated in urban permanent spaces. Considering contemporary work fragmentation, music creativity and reflexivity need to be organised in new spaces. Thus, in the next section I examine the contemporary spaces for music production processes and how musicians perform reflexivity and creativity in such environments.

6.3. Creativity on tour: Coping with creative processes on mobile labour markets

While the preceding section suggests that studio spaces and permanent urban spaces are crucially important for reflexivity and creativity, such processes might find difficulties to flourish due the highly mobilised, flexible and fragmented new music economy. The opportunities for permanent locations of work and creativity in these environments are ill-suited to tackle contemporary working conditions and contemporary requirements of highly mobile labour. In order to stay competitive, support individual music careers and maintain positions in the music scenes, economic geographers have started to pinpoint the fact that musicians and other cultural workers are forced to move between locations and spaces in order to access job opportunities or
important information concerning work and employment (e.g. in Gill & Pratt, 2008; Hracs, 2011, Menger, 2006; Ross, 2008).

Although my findings show that musicians put a significant amount of effort into reorganising work in order to enable continuous periods of time to spend in studios since “it is how creativity is generated” (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013), the traditional work patterns sharply contrast with new requirements of work and employment and are put under fierce pressure from the scope and scale of contemporary approaches to work. As these musicians explained, such conflicts between preferred studio periods and requirements of mobility and temporary locations:

If I could choose, I’d rather stay in the studio than, as now, going for thirty additional days on the road. I know it’s not possible today and that it’s more difficult, for new musicians in particular, to earn enough money because of the tough competition. Personally, this development has resulted in more focused periods of studio work in order to be able to perform more, not only in Sweden but also in the European market, and just recently in the US. Of course this is what I want, but it takes a lot of time as well. […] But I cannot say that my way of producing music has changed, rather it has to be done during more focused periods of time. (Interviewee 22, male musician, 2013)

Another musician concluded:

At best, I can take notes, which I always have done. It’s more about being undisturbed if I have started something creative; I need the break to write music. The creative process needs certain time and that is the equation to solve actually – how do I find time for it? How do I solve it? I’ve gotten very close to getting burned out several times over the past few years because I get stressed out when I don’t find the time to do the main work of the profession anymore – creating music. Loads of gigs only to get the same earnings as ten years ago, performing several days a week even the “bad days,” too long distances to travel for just one gig. If you also add that I use 30% of my work time every week to apply for various cultural scholarships, you certainly must see the madness of the new music industry. (Interviewee 19, 2013, female musician)

Clearly, changing working conditions requires new work patterns adapted to the new music economy. In particular highly mobile labour markets forces music actors to explore new spaces for reflexive and creative processes. Musicians certainly need to reorganise their schedules and activities across time and space to enable efficient spatial configurations involving reflexive and creative processes. As demonstrated in previous sections, many musicians have started to cope with interactions and important network relations in different social spaces such as backstage areas or in various online communication spaces. However, as strongly suggested by the interviewees, the prerequisites for reflexivity and creativity are explicitly different compared to the realignment process of social ties and networking. To an important
extent, the processes of reflexivity and creativity involve various time aspects and necessitate "periods of undisturbance and uninterruption" which are perceived as non-transferable to other contexts. Thus the highlighted value of time spent in studio environments.

However, despite such efforts and strong preferences on locational aspects of work and employment, such features of the contemporary music industry necessitates the reconfiguration of work patterns and the involvement of work in multiple music geographies. Musicians’ everyday working lives revolve around the combination of multiple spaces of creative work, in both physical and online geographies and adding to the music spaces in urban metropolitan areas (Brennan-Horley, 2010).

Considering the much vaunted and highlighted entrepreneurial mode of work in contemporary cultural industries, traveling between music spaces is similar to corporeal travels regarding the similarities between modern music work and SMEs. In his research on the necessity of corporeal proximity and the associated conditions of traveling between places despite the opportunity to make use of technological achievements and online proximity, Urry (2002) argues that:

Travel occurs of course for many reasons. However, one unifying component is indicated by the term, corporeal travel. This highlights that travel is embodied and that as a result people are bodily in the same space as various others, including work-mates, business colleagues, friends, partner or family, or they bodily encounter some particular landscape or townscape, or are physically present at a particular live event. In other words, travel results in intermittent moments of physical proximity to particular peoples, places or events and in significant ways this proximity is felt to be obligatory, appropriate or desirable.

Thus, to cope with new requirements for work and creativity and the need to make work more efficient, musicians are necessitated to explore new spaces for processes of reflexivity and creativity.

In the next section, I examine such additional spaces of creative processes based on musicians’ experiences of various non-permanent spaces for work and creativity.

Beyond the club scenes: Inspiration and creative input at music festivals

As a result of hanging out in festival environments, many of the interviewees emphasised the “bombardment of impressions” and creative input as well as the wide array of ideas generated from such presence, in particular inspiration on how to combine the performance of music creativity and performance scenery. Most of such input is the result of spontaneous meetings although festival events also involve planned visits to other artists’ shows or
meetings with fans to get feedback and inspiration. Thus, many musicians combined scheduled “inputs” and spontaneous meetings with social actors during festivals in order to fulfil the need for idea generation.

However, despite opportunities of creative work in the backstage areas by making use of mobile studios at festivals, only a few musicians considered such creative settings necessary to support music creativity. The interviewed musicians identified a number of reasons for the disinterest in potential studio support at festivals. Firstly, mobile recording studios are still rare features of festivals and were, from the interviewees’ point of view, perceived to be too expensive for festival organisers to become a permanent feature of festivals; “they are rather a one-time possibility […] and I doubt it will become a common phenomenon (Interviewee 15 2013, male musician). It is even suggested that ”a fully equipped studio” is a waste of economic resources which preferably can be used to improve the specific festival, in particular to book more artists.

