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*„It's a decent thing to bring cool sounds into the world<sup>1</sup> -  
Musical Mediators and Cultural Production“*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 General Introduction and research question

Music is an art form, a sonic phenomenon, a cultural product or commodity. It can be manifest as a carrier of sound, waves coming from a radio or from a person playing the music live. It transports sounds as well as stories and words. Most of all it is embedded in cultural practice, rituals, consumption and processes related to identity. Interactions, music scenes and friendships occur around music. Music - as we experience it today - is mobile and can travel around the world quickly. Music and people are more mobile than ever and new music trends cross the globe and might be thought of as increasing what is called a *cultural entropy* (Eriksen 2001: 297). Sounds are adapted to new contexts and influence musicians and audiences. Music fans are looking for new sounds and artists for new inspirations.

The focus of this work will be on the discourses about “African music” and “world music”. The interest in Europe in music from outside Europe is nothing new, but the increased availability of music on the internet and the possibility of travelling to different places seems to accelerate the flow of music from one place to another. The internet makes it possible for musicians and their audience to get in direct contact with each other but the vast amount of music still requires a kind of preselection. The structures of *the field of cultural production* (Bourdieu 1993) did not become obsolete through new methods of consuming media but translate to the new environment. Bourdieu's concept says that this field consists of various agents - in the case of music that would be musicians, journalists, producers, record labels, managers, the audience, etc. - who contribute to the production of the meaning and the value of a work of art (Bourdieu 1993). This means that it is not only the authors or the receiver who have the monopoly of conveying meaning, but the whole field contributes to this process.

Taking “African music” or “world music” seen as an idiom as a point of departure, I looked at certain agents in this field who are intervening as mediators in these processes, which means that they preselect and curate music and artists and talk about it in certain ways. I conducted interviews with research partners who are involved in cultural production in Ljubljana and beyond. The main case studies are the record label *Glitterbeat* and the

international music festival *Druga Godba*. Apart from interviews with different agents related to this field, I did participant observation at the festival in May 2014. I suggest that record labels and musical festivals are important agents in the field of cultural production. The people involved are often cultural workers, cosmopolitans, people with a special kind of knowledge and access to certain places. They are enthusiasts in what they are doing and present their knowledge and experiences publicly. Accordingly, my research questions are as follows:

- With regards to those „western“ record labels and world music festivals which produce or employ „world“ or „African“ music: what position do they occupy in this „field of cultural production“?
- How do these actors select from a diverse range of musics and how do they subsequently reach their audience?
- What kind of aesthetics are used and how is Africa represented?

## **1.2 Research interest and access to the field**

My interest in music from Africa was sparked by several journeys to Tanzania, but especially by the radio shows and gigs of DJ Marcelle and the compilations of the record label Analog Africa, which re-releases music from Africa and the African Diaspora from the sixties, seventies and eighties. The thematic focus of my bachelor degree in social and cultural anthropology was on material culture and international development. Coming from this background, I initially intended to include this topic in my studies through a focus on the revival of vinyl records or a focus on “African popular music” in the context of consumption, that would be connected to a display of a positive image of “African culture”. From the material aspects of music phenomena I came to popular culture and cultural studies. This research interest and plan were presented at a conference in Maynooth in the course of the CREOLE masters in anthropology. At first, the plan was to embed the topic in the context of consumption and creativity. The feedback I received directed me to narrow down my focus on particular agents, like a band, or a certain audience or record labels and pointed out also



problematic aspects of the transnational music business that I had previously been largely ignorant of.

The main theoretical focus was altered from Hallam and Ingold's concept of creativity (*Hallam & Ingold 2007*) and aspects of consumption to Bourdieu's theory of a field of cultural production (*Bourdieu 1993*) that has as a basic assumption the idea of a field in which many different agents contribute to the production of a cultural good (*Bourdieu 1993*). A focus on the agency of record labels seemed promising, as I considered record label workers as interesting, mobile actors that are in a position of mediating between different places and positions. These actors could not only say something about their position in the field or the field in general, but also about transnational processes. After the initial contact with the label Analog Africa did not come about, my supervisor in Ljubljana connected me to several people that he considered as having knowledge about “African music” and record labels. So the research started in Ljubljana and after several research partners recommended me to get in contact with Chris Eckman from Glitterbeat records, I followed this course of action. Recommendations from interview partners helped with the navigation through the field and collecting further material on record labels and “African music”. A list of Western record labels that have such a focus can be found in the appendix. Another important research thread were the many recommendations to focus on the international music festival Druga Godba, founded in 1984 and located in Ljubljana also. Rok Košir, the director of Druga Godba enabled me to do voluntary work for the festival. It was possible to interview important people that are or were involved in the organization of the festival or are connected to it in other ways, like journalists.

### **1.3 Structure of the work**

After this chapter provides a general introduction to the topic, my research interest, the research question and how the topic contributes to scholarship and anthropology, basic terms and concepts will then be introduced and discussed (chapter 2). Chapter 3 deals with the basic theoretical assumptions of my work, *the field of cultural production* of Bourdieu (1993) and related concepts of cultural production from Keith Negus (1997), Kevin Robins (1997) and Paul du Gay (1997). Practices of representation and construction of meaning (*Hall 2013a*) are

important to understand how the different actors within the field create the meaning and value of a cultural product. Chapter 4 poses more general questions about the role of music in society as well as within the discipline of anthropology. It connects the more theoretical chapters 2 and 3 with my fieldwork and builds a bridge to methodology, my fieldwork and its analysis which are presented in chapter 5. The fieldwork builds on two case studies, one of the record label Glitterbeat, the other of the international music festival Druga Godba, both of which are located in the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana. Most of my interview partners are or were active in the cultural field of this city, which stands as an example for other places in Europe and their involvement with music, while pointing towards its particularities. The thematic focus concerning this field is mainly on music considered as “African music” and “world music”. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of individuals of institutions as mediators and the connotation of music with “labels”.

#### **1.4 Anthropological dimensions and contribution to scholarship**

The present work aims to connect Bourdieu's concept of *the field of cultural production* (Bourdieu 1993) with empirical examples through the use of ethnographic methods. The focus is narrowed on discourse about music, connecting the micro level with macro processes and therefore questions concerning globalization. Conforming to the basic topics of the Master programme *CREOLE – Cultural Differences and Transnational Processes*, this work is embedded in the thematic emphasis on transnational processes within the field of popular culture. The nature of the fieldwork was not *multi-sited* but contrasted a local phenomenon with the broader global context (Marcus 1995). Following the recommendations of Ismael-Wendt for a postcolonial focus of research on music, I tried to conform to three basic aspects that this perspective requires: a deconstruction of “*Imaginative Geographies*”, a critique of a certain logic of representation and an employment of a dynamic understanding of culture (Ismael-Wendt 2011: 38).

## 2 Basic terms and approaches to the topic

This chapter deals with terms and concepts that are important in the context of my research topic and should provide a background for the use of these terms in the latter chapters. It is not the aim to offer final definitions, but rather to question the terms and concepts and how they are employed in an academic and non-academic context. The approaches of different scholars to concepts like world music, hybridity and globalization are presented and discussed. My own reflections and observations are connected to these positions. I will further explain why a focus on certain agents in the field of music is important to my research.

### 21 *World music, world music 2.0 and African music*

#### 2.1.1 World music

Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh explain in the notes of the introduction to their edited book *Western Music and Its Others. Difference, Representation and Appropriation* (2000a) that the term “world music” can stand for the following musical phenomena:

- (a) *The music of western stars who have shown an interest in non-Western pop;*
- (b) *Non-Western and/or non-rock popular musics distributed in the West, especially commercial, hybrid forms such as salsa, zydeco, rai, soca, highlife, jùjú, etc.;*
- (c) *Supposedly „traditional“ musical forms such as Balkan a capella choirs (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 53)*

The meaning of the term can, however, differ from country to country. The above definitions are basically valid for how the term is used in Great Britain. From these

definitions, we can see that “world music” as a term is related to eurocentric ideas about music, in which countless, completely different forms of music are put into one category. Music that is not considered as European music or European art music, and even music from remote areas within Europe, are often labeled as “world music”. This has many different causes including marketing, a lack of knowledge and an unbalanced valuation or representation of the music. These reasons will be further explained below.

In Anthropology, “world music” is tied to ethnomusicology and the study and recording of non-European music. The focus on sound sources as well as the collecting and describing of music has brought into a focus issues of representation and discourse, as Kofi Agawu explains in the context of „African music“: *Scholarship outside Africa has continued to ransack material collected during earlier, safe periods, to analyze material collected by others, or simply to turn attention from the nature of the material to the nature of discourse about the material. (Agawu 1992: 256)* From this quote, one could get the impression that the shift towards the analysis of discourse about music has to do with the inaccessibility of the sources. In fact, accessibility has grown through new media. The change itself is in fact indebted to paradigm-shifts within the field of Anthropology. Of course, within the discipline the presence of the researcher in the field where music is made in an unmediated way and not filtered through media, is still the core method of ethnomusicology (Bohlmann 2002: 4).