Secondly, musicians rarely spend much time at each and every festival and find it increasingly difficult to allocate time and resources to on-site studio work. Festivals are essentially face-to-face modes of networking in order to maintain network relations and, in particular, spaces for transfers of network resources; they served above all as crucially important performance venues and serve as hotspots for negotiating job opportunities and other music work practicalities. Thus, there is little time left to spend on festival studio work.

Under the current conditions of work and employment, studio creativity on festival sites was not prioritised due to hectic and intense work schedules. Indeed, even those reaping the benefits of “the festival studios” considered it unnecessary and only make use of certain equipment “since it is there any- way”:

I have used a festival studio once and actually only encountered such studios on one occasion; it is not a common service yet. Also, I only used it to put together a few bits and pieces that I recorded on my Z4 [handy recorder] which happened to end up slightly noisy on the recorder. It’s actually nothing I really need or will prioritise at festivals. Still, it’s great service. (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician)

Thirdly, festivals do not exhibit the characteristics of calm and quiet necessary for creative processes. Although festivals contribute greatly to creative input due to richness of music performances the opportunities, “to sum up such ideas into music” (Interviewee 3, male musician, 2013) requires time and spaces for undisturbance and uninterrupted. Considering work schedules and the disadvantage of time constraints, such requirements of creative processes are difficult to achieve due to working conditions at hand. As a result, only a few musicians in this study have started to make use of mobile studios at music festivals.
Additionally, regarding reflexive processes at music festivals and considering time constraints for creative work, none of this study’s interviewees found it possible to reflect on impressions and ideas on-site due to lack of time and spaces allowing for contemplation.

Creativity on the go: Reflexive and creative processes in traveling spaces

With regard to the intensified mobility of creativity on music labour markets, work places have transformed into non-fixed “office spaces” in which workers communicate and co-ordinate tasks and projects through increasingly new innovations in communication technologies – laptops, smartphones, tablet devices and digital organisers supporting various communication modes such as e-mail, voice-over services and instant text messages and, in addition, various computer-based music technologies (Florida & Jackson, 2010; Thrift, 2000; Urry, 2003).

Considering the working conditions at hand for highly mobile labour, spending much time traveling between temporary locations for intense face-to-face interactions and the online spaces managed by using a variety of information and communication technologies, planning and executing reflexive and creative processes can be located “in between spaces” of non-fixed locations (Urry, 2012).

Contemporary music technology certainly allow for music being created while traveling thus producing different mobile studio spaces to perform music activities. Therefore, working under great time pressure results in that musicians embrace new spaces for creative activities in order to benefit from the increasing time spent on traveling between locations (Thrift, 2000; Urry, 2003).

Many of the interviewees have started to identify the opportunities to make use of traveling spaces for reflexive and creative purposes. Due to increasing competition for jobs in Sweden, many musicians goes beyond the Swedish music labour market and have started to seek out international music labour markets for work and employment. Considering the increasing number of travels between various work sites due to growing spatial distances “from home base,” an increasing amount of work time is spent in airplanes, buses, trains and other modes of transport. In addition, technological achievements result in faster modes of transports and facilitate face-to-face preferences between social actors. At the same time, such technologies simultaneously allow for connections with at-distant actors thus speeding up work processes in different projects (Urry, 2012). Most importantly, such innovations have contributed to opportunities of music productions while traveling between places. Therefore, these new studio spaces serve as efficient workspaces and supplement the reflexive and creative processes performed in permanent urban spaces.
However, performing creative work in traveling environments also involve demands for new music technology adapted to traveling spaces, in particular conditions for music production and the process of recording music. As many musicians pinpointed, different music genres require different types of workspaces and not all music genres are suitable for “traveling creativity.” As this musician put it:

Personally, because I’m into the lo-fi, guitar-based pop genre, I find it difficult to be creative while traveling for practical reasons. However, I can imagine that it is very different if you are into other kinds of music such as the electronic music genres. They may find it easier. (Interviewee 22, male musician, 2013)

Many interviewees emphasised the problems of practicalities of traveling workspaces especially those dedicated to certain music genres requiring acoustic instruments. These musicians are rather faced with the disadvantages of not being able to use their primary music equipment while traveling or if they did that it would probably be perceived as disturbing for other travellers. Although some of the pop and rock artists in this study have started to use new technology and, thus, making it possible to engage in creative processes in traveling mode, the vast majority of these musicians at best make notes on new music ideas:

Maybe I can record simple piano loops which eventually could be converted to guitar chords – it has happened on rare occasions – but it will be a sort of a problem right from the beginning since I usually don’t use electronic equipment to create music. […] Of course I bring my laptop while traveling between gigs, but I mainly use it to listen to new music and get some inspiration to new ideas, not to create music. I prefer just to relax in my seat and listen and/or read a book while traveling, nothing else. (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2012)

This musician put it:

You hang around the band and play cards with band members when you’re going around the globe. Maybe you have time to reflect on a few [music] ideas but personally there is too much going on around the shows or the tour to find time for something else. When it comes to music, it’s almost only about rehearsals prior to various shows. […] You actually don’t have time to reflect much on new ideas before you get back to the studio. (Interviewee 8, 2013)

Indeed, the vast majority of the interviewed musicians found it difficult to engage in creative processes while traveling, in particular regarding music practices such as the recording phase of music creativity; “it’s not so simple to pick up the guitar while being on a train and start playing some chords” (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician).
However, some musicians have started to cope with these conditions for work and creativity thus they enable efficient work schedules by performing various music-related tasks in mobile spaces. In contrast to the statements on difficulties for performing pop and rock creativity in traveling spaces due to practical difficulties, musicians involved in various electronic music scenes found it much easier to perform creative work during traveling conditions. Because of portable and lightweight music technology, electronic music artists are unlimited in time and space to perform music creativity in non-fixed spaces and benefit from the contemporary working conditions at hand. As this musician explained:

You only need a laptop and some software; then there is no barrier to process ideas while traveling between gigs. Sometimes it's difficult to focus because you're tired of never-ending travel and you need to relax but clearly it has facilitated work. Now I’m able to head back home with several nearly completed ideas instead of only a few loops. Sure, it’s not the ideal workplace but once you get used to it, you can do a lot more than before. (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician)

Clearly, although hectic touring schedules and the wide range of tasks to be carried out in between shows, electronic music artist benefited from the opportunity to work in multiple sites. Indeed, recent research emphasise such advantages of new music technology. Hracs (2012) suggest “that D.I.Y. musicians can operate anywhere they can find a laptop computer and a decent Internet connection”; Du Gay & Pryke (2002) demonstrate how work is facilitated in multiple spaces due to “plug-in points for laptops and mobile working from indeterminate ‘non-places’”; and Rallet & Torre (2009), finally, argue for the advantages of non-fixed spaces and multiple connections during travel, contributing to work efficiency “thanks to the rapid diffusion of mobile communication tools [...] and to the wireless connectivity of these devices.”

In their research on the electronic music genre drum & bass, Fraser and Ettlinger (2008) conclude:

The world of D&B consists of multiple sites and assemblages, fixed points as well as fleeting, temporary locations in which innovation occurs and value is generated and then valorised. Innovation, for instance, occurs in recording studios in a producer’s home or in the office of a D&B record company. These are mostly fixed in space–time, but music production software also allows for music-making on-the-go, for example on a laptop computer whilst traveling. Some collaborators meet up and make music in a particular studio; others collaborate online by sending sounds, beats, or tracks to each other over the Internet.
Therefore, as a result of innovations in music technology, musicians can employ various music technologies while traveling and enjoy unprecedented spatial freedom in creative processes.

However, because of different practices and perceptions of work and creativity and the interrelationships between space and creative processes, only few musicians in this study made use of traveling spaces for reflexive and creative processes. Clearly, those electronic music producers growing accustomed to creative work “on-the-go” can speed-up work and creativity by using new technology. However, this also raises the question on how non-electronic musicians perform creative processes while being on tour. In the next section of the chapter, I explore additional traveling spaces, permanent by nature but temporary in context.

On-site work: Performing music creativity in fixed touring spaces

Due the characteristics of the new music economy, some musicians have started to seek out on-site spaces, similar to those found in musicians’ “home bases.” In addition to the already examined festival backstage spaces, on-site spaces such as local recording studios, hotel rooms, libraries and all the aforementioned informal spaces used in their home bases for contemplating and reflecting on music ideas, represent potential work spaces in these temporary locations of work and creativity.

For some musicians, these on-site spaces serve as opportunities for conducting creative work and “experimenting” with new music ideas:

I really love to have those hours on my own at the hotel room. It’s soothing and gives me time to reflect on small details in my music or time to experiment with new ideas. You only need a guitar and some peace and quiet for a few hours to bring half-finished tracks home with you. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

This musician explained the opportunities to perform creative work while being on tour:

You shouldn’t exaggerate how much time you actually can spend working on music while being tour. You need to rehearse, sound check, meet fans, meet other important people, participate in press conferences, mentally prepare yourself for the show and somewhere in between you may need to eat and sleep. There’s not much time left for anything else. But yes, sometimes it happens that I’ll get time to bring a few [music] ideas together. In fact, some songs are even products of hotel visits. Maybe it will be forced upon you, to be more creative while being on tour, in particular if you consider that we need to perform shows more often. (Interviewee 3 2013, male musician)
According to many of the interviewees, touring schedules rarely allow for longer periods of time spent on creative work nor provide for contemplative sessions and opportunities of being undisturbed. Considering the large number of creative and non-creative tasks to be carried out at the various touring sites, in particular by unsupported independent musicians, these often serve as barriers to the opportunities of engaging in reflexive and creative work. Thus, some musicians have started to make use of new spaces for creative work in order to cope with comprehensive tour schedules.

Under these working conditions, it is also important to emphasise the significant difference between established musicians and independent musicians regarding the opportunities to enjoy technical support and stage crews, resulting in distinct conditions for on-site creativity. As pinpointed by a professional musician “I have some time to spend on my own since I don’t need to be around at soundcheck […] I have my stage crew” (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013) which allow for time being spent on experimenting with music ideas and reflection on music. However, my findings clearly suggest that only a few of the interviewees are supported by crews and therefore can devote such time resources to reflexive and creative processes. Many independent musicians argue that “when you finally get some time off you rather go for a walk or read, maybe call some friends” (Interviewee 13 2013, male musician). Therefore, hectic and intense touring schedules and the various tasks to be carried out by many musicians themselves result in that unscheduled breaks in work are rather spent on leisure or relaxation activities.