However, “world music” as a term is also strongly connected to the music industry and music marketing. From there, the concept was often taken over by academic discourse. Martin Stokes provides a critique of the term when he explains how it was introduced to the music industry:

*The term world music is not, of course, remotely adequate for descriptive or critical purposes. The term dates from 1987, when independent record company executives and enthusiasts met in London to determine ways to market to British-based consumers already circulating commercial recordings of popular musics from many parts of the world. (Stokes 2004: 52)*

So „world music“ as a term was mainly introduced in order to better categorize and market music. Record companies adapted to the increased interest in and popularity of music from outside Europe. As it had to be a term that stood for many possible music styles, „world

music“ seemed big enough to fulfill the requirement. The vast amount of styles and genres it embraces exposes the lack of in-depth knowledge about non-western music styles in the west. Otherwise this term would seem pretty useless, as it basically comprises everything and nothing. This problematic aspect of the term was also expressed by most of my interview partners. Despite this analytical vagueness, the deployment of such a term can have its advantages at the same time. It can help to create structures and possibilities for less well-known music and thereby combat western hegemony over music production. This is what “world music” was intended to achieve when it was originally introduced to academia in the 1960s (*Feld 2000: 145f.*). Therefore “world music” needs careful research and a simultaneous analysis of the concept and of the practices around it carried out, as John Hutnyk suggests:

*World Music has come to be considered by the music industry – its commercial production and promotional arms – as a potentially profitable, and so exciting, expansive and popular way forward in contemporary music. There has been little critical work produced on any aspect of this development at a time when what is required is a multi-perspective examination of the World Music phenomenon, ranging from a critique of the concepts and terminologies deployed, through the employment practices, marketing of „ethnic identities“, commercialization, and so on, to the attempts at explicit politicization of Womad audiences by disparate political groupings. (Hutnyk 1998: 402)*

Since Hutnyk's critique (but also before), debate evolved around the concept of “world music” and the practices related to it (*Lipsitz 1994; Taylor 1997; Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000a; Feld 2000; Frith 2000; Stokes 2004*). „World music“ as a term needs to be used carefully and in the right context. The concepts related to it and the problematic aspects need to be questioned. How people use it and what people refer to can tell us a lot about how people perceive different kinds of music. From my interviews and fieldwork, it became clear to me that a rejection of the concept does not mean that the terms and infrastructure surrounding this discourse of world music are not used. As Bourdieu makes clear, it is hard for the individual actor to change the system (*Bourdieu 1993*). However, it must also be addressed that a deployment of the terminology can also pursue a strategic aim to break with other existing structures in the field of music. On one hand, the term can be used in an

essentialistic way, on the other it can help to question hierarchies in the field of music. Steven Feld explains the term “world music” and the different discourses around it as follows:

*The idea is that musics originate from all world regions, cultures, and historical formations. „World music“ thus circulates broadly in a liberal, relativist field of discourse, while in a more specific way it is an academic designation, the curricular antidote to the tacit synonymy of „music“ with western European art music. In this latter sense the term is explicitly oppositional, markedly more polemical and political than in the former sense, contesting Eurocentrism and opposing it with musical plurality. (Feld 1994c: 266)*

In contrast to Stokes, who thinks that the term was taken over by academic discourse too unquestioningly (Stokes 2004), Feld has the opinion that the academic use follows a more subversive strategy to question hierarchies related to music (Feld 1994c). We can therefore say that „world music“ is used in different contexts, in different ways and with purposes that differ from each other. While on the one hand it seems to be a term that opposes a differentiated knowledge about music, it has been used academically to challenge the hegemony of western art music. As a term, „world beat“ is seen as more problematic by Steven Feld than „world music“ as the former seems more exoticizing (Feld 1994c: 266f.). To sum up, „world music“ can refer to a specific music scene and can serve as a label for marketing a vast amount of different kinds of music, but it can also be an analytical term in scholarship.

The historical or structural reasons for the creation of this term might also stem from a development towards an ubiquitous availability of different kinds of music from all over the world. Thus the term is strongly connected to globalization. Despite this, I would suggest that the term „world music“ will become more and more obsolete, not least because of the increasing knowledge about musics and availability of different music styles, which will lead to more differentiated categorizations.

### **2.1.1.1 Record labels and world music**

As we have seen, the term “world music” is closely tied to the music industry and marketing of music. Record labels are agents in this field that are the basic instruments of promotion for artists and bands. But their task can comprise many practices and activities. As I will show, they are also curators, trendsetters, connectors, investors and involved in the representation of different groups of people. They can at the same time reproduce the category of “world” music as well as trying to contribute to a more differentiated knowledge about the diversity of music styles. Stokes describes a development towards small independent record labels and other institutions who are active in the field of “world music”, as differentiated from the bigger corporations (*Stokes 2004: 50*). This development can contribute to a more diversified and nuanced image of musical practices. Stokes is in favour of an ethnography that includes a perspective on these agents and institutions (*Stokes 2004: 49*). Even if there is an advancement which seems to be in favour of diversification, the structures of the music industry still exemplify a hierarchy from “north” to “south” that privilege white (male) western popstars, academics and other agents related to the music industry and discourse (*Feld & Keil 1994; Feld 1994a; Lipsitz 1994; Stokes 2004*).

Simon Frith notes that the “world music” phenomenon emerged out of the rock music scene. It is strongly based on the work of particular record labels and music festivals also play a vital role in this scene (*Frith 2000: 306*). He describes the interaction of labels with the audience as follows:

*The record companies involved were in the business of persuading consumers to distinguish themselves from the mainstream of rock and pop purchasers, to be different themselves. World music wasn't a sales category like any other; these record labels claimed a particular kind of engagement with the music they traded and promised a particular kind of experience to their consumers. As Jan Fairley notes, world music records were, on the one hand, sold as individual discoveries, the record company as individual explorer bringing back a gem to share with the discriminating public; and, on the other hand, exchanged as a currency to link together a community of enthusiasts – record company bosses being at the same time promoters, journalists, deejays, musicians. (Frith 2000: 306)*

It seems that in the “world music” scene, aspects of curation and the stories of the curators play a vital role in the context of the music. These patterns also appeared in the analysis of my fieldwork. The enthusiasm of the agents and the various activities they pursue are aimed at the creation of a special experience for the audience, that is itself involved and trying to get in direct contact with musicians, if not by travelling, then at least through attending festivals and concerts. One who travels and acquires knowledge can him- or herself contribute to the discourse, write articles, be a DJ and therefore actively be part of the scene and its adherent discourse. What Frith also mentions is the interconnectedness of the scene and its discourse with academia. Scholars contribute their expertise and at the same time use the scene for their research (*Frith 2000: 307f.*).

David Hesmondhalgh stresses the importance of micro studies of record labels (*Hesmondhalgh 2000: 281*). Questions should be asked like: *How do musicians and music industry workers see the issues of ethics, identity, and commerce involved in musical exchange and borrowing?* (*Hesmondhalgh 2000: 281*) Several of these aspects will be pursued upon in the analysis of my fieldwork in *chapter 5.2*.

### **2.1.2 World music 2.0**

Not only scholarship but also musicians found ways of dealing with the term “world music” and its context or associated concepts in a creative and even provocative way. The characteristics and stereotypes associated with “world music” serve these artists as creative foundation. Some of these artists play with references to older aesthetics and sounds of world music (*Kim 2011*). Thomas Burkhalter talks about the phenomenon of *world music 2.0* (*Burkhalter 2011*) that is promoted by musicians who consciously question stereotypes and aesthetics with creative means and make use of the various musical influences from all over the world that are increasingly available online (*Burkhalter 2011*). Burkhalter writes about the musicians he associates with *world music 2.0*:

*(T)hey want to position music (and art) in a new way in society; and they cyclically re-define the role of music – one time music is a reflection of real life, another time a form of protest, then it embraces shock therapy or irony, and finally it serves as an escape to*



*an imaginary world. (Burkhalter 2011; own translation<sup>2</sup>)*

Of course, the deployment of the category “world music 2.0” is a bit of a contradiction to what I stated at the end of the last subchapter. What these artists seem to have in common are the references to the “world music” aesthetics and stereotypes. What Burkhalter describes is maybe an attempt of subversion within the field of “world music” and not the establishment of a new denomination. Burkhalter compares their acting with that of avantgarde artists (Burkhalter 2011). The practices of the musicians aim towards a change of the hierarchy in the field of music or world music. Bourdieu would call their way of acting within the field and playing with meanings *subversive strategies* (Bourdieu 1993: 83). They are part of revolutions that happen in the field of cultural production:

*In the relationship which constitutes them, the choice of the moment and sites of battle is left to the initiative of the challengers, who break the silence of the doxa and call into question the unproblematic, taken-for-granted world of the dominant groups. The dominated producers, for their part, in order to gain a foothold in the market, have to resort to subversive strategies which will eventually bring them the disavowed profits only if they succeed in overturning the hierarchy of the field without disturbing the principles on which the field is based. (Bourdieu 1993: 83)*

According to Bourdieu, we must consider that changes within the field, such as the overturning of an existing hierarchy, which can happen when new producers enter the scene do not necessarily change the basic rules. The field remains intact, only the hierarchies within it are changed. The aim of the challengers is still to ascend in the hierarchy of the field and establish themselves. Musicians associated to “world music 2.0” challenge established artists by „speaking their language“ while at the same time breaking with established boundaries of taste and convention. The problems with using this category analytically are the same as those associated with world music – it is also a category too imprecise to adequately represent the variety of musical forms it contains. Contesting the older category of world music, it might still be a strategically interesting step forward.