However, some of the interviewed independent musicians acknowledged the dilemma of far more live shows and/or at greater spatially distances, thus they stressed the potential need to make use of locally fixed touring spaces in order to speed-up work processes and to reduce costs. In a few cases in this study, musicians have even booked local studio spaces to record “sudden flashes of music ideas” in order to explicitly explore the opportunities to make work more efficient:

During the past few years we have used on-site studios at three or four occasions especially when being on long tours. It’s a new thing actually and hadn’t happened previously, but it’s the result of going for longer tours and more gigs and in many different countries. Therefore we had to start thinking on how to fix the problem of less studio time at home. So for the moment it’s some kind of a test to see if it works out for us. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

My findings however suggest that such “tests” or explorations of local studio environments in order to speed up work efficiency and facilitate creative processes of music work yet should be considered exceptions; musicians need to consider work efficiency in relation to the added costs.

In addition to the strategy of hiring locally fixed touring studios, some of the independent musicians with low or no budgets to spend on similar strate-
gies instead make use of “exchanges of favours”; they borrow equipment and recording studios, and even sleeping facilities, from music actors within networks in return of such favours in the future. By making use of network relations, the independent musicians can reduce costs and in particular draw the benefits of on-site studios and music equipment. When earnings from gigs have been greatly reduced (Hracs, 2011; Kindstrand, 2013) due to fierce competition of jobs and saturated labour markets, there is a growing need to plan gigs and tours economically efficient. Since many musicians and music labour markets are connected through global online networks it was argued that musicians make use global networks and connections built on “bartering” which creates opportunities for artists and bands with low or no budgets to face the challenges of added risk and economic uncertainty involved in international tours.

One of the independent musicians considered such networks to be similar to global backpacker networks connecting members in global communities of travellers and providing for free accommodation:

It’s similar to “couch surfing” which you can use when you travel around the globe, but between musicians. There is this network [of musicians] on Facebook, and I think on LinkedIn as well, where you can hook up and exchange services. […] To me [an independent musician] it’s crucial; otherwise it wouldn’t have been possible to go for some gigs in Berlin, London, Paris and Brussels. Today, I can go to Berlin for just a single gig since I don’t need to pay for a hotel. The earnings from the gig usually correspond to the costs to get there. (Interviewee 19 2013, female musician)

Clearly, considering the opportunities of combining global online networks and relations, “low-budget” independent musicians found it possible to make international tours thus resulting in opportunities to access international labour markets, new consumers and fan bases and job opportunities.

Considering the globally networked music society and the opportunities for broader labour markets due to exchanges of services supporting international and economically efficient tour schedules, the question of exploring online communities for creative purposes remains. Therefore, in the final section of this chapter, I examine the opportunities of networked creativity and to what extent musicians make use of online relationships to collaborate on music projects.

### 6.4. Online creativity: Creative processes in online communities

While creativity in face-to-face environments and fixed spaces roughly exhibit similar features and conditions for engaging in networking, work practices and creative processes, online communities are distinct in many as-
pects. First, musicians have to consider the barriers to build trust-based and collaborative network relations with potential partners at distance and need to ignore the added risks and uncertainties of collaborations in online communities (Song et al., 2007; Walther et al., 2005). Second, as outlined in the chapter on networking, online networking necessitate continual updating of technical skills in order to master all the processes of learning related to new peer-to-peer software and social online communities. This also involves to cope with the dynamics of online spaces because “the important information seems to ‘jump’ between websites” (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician) due to popularity and accessibility. Moreover, it is suggested that analyses of interactions in online social communities need to consider generational differences exhibiting distinct work practices and thus adds an age component to work and creativity in these environments.

As a starting point of a presentation of online creativity, a major drawback of identifying online creativity needs to be explained. One of the major complexities when identifying creative online environments is that many of the interviewed musicians found it very difficult to pinpoint creativity in online communities and to what extent such interaction is creative in the sense of studio creativity because “using software and computers in music production cannot be considered being creative on the Internet – or is it?” (Interviewee 2, male musician, 2013). More often than not, musicians in this study referred to various online work practices but many found it increasingly difficult to point out the role of online communities for creative work. Therefore, this section elaborates on musicians’ experiences of online creativity and to what extent they found it similar to studio creativity.

Considering technological opportunities for carry out various work practices on the Internet, Brown (2012), Hracs (2011) and Lysloff (2003) pinpoint the wide range of online spaces and their different characteristics in studies on online music communities. Some communities are textually based being limited to e-mail lists, discussion groups, for instance in Facebook, and non-verbal peer-to-peer software or apps such as Messenger, WhatsApp and Google Hangouts. Others allow for face-to-face discussions using visual software, in, for instance, Skype or ooVoo, allowing for the transmission of visual impressions, in particular body language and gestures which facilitate trust-building (Bathelt & Turi, 2011; Walther et al., 2005).

Lysloff (2003) argue for the opportunities offered by various music online communities allowing for listening to excerpts of new songs and being part of instant feedback communities which serve as inspirational input to music creativity. With respect to the creative processes of music work in this study, those interviewees engaged in online creativity mainly used Dropboxes or SoundCloud to share music ideas and experiments – songs – with collaborators and friends to get feedback or the opportunity to add music elements to ideas. As one particular musician put it:
I frequently use Dropbox and SoundCloud to share music files with friends who can download files and add some elements in their studios. It works great when you live at a distance from each other. However, it also necessitates that we have compatible software in order to be able to collaborate. (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician)

However, the same musician added:

Although all these software programs make it possible to collaborate with friends in various locations, it’s so much easier to just get together for a weekend to create something in the studio instead. It takes too much time to discuss ideas and songs on the Internet, so sooner or later you will find it annoying. […] You don’t actually make music production easier by using Internet solutions, but when there’s no other way you just do it.

In fact, most of the interviewees making use of online creativity emphasised the constraints of efficient collaborations when employing Internet options. In some accounts, technical difficulties hampered music collaborations. For instance, musicians pinpointed the difficulties of transferring equipment patches\(^{14}\) creating additional work to solve technical problems; some musicians emphasised distribution problems of sharing music files involving a combination of large sizes of digital music files and, depending on geographical location, the absence of high-speed broadband connections, in particular when music files are distributed globally; yet others highlight insecurities of engaging in file sharing in online communities because of the uncertainties to prevent access to “music productions under way” (for example in Manning, 2000; McDonald, 2013), thus increasing the risk of music files being leaked on the Internet before official releases. As a result, although many musicians recognised the opportunities of online collaborations in the context of music creativity by employing online communities, the difficult conditions under which creative work is carried out and the uncertainties associated with online collaborations lead, to some extent, to musicians being cautious about engaging in online projects.

However, with respect to specific creative processes my findings also show that the role of online communities and websites serve some important functions of creativity; particularly in two ways they affect idea generation and inspiration, explicitly as input for writing lyrics. This musician explains the benefits of using various websites in search of inspiration for lyrics:

They are great for finding ideas for writing lyrics. For many years I used a combination of impressions from the “real world” and finding nicely put together sentences in various magazines. But on the Internet, you get access to so much more information that can be used for writing lyrics. For example, if

\(^{14}\) For instance, when using electronic equipment such as synthesizers, a patch is a sound setting. In various music computer software patches are similar to “add-ons,” that is specific sound settings added to the original software.
I want to use the word “insane” I just Google it and see what’s turning up. (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician)

Clearly, as input for this specific part of music production, websites offer a wide range of opportunities for finding inspiration through texts and visual impressions not possible to experience in specific musicians’ “neighbourhoods.”

Although some of the interviewees highlighted the role of Internet in the creation of lyrics or as contributor to creative input in the production of music, the vast majority rarely considered the Internet and its social music communities as being part of the creative process, rather they are intermediaries and distribution channels for sharing information and knowledge. This musician explained the blurred line between creative environments and why online communities are not part of creative processes:

It’s difficult to think of it as something specifically creative. Sure, I use it to make music with other people but to me the Internet is an intermediary. We share the files we are working with and then go back to our studios. We don’t work with music on the Internet. (Interviewee 6 2013, male musician)

Another musician concluded:

Music is created in the studio, no matter whatever anybody says about “producing music on the Internet.” There is actually no software to make music on the Internet. […] If we divide creative work into those parts you did, I rather say that the only creative activity I may perform on the Internet is to get some inspiration by watching YouTube or listening to music, but there’s nothing especially creative about that. (Interviewee 20 2013, female musician)

Clearly, in terms of music experimentation and producing songs, online collaborations on its own are not considered creative because shared components of music collaborations need to be processed in studio environments since “they exhibit the core of music production” (Interviewee 9 2013, male musician). Such considerations of creativity in online spaces are supported by Greffe’s (2004) study on artistic work and digital technology. Greffe conclude that although digital technology has reorganised artists’ lives, the impact of technology on creative work is very small. Such conclusion also applies to the netnographic studies in closed Facebook groups. Although processes of feedback and commenting to some extent contributed to reshape common music ideas, none of the participating musicians considered these groups to be subjects for music creativity. Rather than being ”creative” opportunities these communities were primarily used to communicate information concerning practicalities such as deadlines, technical support and legal issues and above all served to “share documents to be signed.” (Interviewee 8 2013, male musician)
Although one musician emphasised the evolution of a wide range of online music software such as Soundation\textsuperscript{15} and that such developments may play more important roles for work processes in the future, creativity is strongly associated with specific work spaces, in particular home studios. Therefore, to conclude, although online communities facilitate transfers of music ideas, the musicians in this study rather consider these communities to serve as intermediaries of the administration of music creativity.

6.5. Summary: Where to foster creativity

In the exploration on the how and where music workers perform – and prefer to perform – their creative work, it is evident that reconfigured working conditions combined with technological achievements in, above all, communication technologies have generated new opportunities as well as new challenges for contemporary Swedish musicians. With regard to different aspects of the creative process, musicians clearly need specific environments allowing for undisturbed reflexivity before they can engage in experimenting with music productions. Also, as has been suggested by many musicians, the “atmosphere” of personal studio spaces is a crucial component of reflexive and creative processes and, therefore, serves to enhance preferences on location.

However, mobile work lives and increasing job spatiality also affect the possibility of locating creative efforts in traditional permanent settings. As a result of new work patterns and intense work schedules, musicians need to explore new spaces to carry out creative work in order to cope with the spatial dynamics in the new music economy. Nonetheless, attempts on putting creativity to work in contemporary touring spaces such as travelling compartments and in on-site spaces or by making use of digital technologies to engage in creative processes have yet to overcome barriers of practicality time limitations. Indeed, musicians in certain musical genres, in particular electronic music, certainly find it possible to create “bits and pieces” of music while being on tour. However, to finalise music experiments the vast majority of musicians need time for reflexivity and to be undisturbed for certain periods of time. Therefore, music studios are still suggested to be considerably important spaces for musicians’ creative processes.

Moreover, although many of the interviewed musicians emphasised the possibility of performing online creativity, in particular when experimenting with music, they above all focused on the downsides of such “experiments” compared to studio creativity. Rather, most online communities should merely be considered as intermediators of creative work generated in traditional creative studio environments. Such attitudes to online opportunities thus enhance the need of creative time in music studios.