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<sup>2</sup> Original: *(S)ie wollen Musik (und Kunst) neu in der Gesellschaft positionieren; und sie re-definieren die Rolle von Musik zyklisch neu – mal ist Musik Abbild des realen Lebens, mal eine Form von Protest, dann setzt sie entweder auf Schocktherapie oder Ironie, und schliesslich dient sie als Flucht in imaginäre Welten. (Burkhalter 2011)*

### 2.1.3 African music

*At first people in Africa said that I made Western music, that I was black-white. I carried that around for a long time. In France, people often told me that I made American music. And when I went to the united states, the Americans thought that I made African music. It's impossible to be more of a traitor than that! (Dibango quoted by Lipsitz 1994: 123)*

The above quote from the musician Manu Dibango illustrates how difficult it is to answer the question of what “African music” is. Perhaps it most accurately indicates the need of people to categorize music. Categorizations are made according to prevailing images about certain phenomena. The less people know about something in detail the more vague are the terms applied (*Bourdieu 1993: 230f.*). I experienced this when I first went to my supervisor to discuss my research project and told him that I felt there was an increased interest in „African music“ in Europe. He told me that his impression was that there was already more interest in the last decades, for example when Peter Tosh filled concert halls all around Europe. First of all that reminded me that I forgot about the African diaspora in terms of music and furthermore I realized that it is not clear at all what „African music“ refers to. Is it just a term that is born out of a lack of knowledge (*Bourdieu 1993: 230f.*) and only makes sense to use it as reference to how people that are part of certain discourses conceptualize this music “genre” (*Hall 2013a: 30f; 39*)? Clearly, there can be no useful definition of the term „African music“. Even if one includes all possibilities such as:

- music that comes from the continent of Africa (which reduces the music to geographical factors)
- music that was created by Africans (but who are those Africans?)
- music that is made after specific patterns that are thought of being „African“ (but does it then matter who composes this music?)

The term would either way stay essentialistic and presuppose a world consisting of isolated geographical entities, whose inhabitants are not mobile and not communicating or sharing ideas. Nevertheless, if the term remains useless for definition, analytically it can be

interesting, as people do use the term and seem to have an image in their heads when they talk about „African music“ (*Ismael-Wendt 2011: 50*). As I experienced myself, this notion about what African music means can change through increased knowledge and critical reflection about one's own associations and assumptions.

However, what I experienced might not be the peak of popularity of „African music“ in Europe, but an increased availability and also more diverse musical forms that are associated with being African in Europe. In terms of knowledge and appreciation of the diversity and artistic achievements coming from artists associated with Africa, this can only be seen as a positive development. It contributes to a more balanced image of art from Africa and to the deconstruction of stereotypes. Of course, one has to question certain practices. If the term Africa is used for advertisement because „Africa“ is connotated positively in relation to art, and it is thus just used for purposes of promotion, then there is the danger of narrowing down the understanding again and reinforcing stereotypes, if the term is used in an essentialistic way. I will return to this topic in *chapter 5.2.4*.

## **22 Globalization and hybridity-talk**

Globalization is often seen as a process that brings homogenization through increased mobility, exchange and monopolies of meaning. Eriksen says that this doesn't have to be the case: *First of all, we need to look more closely at the currently fashionable term 'globalization'. For this word does not mean that we are all becoming identical, but rather that we become different in ways that are not as they were in earlier times (Eriksen 2001: 297)*. Even if globalization is a phenomenon that seems to have a homogenizing function at a superficial level, the responses to the changes it brings are not everywhere the same (*Appadurai 1990b*). Not to forget, the access to the innovations a globalized world produces is not the same everywhere. Not everyone has the access, the means, or the will to use increased mobility and new technologies of communication (*Stokes 2004: 55; Spivak 2008*). Strategies to deal with the consequences of globalization are different everywhere. Through technological innovations, it seems as though globalization has changed the parameters of space. People, commodities and information move around increasingly fast. Music can not only be transported via various data carriers or travelling musicians, but also accessed over

the radio and increasingly over the internet. In the context of globalization, Eriksen refers to music as a particularly interesting field of research:

*Musical discourses are fields where identities are shaped, and for this reason, the global flow of popular music can be a fruitful field for studying contemporary cultural dynamics as well as the political economy of meaning. The debate about authenticity is in itself interesting, as it reveals conflicting views of culture: as unbroken tradition, or as flux and process. These issues, we should keep in mind, are not merely aesthetic ones, but are frequently politicised. (Eriksen 2001: 299)*

Eriksen sees music as a field that is relevant as an example of the processes that are connected to globalization. Frith says world music is especially well-suited to *read* globalization (Frith 2000: 309). Debates surrounding this field can tell us something about different perceptions of specific circumstances and therefore a focus on meanings and discourses is revelatory for social sciences. For Stuart Hall, language is central to culture. Discourses and meanings, as related to language, are important sources of data in order to acquire knowledge about certain cultural phenomena (Hall 2013a). Timothy Rice mentions that the musical flow around the globe happening today, has strong spatial aspects related to globalization, that made possible *the simultaneity of every place in one place* (Rice 2003: 155). The origin of globalization according to Rice was on one hand colonialism and on the other hand, later, *electronic media* (Rice 2003: 155).

Globalization is not free of historically grown structures and imbalances that affect present issues of power, discourse, and different kinds of capital. These prevailing structural issues are also related to the field of art (Mießgang 2008). The historical narrative about the „western“ hemisphere and the areas that used to be described as „remote“ translates into the discourse about art. There are still centers of power that dominate other areas in different ways (Hannerz 1987: 549). The power of representation, the way money ends up at certain monopolies, the way art is instrumentalized by institutions and used for a system that relates social class with cultural capital are shaped by politics, academic institutions and art „experts“. One could say that through the globalization and commercialization of art, a global field of art came into existence that is still not freed from western hegemony. This does NOT mean that the way these flows operate are exclusively in one direction (from center to

periphery, for example). These processes are much more complex and theoretically hard to grasp (Appadurai 1990a: 296). For that reason, Appadurai suggests thinking of the movements as *-scapes*: *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes* and *ideoscapes* (Appadurai 1990a: 296).

Commercialization and global trade of records are more recent phenomena, speaking about music in general. Historically music was related to rituals and was embedded in completely different contexts before the possibility of the sound recording. The phenomenon of splitting sound from its source and context is called *schizophonia* (Feld 1994c: 258): *Schizophonia refers to the split between an original sound and its electroacoustical transmission or reproduction* (Schafer quoted by Feld 1994c: 258). Only through the possibility of splitting sounds from their sources and reproducing and distributing them in vast amounts as CD's, vinyl records, cassettes or broadcast on the radio was it possible for a music industry to emerge that made profits through mass production. Through these developments, a global music market became possible that revolutionized the travel and exchange of music styles enormously. It makes the idea of pure or authentic music styles, that I already criticized above, obscure or impossible (Stokes 2004: 60).

In this context, the assumption of a danger of „cultural“ homogenization under western parameters would be wrong. It tends to interpret cultural practices as passive and neglect the capability of people to create new meanings on the basis of older ones<sup>3</sup>. Though it cannot be denied that popular culture does have the quality of contributing to this negotiation of meaning. The underrepresentation of non-European art forms and their restricted access to the global art discourse can have certain problematic aspects: *The globalization of music cements the hegemony of significant racial and gendered hierarchies in many parts of the world* (Stokes 2004: 55). Stokes' statement points out that musicians of non-western origin are given less attention, globally speaking, and also that western art forms and the meanings they convey have a disproportionally large influence on discourses somewhere else, which is not the case the other way around. One just has to think of the dominance of white males in the music business, or of the current state of academic scholarship.

George Lipsitz provides another example of this imbalance. He mentions the case of record companies that put pressure on South African musicians to return to musical styles that have been popular decades ago in South Africa, for the reason that they were popular among

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<sup>3</sup> Kelly Askew shows through the example of certain musical traditions in East Africa how the integration of external influences into the own practices can be a cultural principle (Askew 2003).

the company's target audience in the West (*Lipsitz 1994: 59*). Such an example can tell us a lot about globalization and how music - or art in general - is related to economic conditions, contrary to idealistic claims that art would be autonomous from economic constraints. This idealized view does not correspond to reality. If the classical music section in Central Europe is popular among Asian audiences, for example, states will take steps to disproportionately subsidize this field of music compared to other music genres that would bring less economic profit. In this case nation states are agents that can influence the field of cultural production as well, just think of how they can use their institutions to promote the status of different art genres (*Bourdieu 1993*). This thesis gives some empirical examples for strategies that are used in this field, which is loaded with historical and structural problems to solve. Some problems are detected by the agents and countered with deliberate measures. It could, for example, be observed how labels promote female artists or open up room for political struggles of the artists. One of my interview partners intervened on an institutional level, by trying to achieve a more adequate representation of African countries and cultural achievements of musicians from African countries in school books in Slovenia. He contacted the publishing house, told them about his concerns and was offered to write a contribution about "African" music.

The qualities of music in relation to economic and political purposes can neither be seen as only positive or only negative, they can be both, depending on the strategic use or how people make meaning from it. The field of music is not free from economic constraints and thus these constraints have to be reflected (*Bourdieu 1993; Lipsitz 1994; Robins 1997*). Equally, music can be involved in political matters. Kelly Askew portrays music in Tanzania as having a vital role in the fight for independence from the former colonial power (*Askew 2003*). Lipsitz mentions how important musicians were for the struggle of national liberation in Africa (*Lipsitz 1994: 138*). He further states that because of increased globalization the influence that music could have on a national scale has now shifted to a global one (*Lipsitz 1994: 13*). As an example he mentions how important the music of Bob Marley was for indigenous people in Australia (*Lipsitz 1994: 142*).

The difficulty of this entire debate is that we have on one side accusations of cultural imperialism and on the other side the problem of underrepresentation. The reality is somewhere in between these extremes. At the same time, it is the case that globalization provides new technological means to get rid of intermediary institutions which stand between artists and the audience. Technological developments, that can be seen as *universalities*

(Miller 2010) in the process of globalization, make it possible for musicians to escape the institutional power of other agents in the field and therefore representation by others. On the other side, it seems (and I will go into detail of this claim in *chapter 5*) that the audience needs curatorial intermediaries – consciously or unconsciously (Taylor 1997: 28). I want to argue that this is why the idea of the field of cultural production that Bourdieu (1993) suggests is also valid in the face of increased globalization. As a result of the distance between artist and audience, the curatorial factor in „world music“ might be of more significance at this point than in other music scenes. This is especially the case when considering the fact that globalization doesn't mean that everybody has equal access to new technological facilities or other means of production or distribution (Spivak 2008).