\textsuperscript{15} Soundation Studio is a music software in which musicians can create music online.
Therefore, although some have started to “try out” combinations of touring spaces and online spaces in order to speed up the creative processes, the vast majority still emphasise the needs of specific work spaces to nurture artistic quests for undisturbed and uninterrupted creativity.
7. The music geographies of work and creativity

-Conclusions-

My key aim in this dissertation has been to explore how new conditions for artistic work practices and creative processes have affected the music geographies for performing such processes, and the roles of these geographies for Swedish musicians’ work patterns. It was suggested that contemporary music workers face the challenges of increasingly fragmented work lives due to large-scale changes in the music industry such as technological progress affecting traditional business models. As a result, musicians have started to pay much attention to new geographies for music work and creativity in order to cope with increasing fragmentation of work practices across time and space.

The notion of growing importance of space draws upon musicians’ experiences of how and where crucial resources traditionally are exchanged and the impact of shifts in work patterns on the opportunities to spend time in these spaces. In the contemporary music industry, musicians are faced with the challenges of performing nearly everything themselves. The erosion of traditional business models combined with decreasing earnings from live performances have resulted in growing uncertainties and increasing income irregularities for many musicians. Faced with these challenges and added responsibilities, musicians need to balance competing interests in terms of the distribution of time in order to make their work more efficient. In doing so, many musicians have started to seek-out new opportunities to improve work efficiency and possibilities to spend time on music creativity.

In order to discuss these new pressures on work, and based on musicians experiences of the structural changes of the music industry, my aim was to explore which spaces musicians employ in order to cope with new working conditions as well as the roles of such spaces for the tasks and processes involved in work and creativity. Considering that early results highlighted a growing importance of existing music geographies in festival backstage areas as well as new spaces of work based on digital communication technologies, I explicitly paid attention to various microgeographies in these environments and their roles and functions for different practices and processes.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will continue the examination of the conclusion by discussing the roles of these new music geographies.
7.1. The diversity of network ties

Networking is a key factor in the new music economy due to transferred responsibilities for creating individual music careers. While connections, distribution channels, jobs and knowledge processes were supported by record labels and managements during the “record label” model, contemporary independent musicians need to cope with these responsibilities individually. Some musicians can afford to outsource services to booking agencies and managements due to relatively stable income from semi-regular music work. However, the increasingly growing sector of independent musicians with no or very low budgets who cannot afford the help needed to find alternative ways of support to cope with, for instance, job searching and updating of skills. As emphasised in this study and in line with much research on the symbolic industries, personal networks are the key factor to cope with contemporary music work.

For most of the independent musicians not enjoying the support of music institutions in this study, there is a growing need to get involved in networks and the flows of job information and knowledge support. Temporary co-locations at music festivals certainly allow for being exposed to a diverse set of connections and favourable circumstances for access to those important resources contributing to initiate and maintain music careers. As my findings show, and by comparing established musicians and “the independents” in this study, I will indeed argue that the latter have adopted a clear strategy for performing various tasks such as meetings during their visits at different temporary gatherings. Such strategic thinking is gaining more attention since “it is at these gatherings you may get a foothold in various social circles [networks] and improve opportunities to get gigs” (Interviewee 12 2013, female musician). That is, temporary environments clearly serve as hubs for network connections and important career resources.

However, although many musicians emphasised the benefits of multiple connections in temporary environments, the major share of these connections are confined within existing personal networks. Time is limited, and therefore many of the established musicians rarely engage in network relations in temporary settings. Rather they make use of the network relations which have been established in contexts allowing for repeated interaction, preferably the traditional spaces in metropolitan areas. Although Swedish musicians consider each other helpful rather than competitors of resources, due to fierce time pressures in temporary environments many musicians cannot find time to engage in communications “with everyone.” Bearing the burden of intense work schedules for musicians in general and the fact that the growing pool of independent musicians finds it difficult to access certain face-to-face locations, in particular concerning female musicians, I argue that many musicians transfer network processes to online communities, in their struggle to get access to important resource spaces. Moreover, female
musicians at large have started to make use of online networking due to growing exclusion from crucial spaces of network resources and marketing opportunities. Thus they have started to transfer much networking and the flows of information and knowledge to online communities in order to help each other out with promotion and job seeking.

Although some musicians in my study emphasise experiences of drawbacks of such relations, causing economic problems, these new intermediaries also exhibit a wide range of opportunities and open access to network resources which can be used to build personal networks. Since online communities exhibit both permanent and temporary features, albeit in non-physical forms, and allows for communication in “just-in-time” fashion, some musicians have started to circumvent access-related difficulties and initiated network relations in online community spaces. When considering career stage, age and pressures of coping with intense working schedules there are indeed opportunities to draw the benefits of a multitude of weak links in the music industry, in particular when such online links are connected into global networks reaching out to new labour markets.

Considering these new networking environments and various quality aspects of these contexts, it clearly suggests a distinction in network relations depending on career stage and gender. The established musicians supported by music institutions and no incentives for engaging in new work modes rely on strong ties and familiar connections while independent musicians with limited important network connections transfers networking efforts to online environments in an attempt to circumvent the difficulties of access to networks with crucial resources. That is, established musicians prefer the communality mode of networking while the independent sector is directed towards networks of connectivities.

7.2. The spatialisation of work practices

The progress of contemporary music work has to a considerable extent emphasised the burden of many new responsibilities for individual musicians. The reconfiguration of the music industry has resulted in competing interests of valuable time and stress the need of how, when and where these new burdens of added work practices can be performed efficiently to allow for time being allocated to creative processes, preferably in studio environments.

In the context of non-creative work, the musicians in this study have identified temporary gatherings in festival backstage areas and online communities as important ecologies for coping with the work practices in the contemporary music profession. According to the interviewees, these ecologies are manifested in different geographies, playing distinct roles in the performance of various responsibilities and allowing for exchanges of crucial network
resources. As my findings demonstrate, such ecologies and the associated spaces support musicians, in particular in three aspects of non-creative work.