### **2.2.1 Hybridity**

Hybridity is often described as a consequence of mobility that is connected to globalization (Robins 1997: 18). Jan Nederveen Pieterse concludes that exchange through globalization results in *third cultures* and a *creative conjoining hybridization* (Nederveen Pieterse quoted by Robins 1997: 18). This perspective on processes related to globalization seems to presuppose cultural purity and leaves out earlier forms of exchange and inter-cultural dynamics. Overlooking these processes means neglecting historical forms of exchange or simply adopting a narrative that merely sees the continuities and not the breaks, interconnections and contested meanings within and between cultural groupings. John Hutnyk warns of the dangers that an institutionalized, fixed concept of hybridity produces and says that this needs to be questioned (Hutnyk 1998). For example, Bohlman points out that the influence of Arab music in Europe was overlooked for a long time (Bohlman 2002: 52). Thus, I suggest to conceive of the processes of globalization more similarly to that of Timothy Taylor, who suggests: *The dynamics of collaboration, representation, and appropriation create new, complicated political and subject positions that shift with increasing frequency* (Taylor 1997: 197).

Taylor states that it seems to be allowed for western stars to adapt external musical elements from others regions of the world to their own music, which is seen as creative, while when non-western musicians integrate other musical forms in their work, they are described

as unauthentic. Authenticity is demanded from non-western musicians but musicians from the west can do anything (*Taylor 1997: 35; 201*). So concepts of hybridity are often connected to questions of authenticity or purity and the search for nativism (*Ismael-Wendt 2011: 48f.*), this also is the case in academia (*Stokes 2004: 59 f.*). According to Stokes, several scholars have stressed that the notion of hybridity in music is not very fruitful, as it presupposes pure forms, but all forms of music should be hybrid by nature (*Stokes 2004: 60f.*). Similar to Hutnyk, other authors suggest paying attention to who is using the concept of hybridity, for which purposes the author applies the concept and which phenomenon the author wants to describe (*Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 19; Stokes 2004: 60f.*). For musicians and creativity, Born and Hesmondhalgh see hybridity as a way of working and expressing themselves by new means and influences (*Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 19*). The phenomenon of world music 2.0 could be an example of this view of hybridity. It also challenges older, static conceptions of world music, that were not very different from itself apart from their characterization of authenticity. Creativity and methods of working have a lot to do with the personal situation of the artists. Bohlman says that hybridity is often connected to mobility and the experience of the diaspora (*Bohlman 2002: 115*). In the following chapter I will explain how in their work *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (2007) Hallam and Ingold found a way to describe how external influences on the creativity of an artist become part of their work.

### **2.2.1.1 Creativity and improvisation**

An interesting way to conceptualize cultural exchange is the model of Hallam and Ingold, which speaks of *cultural improvisation* (*Hallam & Ingold 2007*). Cultural improvisation is not a terminology that should replace “hybridity”, it is rather an approach that offers a different way to think about creativity. It is equally suited to make sense of the dynamic processes of cultural exchange. However their concept is against ideas of authenticity or purity and in favour of a more dynamic understanding of cultural production. They say that we must focus on *productive processes* (*Hallam & Ingold 2007: 3*) rather than the finished product, in order to get an impression of how the artist makes sense of his or her environment. Artists are always in exchange with their environment (*Hallam & Ingold 2007: 9*). Therefore they speak of a *forward reading* instead of a *backward reading* of creativity



(Hallam & Ingold 2007: 3). This means that we should imagine art not only as individual achievement, but also as a product of the historical and social circumstances: *Only when we look back, searching for antecedents for new things, do ideas appear as the spontaneous creations of an isolated mind, encased in a body, rather than way stations along the trails of living beings, moving through a world* (Hallam & Ingold 2007: 8). Born and Hesmondhalgh criticize the idea of serialist composers who claimed to create music free from recourse or reference to older musical forms or societal relations (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 16f.). Hallam and Ingold see a similarity between the way artists work and how scholars work (Hallam & Ingold 2007: 12f.). Hallam and Ingold's concept of creativity does not oppose the idea of tradition, but instead posits that creativity is what keeps traditions alive, maintaining them by renewal instead of rejection (Hallam & Ingold 2007: 5).

Whilst Hallam and Ingold contribute a forward reading of the creativity of the artists they could also include a forward reading of the reception of their art by the audience. Edward Said suggested that it is of equal importance how the work is written as how the work is read. For Said it is less relevant who wrote the work (Said quoted by Taylor 1997: 51). Roland Barthes even saw the full power of interpretation on the side of the reader (Barthes quoted by Taylor 1997: 51), which Taylor rejects. He says that there is still influence left to the author concerning the negotiation of meaning (Taylor 1997: 51). Pierre Bourdieu, in *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993), explains that the whole field contributes to the construction of the meaning and value of a work of art. I will come back to his approach, the most central of my thesis, in *chapter 3*.

## **23 New ways of communication and media consumption**

From radio to vinyl, cassettes and CD's to MP3's and streaming, the music industry constantly responds to new technological innovations and user habits of music consumption and sets new trends of distribution. I suggest that the action of buying records or listening over the internet as well as related practices of listening to music can be seen as acts of consumption<sup>4</sup>. These methods of consumption affect the methods of production – through a

<sup>4</sup> I am aware that the use of the term consumption in Anthropology has been contested recently (Graeber 2011), but I still find it the most useful term for the description of practises of people in relation to material or non-material goods.

system of rewards and feedback (but also through exchange of contents). Musicians are responding to these developments and consider them in their creative processes. Through the internet and other interactive media, musicians have the possibility to get in contact with their audience more easily (*Seliger 2013: 102f.; 125*). However it seems that these new means of promotion and communication cannot fully substitute the roles of advertisers and other mediators. People still seem to need guidance through the mass of available music. How does this work?

*The internet is best seen not as technology but as a platform which enables people to create technologies, and these in turn are designed for particular functions. So what people weave from the fibres of the Internet are the traps they use to catch particular kinds of passing surfers. They require a design that draws interest, attention and appreciation and thereby seduces its particular victims. (Miller 2010: 113)*

Through the consumption of music over the internet, older forms of music consumption and mediation, like the radio moderator or the record store worker, are substituted by new ways of mediation – advertisement over the internet, aesthetical presentation, images, music videos and the possibility of participation (commenting, sharing, liking). The internet is a *platform* as Miller (2010: 113) says, that is used to present and promote music. Soundcloud<sup>5</sup> and YouTube<sup>6</sup> are interactive media platforms and videos are a way to transport messages. Innovations, like the streaming of music over the internet, are often seen negative by established musicians (*Byrne 2013*). However, these *technologies* (Miller 2010: 113) compete for the attention of the audiences. Mediators make use of different technologies for promotion, they are experts who know how to present the music. They have the connections and networks that are necessary for taking on such a role. I will explain more about the role of mediators in *chapter 5*. Also other actors in the field of music, like the nation state or governments, try to get involved in these practices, in order to control or manipulate the flows (*Graebner 1989; Hacke & Reuster-Jahn 2011*).

Some scholars state that music from the western hemisphere is available everywhere around the world, which would not be true the other way around (*Stokes 2004: 55; Taylor 1997: 201*). This is also changing because of the internet (*Mokgata & Rasethaba 2014*).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://soundcloud.com>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/>

Timothy Rice speaks of a *ubiquity of electronic media* (Rice 2003: 155), that might not yet be the case, considering the fact that not everybody has equal access to new technologies (Spivak 2008). Another problem is that the structures of the music business in the West leave less room for the visibility of non-western artists. Also, these musicians sometimes don't have access to the best recording equipment or necessary infrastructure.

### **2.3.1 Music in the context of globalization**

Through changes in technology, the possibility of sound recording, radio, internet and colonialism, globalization and increased movement of people and information, questions arise concerning the role of music. The context and meaning of music have broadly changed, it has required new characteristics and entered different contexts. Of course, music is still a way for artists to express themselves. A basic quality of music is that it can express something that cannot be expressed differently (Muršič 2005). Music used to be experienced not only through sound waves but was (and still is) embedded in rituals. To some extent the concept of music in particular localities was very different from recent developments and ways of experiencing music. Usually, it was not experienced separately from dance and ritual (Bender 1985: 612). Of course, music still has certain characteristics, it transports messages and knowledge and is embedded in rituals, but it has also become a commodity.

This is not to say that music has not always been part of economic processes. However especially through the possibility of recording music it became possible to strip music off its context and sell it on sound carriers. Music became a reproducible product that was connected to a capitalistic economic system. This music could travel over large distances and reach new audiences, which raised the fear of homogenizing effects of music, that would transport contents and musical forms which would drive out other musical forms. Theodor Adorno thought that through the control of the production, the music industry could also control creativity and the methods of consumption (Adorno quoted by Negus 1997: 73). There is also a fear of the hindering role of copyrighting to creativity (Feld & Keil 1994: 314; Seliger 2013: 128). Through the establishment of the music business there is a form of monopolization that suppresses diversity (Feld & Keil 1994: 22).

Some authors say that the effects of globalization are not only destructive. Frith writes

that popular music can help to preserve musical traditions as much as it is destroying them (Frith 2000: 311). Ulf Hannerz does not speak of homogenization, but prefers to talk about *creole cultures* (Hannerz 1987: 552). The flow of information and commodities does not lead to the passive reception that is sometimes stated:

*We must be aware that openness to foreign cultural influences need not involve only an impoverishment of local and national culture. It may give people access to technological and symbolic resources for dealing with their own ideas, managing their own culture, in new ways. (Hannerz 1987: 555)*

People are not passive recipients of external influences but on the basis of their cultural dispositions they develop strategies to make sense of new inputs, and they can use these *technologies* and *symbolic resources* (Hannerz 1987: 555) for their own struggles and quests for emancipation from oppressive systems (Lipsitz 1994; Askew 2003) as well as creative expression.

The fear of the effects of commercialization of music was much more immediate at the time of Adorno than it is today. The new way music is embedded in society is nowadays perceived as normal, although this cannot be generalized for all societies. Music and the field of music are connected to other fields of society, like the field of economy, or technologic developments. Concerns about monopolization and heterogenization are connected to processes of globalization. These processes are not as one-sided though as they are feared to be, as was explained above. Musicians and artists still have retained some autonomy and a special position within society. But they are also part of the field of music and constrained by the rules of this field (Bourdieu 1993). This notion will be further explained in the next chapter.

### 3 Cultural production and representation

The challenge of this section is to explain the theoretical concepts that are the basis for my thesis. Pierre Bourdieu's work on *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) served me as a way to make sense of my initial observations and interest in the topic. With the idea of a field that consists of various agents, underlying rules and implicit logic, I could find an appropriate research question that focused and shaped my research. I will explain his approach in the chapters below and show how it is well suited to adapt theoretical reflections to the fieldwork situation and practical experience. Furthermore, the theory will be extended using aspects that Bourdieu does not include extensively in his considerations, such as technological aspects, mobility or mass production.

If one talks about cultural production one has to be aware of economic realities and structures, in which big corporations are agents that have greater influence on the field (Negus 1997). Keith Negus (1997) and Kevin Robins (1997) deal with the topic of art and cultural products in the context of capitalism and economy. It might seem strange to think of art and economy as closely related, but these authors show how these fields cannot be separated from each other. George Lipsitz (1994) claims that even if one takes a critical position towards the economic system, one must understand how the cultural field is connected to capitalism in order to achieve a change of the system (Lipsitz 1994: 16; 35).

Related to cultural production in terms of cultural mediation and creating symbolic capital for oneself and someone else, is the question of representation. Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon have contributed to this topic with a clear and understandable work that explains the basic concepts (Hall, Evans & Nixon 2013). They present different approaches to the construction of meaning, practices of stereotyping and racialization, the role of language, but also the concepts of power and discourse (Hall 2013a; Hall 2013b). This book and its ideas influenced my work a great deal. It has some important parallels but also adjustments to offer concerning the approach of Bourdieu and others mentioned above.

Before I further elaborate on the particular positions, I want to make clear how the terms “culture” and “cultural” have different meanings in the course of this work and especially this chapter as well as how their meaning in general changed over the last decades.

### 3.1 The meaning of culture

Before I come to explain the basic theoretical concepts of my MA-thesis, some remarks have to be made about the use of the words „culture“ and „cultural“ in the context of my work. On the one hand, there are understandings of „culture“ that use the term as a synonym for art and artistic practices. For most of his book on *the field of cultural production* (1993), Bourdieu uses the adjective “cultural” as a synonym for *intellectual, artistic and scientific* (Bourdieu 1993: 289). On the other hand, culture has a different meaning in the context of social and cultural anthropology. The definitions of culture are countless and have changed a lot over the history of the discipline. Recent definitions of culture show a more dynamic and contested understanding of the term, which is connected more to meaning (Hannerz 1987; Eriksen 2001: 3; Hall 2013a). Not in a sense of fixed meaning that has always been valid and passed on in the traditions of a united society, but as something that can and does change over time. From this perspective societies themselves are viewed as dynamic and the meanings constantly contested. Processes of globalization additionally contribute to an increased exchange and thus contribute to negotiations about aspects of culture.

Now, what is the connection between the two different basic uses of the term culture? Bourdieu's cultural production (Bourdieu 1993) understood as artistic and intellectual achievement cannot be comprehended outside of the context in which it is found. In this case Bourdieu envisages cultural context as the learned and socialized meanings in which production takes place. Keith Negus gives the following definition of culture in the context of music:

*Culture, thought of more broadly as a way of life and as the actions through which people create meaningful worlds in which to live, needs to be understood as the constitutive context within and out of which the sounds, words and images of popular music are made and given meaning. (Negus 1997: 101)*

Negus says that the cultural background provides a framework for artistic achievements. Bourdieu talks about a *field of cultural production* that has its own structure and rules but is connected to and embedded within other fields and society as a whole (Bourdieu 1993: 113; 132f.; 163f.; 182f.). The concept of Bourdieu and also the contribution

of others to the topic of cultural production will be explained in *chapter 3.2* below. To conclude these explanations: One has to be careful with the use of the term „culture“, especially in scholarship. Charles Keil, for example, criticizes the term „Cultural Studies“ for contributing to commodification, by including certain phenomena in the scholarly discourse: *Studying culture, calling things „cultural“ and writing about them, turns living practices into civilized products and is „part of the problem“ much of the time* (Keil 1994a: 227). Importantly for my thesis, the deployment of the term culture is not without consequence for the phenomena we relate it to.

### **3.2 Concepts of cultural production**

Pierre Bourdieu has written a couple of essays on how *the field of cultural production* (1993) is connected to capital, class, power and institutions (Bourdieu 1993: 75; 123; 132f.). The central notion in his work is that of “the field”, that consists of various actors, all of whom contribute in one way or another to produce the value of a cultural product (Bourdieu 1993: 75; 132f.). Capital in the sense of Bourdieu can mean different kinds of capital - social, economic, cultural or symbolic (Bourdieu 1993; Zips 2002). Capital, social background and education are factors that explain how a person's aesthetic preferences are shaped and how individuals take positions in the field (Bourdieu 1993: 61; 66f.; 95; 119; 132f.). But these factors are not ultimate and they are not the only determinants in this process. An understanding of the deeper logic and the *rules* of the field are essential in order to successfully establish oneself in the field of cultural production (Bourdieu 1993: 66f.; 75f.; 95). Although Bourdieu gives examples mostly from painting and literature, his theoretical framework is also relevant to other fields of art, like music (Prior 2008).

Bourdieu explains that without the producer of a cultural product acquiring symbolic capital, it is also not possible for the product to be economically profitable (Bourdieu 1993: 75). I wish to add two addendums to this position. Firstly, I would posit that it doesn't always have to be the producer, whose symbolic capital counts, it can also be a mediating brand, for example a record label, that has a good reputation. People buy because they trust the label to publish good music and they identify with its aesthetics. I will come to that aspect in *chapter 5*. Secondly, as a result of the distance cultural products travel, it could easily be that the

producer of a work of art is removed from the frame of reference altogether. The question is whether his or her symbolic capital is substituted by another agent, or alternatively the artist's prestige translated to a new context and is newly negotiated. What remains fundamental, however, is the question: *Who creates the creator?* (Bourdieu 1993: 76).

Through the concept of the field, it becomes clear that the creator, in the sense of the artist, is not the sole creator of the work of art, or of the value of the work. Bourdieu asks: *(W)ho is the true producer of the value of the work – the painter or the dealer, the writer or the publisher, the playwright or the theater manager?* (Bourdieu 1993: 76) The art trader or the publisher are agents who contribute to the creation of the value of a work of art. For the field of music, a lot of agents come to mind: journalists, concert organizers, managers, critics, the audience and record labels. Their practices co-produce the value of a work of art and through their acts, the symbolic capital of the creator rises. But the process is circular and musicians can use their own acquired capital to promote other artists, who are less known or possess less cultural capital. In this case, capital is simply transferred. Frith writes: *Elite pop artists are in the strongest artistic and economic position in the world to appropriate what they like of human musical diversity, with full support from record companies and often with the outright gratitude of the musicians whose work now appears under a new name* (Frith quoted by Feld 1994b: 245). Pop stars seem to be in a powerful position to put other artists in the spotlight and through this acquiring more status as being innovative and prudent in terms of new musical trends (Groß 2014).

So the basic idea of Bourdieu's concept is a field that consists of various agents all of whom contribute to the production of a cultural product or a work of art (Bourdieu 1993: 163f.). The positions of the agents in the field are arranged by the structure of the field (Bourdieu 1993: 132f.). Their positions are related to their dispositions, their social background and how well they understand the rules of the field (Bourdieu 1993: 61f.). The artwork acquires value through the symbolic capital that the artist gains (Bourdieu 1993: 75). Decontextualization and technological aspects are less prominent in the work of Bourdieu (Prior 2008: 303f.). He only states that technical revolutions can only have an impact on the field, if they succeed to change the structure of the field (Bourdieu 1993: 113; 181f.). However, important developments have to be considered more to get a full understanding of changes in the field of art. There have been at least two important developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that concerned the relationship of technology and art:



1. Walter Benjamin early on discerned a drastic change in the field of art: *Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public; it also had captured a place of its own among the artistic processes* (Benjamin 1968: 219). In other words, new possibilities of reproduction were caused by technological changes. The basic effect they had on society, according to Benjamin, was to detach *art from its basis in the cult* (Benjamin 1968: 226). This can be seen as a step towards mass culture, a topic that will be elaborated in the chapter below.
2. The second development has to be seen in terms of technological changes in relation to mobility, both that of persons and, equally important, of information. Possibilities for travelling and communications over vast distances in a short time period, became common with the advent of trains, airplanes, cars, telephones, mobile phones, radio, the internet. Robins speaks of a *global information economy* (Robins 1997: 22). in which physical products are more and more replaced by information (Robins 1997: 24). For example: In the documentary *Future Sound of Mzansi* (Mokgata & Rasethaba 2014) portraying the electronic music scene in South African cities, artists explain how software programmes are an important tool for their artistic work and how they influence the scene. Furthermore websites, like Soundcloud, give these artists a worldwide stage to reach an audience and present their songs. In some cases, artists could attract attention from Western record labels and get their songs published through them, which increased in turn their status in the local music scene of their home city (Mokgata & Rasethaba 2014).