Backstage buzzing for jobs

With the exception of music production, the most important task is clearly the never-ending search for new job music jobs (and to some extent also secondary jobs). Job searching is the common denominator in my findings regardless of music career stage. Although supported by music institutions, professional musicians compete with each other about the best time slots at festivals while the independents put considerable efforts in squeezing themselves in the backstage areas as well as scanning the wide array of Internet opportunities in order to get foothold in music labour markets and establish music careers.

In contrast to online job searching, job offers in backstage areas are perceived to be professional and involves reputational gains which can result in more jobs. In particular independent musicians with no support of record labels or booking agencies consider the backstage buzz crucial in order to access networks and flows of information that ultimately result in job opportunities. Although backstage areas for long have involved job transfers, the reconfiguration of music industry have brought with it a huge and diverse set of music professionals as well as new social actors seeking out these spaces to participate in the backstage buzz in order to make use of network resources at hand. Many of the interviewees emphasised that short physical distances and “just-in-time” accessibility to a wider range of social actors also facilitate instant face-to-face connections and opportunities to “get to know” specific contacts under conditions of relaxation and in spaces similar to those found in traditional interaction spaces, thus facilitating trustful relationships.

Moreover, although ambitions are focused to primarily find music jobs such as gigs and album projects referring to music creativity, the presence of many new social actors also contribute to new types of secondary jobs. The vast majority of musicians in the Swedish music industry is dependent on secondary jobs. Such jobs are often by nature non-creative and involve work at bars, restaurants and schools. However, the growing presence of a wide range of business actors from other industries, such as the fashion industry exploring the opportunities for collaborations in order to market product have resulted in many opportunities to access secondary labour markets. As many independent musicians state, these new job opportunities draw on creative characteristics although they do not specifically support preferred career paths; they however serve as “better options” compared to ordinary secondary jobs.

Considering these various job opportunities combined, the face-to-face environments in festival backstage spaces have clearly started to support
independent musicians’ efforts to find new jobs and can thus serve as important intermediaries between musicians and labour markets.

Promote yourself to success?

The evolution of the new music economy has at large involved an enormous increase in music workers with ambitions to “make it to the top.” Due to the excess supply of music workers, there is particular pressure to “stand out in the crowd” and reach out to music fans. Music festivals have always been arenas for music promotion through live shows and fan communication and serve to enhance artist brands; they serve to support musicians’ efforts of building sustainable music careers.

However, many independent musicians are faced with the challenges of being excluded from important promotion opportunities and need to relocate efforts of reaching their audiences. Instead, online communities have started to become crucial spaces of artist branding by strategically highlighting important gatekeepers such as music journalists to reach fan bases and gain reputation. By employing a wide range of strategies in social online communities, in particular the distribution of music for promotional purposes, some independent musicians in this study have been able to reach out to fans and important connections which indirectly can result in access to crucial network resources and job opportunities. Most importantly, many independent interviewees emphasised the opportunities of gaining access to larger labour markets by connections in a multitude of globally linked networks. As demonstrated in this study, such connections have enabled musicians to find jobs that otherwise would have been unreachable without the support of managers and record labels. Indeed, in a few cases these strategies even have contributed to transform independent musicians into fully-fledged music professionals with access to international labour markets.

Although online communities contribute to promotion and, indirectly, new ways of building music careers, musicians also need to consider how to balance time between employing a multitude of online communities and time for music creativity. Using too many online communities may result in time pressures and affect the possibility to make work more efficient. Therefore, for many musicians in this study it is vital to identify which spaces are “best practices” to support the ambition of allocating more time on music creativity. When options are few, budgets are low and access to network resources is limited, these new arenas for performing work practices can indeed support many musicians’ attempts of building individual music careers.
Learning in online environments and “hands-on” backstage workshops

The reorganisation of the music industry not only resulted in transfers of responsibilities and fierce time pressures on musicians. Most importantly, the lack of support from music institutions also necessitates musicians to find support in knowledge processes in order to update skills and competencies. Since the music industry is in constant change and no longer is the exclusive arena for learning and training, musicians need to draw on personal networks to gain access to learning processes in order to update their skills.

Although music festivals to some extent have started to offer workshops on hands-on skills and expertise, for instance learning new software, their roles for musicians’ learning processes are marginal relative to the opportunities of finding support in online communities. Indeed, the very few interviewees engaging in backstage workshops find such effort much supportive and an opportunity to, for example, test new music technology with the help of experts. However, as a result of intense work schedules musicians cannot find time to participate in workshops because of many other occupational tasks to perform at festivals. In festival backstage areas musicians are first and foremost engaged in negotiating new relationships and networking on music jobs.

My findings clearly show instead that many musicians have started to draw the benefits of personal networks in online communities. Specific interests groups in LinkedIn or personal exchanges in closed Facebook groups involving both familiar and unfamiliar connections behind at-distant computer screens serve musicians with updating of skills and competencies. In fact, some music actors also circumvent gatekeepers by supporting each other within bartering systems and offering support in many different knowledge areas.

Considering these opportunities of finding help and support in learning issues based on networking in online global online communities, many independent musicians can most likely draw some benefits of exploring these different environments. In fact, with regard to time pressures, barriers to get access to important face-to-face arenas of network resources and longer periods of touring, these online learning communities can support independent musicians regardless of their geographic location by employing mobile technologies. Therefore, despite difficulties of accessing more professional environments due to exclusion and lack of personal network relations in the music industry, employing the online model can contribute to learning support and new skills. Thus, independent musicians can cope with difficulties of updating skills and knowledge by making use of various online communities.
7.3. The need for specific creative contexts

Creative processes have long been associated with urban contexts because they serve as large pools of cultural actors and important supporting music institutions and infrastructures. Studio, bars, clubs, cafés, libraries and parks are some of the geographies representing spaces of music creativity and serve different functions for specific components of creative work. As emphasised by many musicians in this study, some spaces constitute specific environments for idea generation and inspiration; other contexts are important for reflexive work and the “processing” of music ideas; yet other contexts, specifically studio environments, support the experimenting process and new music productions. Taken together, these spaces play the crucial roles of bridging components of music creativity into new music productions.

Despite that musicians are subject to reconfigured working standards causing pressures for, amongst all, longer periods of touring and requiring flexible approaches to music work, my findings clearly demonstrate the need of specific contexts in order to generate creativity. Although creativity in, for instance, hotel rooms, on-site studios and online communities have to some extent served as supplementary spaces of creative work, many musicians strongly emphasised the importance of traditional contexts in order to perform creative work.

Above all, musicians are dependent upon the exploration of environments which fulfil the need of highly diverse creative processes. Indeed, distinct environments play different roles for the components of creative work. Although inspiration and idea generation find considerable support in the temporary spaces of music festivals, the processes of reflexivity and experimenting on music evidently rests on specific contexts in which these elements can be nurtured and allowed to thrive. As highlighted by mostly all of the interviewed musicians, the studio in itself is important because it contributes to specific “atmospheres” and “feelings” serving as impressions to processes of reflexivity and composing (experimenting). These specific conditions and “feelings” are hampered in mobile and online studio spaces because such spaces cannot fulfil the need of each of the components needed for creative outcome. As some musicians emphasise on the complexity of creativity, ideas, reflexivity and experimenting taken apart cannot create music products because these elements are dependent on contexts and circumstances.

Moreover, the need for specific environments suggests a need for proximity. To be able to coordinate the elements of music production, musicians need to alternate between idea generation in clubs, reflexivity both in studios and public spaces and experimenting in the studio. As shown in the case of musicians co-locating to studio complexes, there are short distances between the these spaces. Studios allow for experimenting and reflexivity as well as close proximity to reflexive spaces in the cases where musicians need calm
environments to reflect on ideas, as well as feedback and idea generation within the studio complex. Such conditions for music creativity can therefore enhance the specific conditions under which creativity needs to be performed.

In contrast, the potentiality of spaces conforming to mobile work lives and comprehensive touring is subject to many barriers. For instance, there are many practical difficulties of employing travelling compartments; time pressures from touring schedules and the performance of many non-creative tasks hamper opportunities to engage in mobile studios; technical difficulties in online collaborations serve as barriers to creative work – if they even should be considered creative; and above all, time pressures combined with low or no budget support add to the intensity of touring and do not allow for longer visits during which musicians can make use of on-site creativity.

Considering the specific conditions for performing music creativity and the diffusion of creative components in temporary, mobile and online environments my findings suggest that musicians to a great extent prioritise studio creativity.

However, this also raises the question if it is unlikely to perform music creativity in those new spaces of work. Although the vast majority of musicians with much effort and planning locate to studio environments, some musicians investing much effort to find their way into music labour markets have started to adapt to these new spaces in order to find time for creative work. Some independent musicians in this study have started to make use of travelling spaces as well as on-site location. Considering the opportunities for participating in global networks and greater access to international labour markets even for musicians with low or no budgets, these new spaces may gain importance. Therefore, it cannot be ignored that the role of these new spaces for music creativity can grow and become more important in the future.

7.4. Concluding notes: The future of music spaces

Considering the major leaps towards ”omnipresent connectedness” induced by new information and communication technologies and combined with faster transport means, social actors can be everywhere at any time. Put into the new organisational context of the music industry, the argument is even more valid seeing that the developments in work patterns among Swedish musicians are becoming more spatially dispersed simultaneously as they cluster in online worlds. Indeed, the growing reservoir of fresh talents contributing to excess supply of music actors can in the light of new technologies be explained by shorter distances and new opportunities for promoting and distributing music to fans. There are undoubtedly some contemporary artists that would not have made it to the top under the record label model,
but have found new ways into the music industry with the help of digital technologies and strategic marketing in online forums.

However, notwithstanding all these means leading to new opportunities for building music careers, one interesting point is that the need for geographical proximity is still a key factor in music work. Musicians clearly remain dependent on fixed locations and specific contexts to fulfil the needs of the complex composition of creativity and the input to these components from participating in the environments co-creating such input. Metropolitan spaces and traditional negotiation contexts in locally-rooted environments still seem to be crucial contributors to contemporary music work. When musicians are squeezed out of these environments due to conflicts with intensified work schedules, the festival backstage areas in some cases serve as supplementary spaces because they exhibit some similar characteristics as preferred environments in fixed locations. However, considering the intensity of contemporary music careers they only serve specific tasks of music work and rarely fulfil the needs of creative work or as learning environments.

In addition, of major interest and raising many questions for the future of musicians work patterns, is the new division of music labour that seemingly organise musicians in different network ecologies. While established musicians access the dense artist-centric face-to-face locations in festival backstage areas, female as well as independent musicians are excluded and need to seek-out the multitude of online communities in order to find crucial network resources.

These findings certainly raise many new questions about the future of music work and creativity in relation to space. How will the diffusion of work practices across space affect musicians work patterns? What roles will different music geographies play for artistic work and creativity? How will experience, age and gender affect the roles of various music geographies? What outcomes and impacts will the exclusion of independent musicians and above all female musicians have on the music industry?
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