Mobility of music and musicians is not something completely new however, but has to be seen as a continual (although accelerated) process. Technological and mobility aspects can reach from musicians travelling on *dhow*s from East Africa to the Arabic peninsula (Askew 2003) to new social media platforms like Soundcloud. Both the *dhow* and the music platform have the effect of enabling the spread of music over distance and can connect the music scene of two or more places. This adaption of music styles leads to mutual inspiration, new styles

and, possibly, the exchange of knowledge. This also contributes to the creation of a new image about the „other“. However, I want to argue that the exchange of music is nothing new, but something continuous over the history of humankind. The means and the pace of exchange have changed and increased, but not the basic process. Thus I prefer to speak of the adaption of new influences from one context in another as *cultural improvisation* (Hallam & Ingold 2007) rather than hybridity, as I have explained in *chapter 2*.

Looking at creativity through focusing on the processes that create a cultural product (Bourdieu 1993; Hallam & Ingold 2007) is more useful than just looking at *consumeable products* themselves (Friedman quoted by Hallam & Ingold 2007: 3). Let us take, for example, hip-hop. Hip-hop music is not hip-hop music because someone spontaneously invented it and people liked it. Instead hip-hop is a result of historical processes and experiences that continue to this day and are manifest in the lives of people. So music and, most of all, popular music has different important qualities. According to Lipsitz, it is influenced by *social experience* (Lipsitz 1994: 126f.) that is related to certain places and their specific historical and social conditions. Paul Gilroy elaborates on the example of *black musical forms* (Gilroy 1993: 74) and explains how they are related to particular social situations:

*Examining the place of music in the black Atlantic world means surveying the self-understanding articulated by the musicians who have made it, the symbolic use to which their music is put by other black artists and writers, and the social relations which have produced and reproduced the unique expressive culture in which music comprises a central and even foundational element. I want to propose that the possible commonality of post-slave, black cultural forms be approached via several related problems which converge in the analysis of black musics and their supporting social relations. (Gilroy 1993: 74f.)*

Gilroy claims that music has to be understood in a certain social context and in terms of common past experiences. In that context, hip-hop would be a method of expression that is connected to particular experiences and realities and basically speaks to people, who can identify with the whole set of experiences (Gilroy 1993; Lesage & Wudtke 2010: 27). If this is the case, how can we explain hip-hop music's popularity all over the world? Andy Bennett

gives us an example of Germany and how this music trend was made sense of in a completely different social setting: *Broadly speaking, it could be argued the Frankfurt rappers were initially motivated by a similar identity of passions, in which the appropriation of hip hop became bound up with a sense of imagined cultural affinity with African-Americans (Bennett 1999: 81).* Music is also something mobile and thus can enter into new *social locations (Lipsitz 1994: 126f.)* and be able to be received by people in these locations. In order for this to occur, as Bennett explains, people need to identify with the social conditions that led to a particular phenomenon (i.e. hip-hop) and which are themselves represented in its content and aesthetic presentation.

George Lipsitz explains that music as an expressive art form doesn't have to speak for a whole group, but can still represent a specific social situation and raise identification among individuals or groups of a different location that experience a similar situation:

*Although popular music can never be a „pure“ or „authentic“ expression of an undifferentiated group identity, as a highly visible (and audible) commodity, it comes to stand for the specificity of social experience in identifiable communities when it captures the attention, engagement, and even allegiance of people from many different social locations. (Lipsitz 1994: 126f.)*

Mobility and technology contribute to the spread and exchange of various musical forms and expressions. These forms are adapted in new contexts because individuals or groups from these new localities can identify either with the contents or simply the form. What sense people make of music, for example through processes of reception, can also alter the content. The meaning of art can be adapted to new localities, through an identification with the meaning by various agents in a new field. But the content can also change while the form stays the same. Art is an expression of historical processes and constraints, as well as of individual experiences and inspiration, that has to do with the former, but it does not have to be interpreted in one specific way. For example the original meaning can get lost in a different context, maybe the language is not even understood, but despite this there seems to be universal patterns that allow people to adopt musical forms for their own purposes. Taylor writes that the influence of the producer is still important for its reception (*Taylor 1997: 51 f.*). However increased globalization can also reduce its importance. As I explained above,

because of the distance that cultural products travel, the symbolic capital of the producer of a work of art can lose importance, conveyed text can be reinterpreted or new meanings and values can be negotiated. Johannes Ismael-Wendt speaks about *postkoloniale Komplexität* [*postcolonial complexity; own translation*], where meanings and contents of cultural products are constantly renegotiated because they are used in a variety of different contexts (Ismael-Wendt 2011: 36). Du Gay also explains that the process of conveying meaning is not a simple one. Meaning is not just transmitted linearly from the producer to the consumer, especially not in the context of increased globalization (du Gay 1997: 10).

Kevin Robins interprets mobility as a phenomenon of globalization, and sees creolization and hybridization as an effect of mobility (Robins 1997: 14; 18). Although this explanation does not seem incorrect, it contains some essentialism and does not provide a useful way of thinking about these processes. More promising is his term *global information economy* (Robins 1997: 22). Robins writes that (t)he *global information economy creates a new international elite of knowledge producers and processors* (Robins 1997: 24). These knowledge producers have to struggle with a contradiction, namely the *universal media products* (Robins 1997: 34f.) that these agents are creating for *global consumers* (Robins 1997: 28f.) are contrasted with the development of regionalization that emphasizes, not diminishes cultural difference (Robins 1997: 33). Transnational media corporations are developing strategies to deal with these regional particularities (Robins 1997: 35f.). Importantly this makes clear how the cultural and economic field are connected: *The globalization process must be seen in terms of the complex interplay of economic and cultural dynamics, involving confrontation, contestation and negotiation* (Robins 1997: 44f.).

This situation affords or produces cultural mediators that possess particular knowledge that helps them to manage these intercultural encounters. And *cultures of production* (Negus 1997: 99) evolve that influence the production of culture. Negus explains that *we need to understand how structures are produced through particular human actions and how economic relationships simultaneously involve the production of cultural meanings* (Negus 1997: 84). Questions of technology and economy in the context of cultural production lead us to the next chapter that deals with questions of mass production.

### 3.2.1 Critics of mass culture

In an explanation similar to that of Bourdieu (1993) Paul du Gay uses the concept of *cultural economy* (du Gay 1997: 3) to make clear that the fields of culture and economy overlap and thus are essential parts of each other. Through the use of this term, du Gay wants to explain how these fields work and that they cannot be analytically or practically separated from one another. He writes: *Our everyday cultural lives are bound up with mass-produced material cultural artefacts to such an extent that a principled opposition between the economic and industrial, on the one hand, and the cultural, on the other, is simply untenable.* (du Gay 1997: 3) The field of cultural production is connected to the economic system of the respective society. This leads us to another aspect of this discussion, the industrial production of culture or cultural artefacts. Walter Benjamin has made an early and important contribution to this topic, as explained above (Benjamin 1968), as well as Theodor Adorno. Adorno criticized the *standardization* of cultural products and the influence of the *culture industry* (Adorno quoted by Negus 1997: 73f.). In his schema, society influences music in a reciprocal fashion (Adorno quoted by Turley 2001: 636), but only under the parameters of the predominant capitalist economic system. Adorno claimed that the culture industry controls the cultural production and reception of art (Adorno quoted by Negus 1997: 73). (Mass produced) music in capitalism only serves the purpose of allowing people to escape the troubles of their work for a short time, in order to be productive again afterwards (Adorno 1978: 19; Negus 1997: 76). In spite of their influential theoretical contributions, later critics have made clear that in terms of production, the early critics have not considered certain aspects. Adorno, for example, did not differentiate between *functional artifacts* and *textual artifacts* (Gendron 1997: 115). As such Adorno equates the content or text (*textual artifact*) with the medium (*functional artifact*). While Negus explains that the fields are simply connected (Negus 1997: 84), Adorno sees an absolute domination of the economic field over the field of cultural production. As a result Adorno leaves little space for agency, instead claiming that the culture industry and capitalist corporations dominate all forms of production (Adorno quoted by Negus 1997: 73). Born and Hesmondhalgh criticize the elitist views of Adorno and claim that the *culture of the “masses”* was the modernist's “other” in music (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 16).

Lipsitz expresses a similar concern to that of Adorno which includes an anxiousness

about aspects of a globalized economic system. In Lipsitz' explanation, multi-culturalism is seen as having a homogenizing effect and supports the spread of capitalism:

*Yet, certain kinds of multi-culturalism and internationalism are also essential elements in the project of transnational capital to erase local differences and distinctions in the hope of making all cultural and political units equally susceptible to investment, exploitation, and the sale of mass-produced commodities that make the love of gain and the lure of accumulation the only cultural qualities that count. (Lipsitz 1994: 14)*

At the same time, Lipsitz explains that music also offers emancipatory potential, as it provides a powerful means to convey messages, to reach and connect people in their struggles. Therefore it has to be understood both how the system works, and how to make use of its structures to accomplish the goals that people are fighting for (Lipsitz 1994: 16; 35). The internet, new technologies and new media are *universalities* (Miller 2010) that leave space for people to use them in different ways, they offer the means without determining the contents. Born and Hesmondhalgh criticize Lipsitz for being too optimistic in his assessment of political struggle through music:

*And yet, in the desire to read these hybrid musics as embodiments of a new and effective cultural politics from the margins, as productive ways of „writing back“ against the center, writers such as Lipsitz and Slobin perhaps overstate the relative cultural power and visibility of these musics, and neglect the extent to which they are structured by an increasingly global and flexible industrial complex. (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 27)*

Even if we do indeed face a monopolization of money in the music business (Feld & Keil 1994: 316f.), Lipsitz draws upon some convincing examples for his assessment of the current global situation, for example hip-hop and reggae. Zips describes how reggae and rastafari became a philosophy which gained worldwide popularity and stands for a fight for justice and solidarity against oppression (Zips 2007). Furthermore, the internet and other new technologies do not only lead to repression but offer means to create new modes of expression, exchange and consumption. Peter Manuel uses the example of India and how technological innovations can also have a diversifying effect (Manuel 2014).

For an understanding of the *cultural economy*, as du Gay (1997) calls it, an examination of *language, meaning and representation* (du Gay 1997: 4f.) are central. Therefore, we now turn to issues of representation and come back from the macro perspective of globalization and economy to a micro focus on representational practices, that contribute to the production of a cultural output.

### **3.3 Representation**

Stuart Hall explains the basic concepts of representation and meaning in the first chapter of the book *Representation* (Hall, Evans & Nixon 2013). According to Hall, the meaning of words or concepts is related to culture and language: *To belong to a culture is to belong to roughly the same conceptual and linguistic universe, to know how concepts and ideas translate into different languages, and how language can be interpreted to refer to or reference the world* (Hall 2013a: 8). If meaning is constructed socially (Hall 2013a: 9; 11) then it cannot be static or fixed, but can be altered consciously or unconsciously over time. One example is related to the representation of the “other” by what he calls *racialization*: The positive image of Africa in the West deteriorated from the middle ages to enlightenment. Hall names three processes that are connected to this changed perception of „race“: the Atlantic trade including slavery, the colonization of Africa and the migration of Africans to the West since 1945 (Hall 2013b: 228f.).

Hall's explanation supports a view that leaves room for individual agency in the construction of meaning (through representation). However there remains the question of interpretation. For Hall this question explains why meaning is not constructed individually, but socially. He writes:

*Meaning has to be actively „read“ or „interpreted“. Consequently, there is a necessary and inevitable imprecision about language. The meaning we take, as viewers, readers or audiences, is never exactly the meaning which has been given by the speaker or writer or by other viewers“* (Hall 2013a: 17)

Still, there is an underlying system that makes it possible for people to communicate in a meaningful way. Hall explains this with the model of Saussure, who differentiates between *langue* and *parole* (Saussure quoted by Hall 2013a: 18). *Langue* stands for the rules and the systems of a particular language, whereas *parole* is the applied language that builds on *langue* (Hall 2013a: 18f.) The problematic aspect of Saussure's work is his neglect of other aspects of language, in particular *power* (Hall 2013a: 19). As such possible power imbalances between speakers in different positions is not taken into account by Saussure's model. Foucault, on the other hand, puts the subject in center stage and especially the power imbalance between subjects (Foucault quoted by Hall 2013a: 27).

Differentiation is a practice related to subject positions, power and categorization: *Difference* primarily operates through a binary system, where relationality is an important aspect. Binarisms are an act of reducing what really is more complex. The opposing parts simultaneously possess qualities of the other part. Difference matters because it is essential for the construction of meaning, a process that also involves aspects of power (Hall 2013b: 224f.). Furthermore, according to Bakhtin, meaning is constructed in a dialogic fashion between *different* subjects (Bakhtin quoted by Hall 2013b: 225). Du Gay says *that culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system* (du Gay quoted by Hall 2013b: 226). For the subject (and also its sexual identity) the *other* is constitutive (Hall 2013b: 227)

Bourdieu also includes the question of power in his work. He also states that certain institutions or individuals are more powerful and thus have more influence on certain processes in society, for example construction of meaning or value (Bourdieu 1993). In contrast to Foucault, he puts power relations closer to questions of social class rather than the subject, but not exclusively. The art field is located within the field of power, that is itself located in the field of class relations (Bourdieu 1993: 37f.). Foucault similarly locates power relations within the field of social relations. However he doesn't see it as monopolized by the ruling class. In Foucault's model, power is universal and has to be seen as circulating in society or having a web-like structure. Furthermore, power is not only repression but also a productive force within society (Foucault quoted by Hall 2013a: 32ff.). Foucault - according to Hall - uses institutions to exemplify his notion of power. For example social sciences have a considerable influence on discourse (Foucault quoted by Hall 2013a: 28.). As a consequence it seems important to include the role of the researcher on his or her field of



research and the related discourse (Feld 1994c: 275; Bohlmann 2002: 26). In the context of representation, Hall describes power as working in quite subtle ways:

*Power, it seems, has to be understood here not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain 'regime of representation'. It includes the exercise of symbolic power through representational practices. Stereotyping is a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence. (Hall 2013b: 249)*

Hall uses this description in the context of representational practices like *stereotyping*. Power is also involved in the ways people talk about something, and is therefore connected to the position of the speaker. Images, for example can have a *preferred meaning*, in that case it is common that the image is accompanied by a text. This combination has the effect of narrowing down the possible interpretations, their interplay directs the meaning (Hall 2013b: 217f.) *Stereotyped* means *reduced to a few essentials, fixed in nature by a few simplified characteristics* (Hall 2013b: 237).

Another important model of Saussure is that of the *signifier* and the *signified* (Saussure quoted by Hall 2013a: 16). They are both elements of the *sign*. The signifier means a *form* (word, picture, etc.) and the signified means the concept or idea that is connected to the signifier (Hall 2013a: 16). To explain this, Hall gives the example of clothes. A certain article of clothing can be recognized and then connotated to a certain concept, a dress can be interpreted to signify elegance, jeans can signify casualness and so on (Hall 2013a: 22f.). These concepts are part of the *semantic fields* of the respective culture (Hall 2013a: 23).

Next to the two important concepts of Foucault, power and the subject, discourse also seems to be of great relevance in this context: *Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language* (Hall 2013a: 29). However Foucault's notion of discourse goes even further: *Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about* (Hall 2013a: 29). Foucault furthermore argues that the subject only exists within discourse, can only take certain positions, and in general only makes sense within it (Foucault quoted by Hall 2013a: 39f.).

Steven Feld argues that the way people talk about music is relevant data in order to examine how people *categorize, associate, evaluate* or *reflect* (Feld 1994a: 92). Record labels are interesting go-betweens in intercultural situations. They are aware that they have to be careful of how they speak about artists and products. The economic structures of the field seem to afford that music is talked about only in a certain way, which brings the discourse sometimes close to a reproduction of stereotypes.

My own role shall be reflected throughout this work. Most importantly, according to the central role of language in culture, my thesis aims to analyze how individuals or institutions talk and write about music, how words and images are used as signifiers and what they aim to signify. The aspects of practice related to representation mentioned above, namely stereotyping, difference and racialization, have to be kept in mind, especially in the context of world music discourse.

The next part, *chapter 4* builds a connection between this chapter, the chapters above on theory and basic terms, and chapter 5 which concentrates on methodology, methods and the presentation of data. It tries to reflect and consider aspects already mentioned, put them in the context of broader questions about music and anthropology and thus build a bridge to the final chapter.

## 4 Anthropology and music

*Most ethnomusicologists understand that today's world, the world in which we and our subjects make, understand, and experience music, is either more complex than it used to be, or we are realizing that it was always complex and our ways of thinking about it were too schematic and blinkered. (Rice 2003: 151)*

This chapter should build a bridge between the previous chapters that focused on basic terms and theory, to *chapter 5* which deals with methodology, methods and the presentation and analysis of my fieldwork and data. My topic will be tangentially concerned with theoretical issues. I want to contrast my research with other possible fields of music studies which are related. Therefore I will discuss general qualities of music and questions about it within the context of anthropology and ethnomusicology.

Anthropology and cultural studies has focused on music for a good reason. Questions concerning meaning and technology can be examined through the study of music and its related practices. Discourse about music, discussions of authenticity, questions of the nature of media consumption and interactions related to music can reveal relevant data about local peculiarities and transnational processes.

### 4.1 Different approaches towards music

Music is a field that is increasingly attracting more and more attention for many different reasons. It is highly mobile and therefore is a good example for transnational studies or approaches related to globalization (*Gibert 2011*) as well containing many different kinds of information. Practices surrounding music are also numerous. A researcher can simultaneously work on music theory, on the creativity of musicians, on the contents of lyrics, the context in which music is presented (music video, advertisement, a movie), material aspects of music (technology, production, consumption, sound carriers) and related aspects of

consumption in a broader sense (lifestyle, identity, music scenes). Sonic qualities and aspects of hearing can be a topic of study that contrasts effectively with music. For instance, Veit Erlmann's edited book *Hearing Cultures* (2005) deals with non-musical forms of sound. His essays deal with *cultural and historical contextualization of auditory perception* (Erlmann 2005: 3). Furthermore, music can be seen as both an expression of the social circumstances in which the musicians live and as a reaction to it. Studies related to music can reflect the role that musicians have in society through their status as stars or critics (Feld 1994c: 264). Music can furthermore be studied as related to work, copyright and governmental or institutional policies. One can research these practices within the large field of music generally, which include texts, utterances and acts that are made by the agents in this field (Bourdieu 1993). Bourdieu's concept of the *field of cultural production* (1993) portrays a work of art as something that is produced by different agents in the field. What does an approach to art that takes these factors into account look like?

*It (...) has to consider as contributing to production not only the direct producers of the work in its materiality (artists, writer, etc.) but also the producers of the meaning and value of the work – critics, publishers, gallery directors and the whole set of agents whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing and recognizing the work of art as such, in particular teachers (but also families, etc.). (Bourdieu 1993: 37)*

In other words, only if consumers perceive something as art (or music), it can be seen as art (Bourdieu 1993: 35). One can say that this practice has further dimensions: different agents contribute to categorizations and valuation of said works of art or music. As Bourdieu notes, in reference to Marcel Mauss: some agents are the magicians and they need the faith of the audience in their magic for the magic to work (Mauss quoted by Bourdieu 1993: 81).

For this thesis the focus will be mainly on the practices of record labels, music festival organizers and mediators. These agents will be examined through the practices and texts they apply, how they reach an audience and thereby promote and represent certain kinds of music, as well as how they deal with their own position in the field. In this way how music is talked about, how Africa is represented and how “Africa” works as a „label“ will be examined. Feld suggests, for example, one focuses on *the practices (...) surrounding the production and distribution of recordings* (Feld 1994c: 258). My approach and methods are anthropological

and acknowledge Clifford's critique of ethnography as blind for dynamics and mobility in the world. Clifford calls for

*a serious ethnographic encounter with the agents and territories that Anthropologists (and Ethnomusicologists) encounter on their way to their imaginary, isolated locals: international travels, the city, and the cosmopolitans who visit or reside there, people such as school teachers, missionaries, doctors, government officials, traders, and producers of commercial sound recordings. (Clifford quoted by Rice 2003: 153)*

In fact, to look at the role and experience of travellers and cultural intermediaries in connection to music, reveals a lot about how music is conceptualized individually and also „culturally“. I have slightly altered the methodology of *multi-sited ethnography* (Marcus 1995) and instead focused on „multi-sited research partners“. Most of my research partners travel from their current locations to African countries on a regular basis. A lot of them interact with musicians from various countries, get information for their work, travel with their contact persons and invite them to their homes in Europe. They are connected to each other and up to date on the projects of the other people. Among my research partners one can find these *cosmopolitans*, journalists, ministerial employees and *producers of sound recordings* (Clifford quoted by Rice 2003: 153).

With this in mind, an ethnography of a musical group or a music style seemed less appealing than looking at the people who are connecting musicians and audiences. After all, these are the people who are directly involved in the construction of meaning. Through the representation of one group of people to another. I wish to note that such a position is close to that of the ethnographer themselves. Both experience similar problems. Bohlman, for example, writes about the questions that any ethnomusicologist has to ask himself or herself when it comes to the representation of the „other“:

*Does ethnomusicology's power to represent depend on the others it encounters? Does the acuity and authenticity of representation depend on heightening the degree of alterity, which by extension depends on expanding, if not exaggerating, the fissure? Does a representational vocabulary grounded in alterity actually contribute to the invention of the „other“? (Bohlman 2002: 37)*

It is particularly interesting to reflect on the question of what this *representational vocabulary* in the field of music is. How is the „other“ constructed through language and how pervasive are these words or concepts? Steven Feld notes that a focus on *transcultural record productions* (Feld 1994c: 258) can tell us a lot about the producers and consumers of music. It can connect their positions and question *essentialized otherness* (Feld 1994c: 258).

Born and Hesmondhalgh suggest that despite postmodern discourse and its promises, a liberation from an exoticistic narrative in music could not be achieved (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 19). It is indeed hard to abandon certain discourses: how can scholarship address the problematic aspects of a trope without recourse to the vocabulary and the narratives that are used by the people involved? The position of the musical mediator can certainly reveal a lot about these dynamics, as also David Hesmondhalgh suggests: *How do musicians and music industry workers see the issues of ethics, identity, and commerce involved in the musical exchange and borrowing?* (Hesmondhalgh 2000: 280) In chapter 5 I will give comprehensive analysis of this question.

In ethnomusicology, the focus has changed from the notation or description of music towards a method of participation (Fuhr 2011). From studying the music of *natives*, there was a shift towards naming the artists and individuals who played the music (Taylor 1997: 16). In this sense ethnomusicology came closer to cultural studies and the analysis of discourses and texts about music. Kofi Agawu writes in his essay *Representing African Music* (1992):

*Scholarship outside Africa has continued to ransack material collected during earlier, safe periods, to analyze material collected by others, or simply to turn attention from the nature of the material to the nature of discourse about the material. (Agawu 1992: 256)*

For one thing, we see that recorded music was important for scholarship (Bohlman 2002: 23ff.), it provided access to music if it was not possible to access the places where music was made. However I would suggest it is not only because the lack of material that attention has shifted towards the discourse and writing *about* music. This was part of a process of decolonization in anthropology and ethnomusicology. The focus on discourses and representation has also brought the critique that there is too little concern now with the music

itself (Taylor 1997: xviii).

#### 4.1.1 Music and aesthetics

If we assume that marketing of (African) music to an audience tries to appeal to certain aesthetic preferences of this audience, we find an analogy to Bourdieu's description of *position takings* within the field: for example, for which newspaper a journalist writes and what he writes will correspond to the dispositions of the journalist and their *feeling* for what makes sense (Bourdieu 1993: 95). These dispositions are therefore related to issues like class belonging and socialization (Bourdieu 1993: 95). Mediators are experts for, at least, people who have similar aesthetical preferences and thus will correspond to the presentation of the music. For “world music”, Bohlman talks of a unique aesthetic embeddedness that I only partly agree with. Nevertheless, his explanation will help us in a further examination of the topic:

*In our encounters with world music, aesthetic issues cannot be isolated and bracketed off. Searching for meaning in the music alone, as if it possessed aesthetic autonomy will yield only incomplete answers at best, and it will violate the music at worst. The complex aesthetic embeddedness of world music is one of the ways in which it differs radically from Western music. (Bohlman 2002: 13)*

What Bohlman says concerning aesthetics is probably true for the marketing or promotion of “world music”, thought of in a commercial way, there is maybe a difference in how this branch of music used to be presented, to some extent also in academia. However to talk about a dichotomy in terms of the aesthetics of the music itself does harm to the varieties of musics that are put under this umbrella of world music in the west, which means that he confuses a marketing label with an analytic category. It seems like Bohlman wants to cement this conceptual dichotomy that recent scholars seek to break. What we should instead talk about are the economic practices in the west surrounding “world music“ that still use certain metaphors and aesthetics in the presentation of music which originates outside of the Western hemisphere. Some of Bohlman's ideas are pretty useful but he doesn't question the term

“world music” enough. Kofi Agawu asks: *Can we (...) study any music without taking note of the social, economic, political, and technological circumstances of its producers?* (Agawu 1992: 246). The following chapter will deal with these political matters that are connected to music.

#### 4.1.2 Political dimensions of music

Stuart Hall sees culture as very strongly connected to language: *To belong to a culture is to belong to roughly the same conceptual and linguistic universe, to know how concepts and ideas translate into different languages, and how language can be interpreted to refer to or reference the world.* (Hall 2013a: 8) What happens if the lyrics of music are not understood? Of course, music has different qualities and the aesthetics of the sound itself can convey a lot of meanings. However the level of language can give music other dimensions. These linguistic dimensions make it clear that music is not something neutral, but has emancipating as well as manipulative qualities. Kelly Askew, for example, explains how music was a subversive means of resistance and ridiculing the colonial masters in East Africa (Askew 2003). In the music itself but also in the context of the music, for example at events, the battle against colonial rule and for national liberation was organized (Askew 2003). George Lipsitz names other contexts, in which music was important for struggles of national liberation, for example chimurenga music in Zimbabwe (Lipsitz 1994: 12). The music of the band Tamikrest, who are on the Glitterbeat record label founded by Chris Eckman, my informant (*see interview 3*), points to the critical situation of Touareg people in the Sahel by using their musical success in the West (ZDF 2015).

However, serious ethical questions are connected to the political aspects of music. What if the lyrics are not understood? Can one enjoy the music without knowing what the content is? Can one party to music that has serious content? Is it a sign of solidarity or just the celebration of one's own exoticism? George Lipsitz criticizes some practices of western listeners. In the context of the success of the Haitian band Boukman Eksperyans:

*They might use this music to become informed and connected to the life-and-death issues of revolutionary struggle in an impoverished Third World country, but they are*



*just as likely to use the music of Boukman experience to the pain and strife in Haiti into just one more exotic spectacle, one more novelty, one more diversion for jaded consumers living in wealthy Western countries. (Lipsitz 1994: 11)*

So we can say that music needs on one hand an explanation and the understanding of the audience, but on the other hand, through the structures in which music is happening, modern consumers treat music more and more as a commodity and therefore tend to neglect the initial aspects. For Neil Lazarus it is important that listening to world music needs to happen as a *subversive practice* (Lazarus quoted by Lipsitz 1994: 61). To not consume music because it is a commodity would not be a solution either, as Lipsitz suggests. If music is to achieve any change, it has to operate within and make use of the system and the structures that it is contained by:

*Concepts of cultural practice that privilege autonomous, 'authentic', and non-commercial culture as the only path to emancipation do not reflect adequately the complexities of culture and commerce in the contemporary world. (Lipsitz 1994: 16)*

Lipsitz sees emancipatory potential in music to fight whichever injustice or hegemony it encounters, but in order for this to happen people have to understand how the system works and make use of such potential. Popular music styles like hip-hop or reggae are a proof of this assumption, according to Lipsitz (Lipsitz 1994: 13; 63).

To demand from listeners awareness of all the implications of his or her listening habits, is quite radical and also does not reflect that access to certain types of knowledge or education is highly privileged. It is the duty of people aware of these implications (academics, mediators, journalists) to bring these implications to attention, but it also has to be said that some people are simply not aware of exoticism of their practices, which can be related to issues of class, or access to education. Furthermore, people's attitude can be the result of the discourse in which they are contained. So how does one deal with these problems if one does not want to make moralistic accusations? A start is to question the practices of representation carried out by important go-betweens, like academics, mediators, advertisers and institutions (like schools). One of my interview partners, for example, felt that African cultural achievements were not represented in an adequate way in his child's schoolbook, so

he contacted the publisher's house and suggested he contributed to one of their schoolbooks, which was accepted. He showed me the book during our interview (*see interview 7*). In it he had written a paragraph on music in West Africa.

In terms of exoticism and representation in the field of art, it is generally difficult to draw a line between what is okay and what is not. It was already mentioned above that some artists reference exoticism or include it in their work in a creative and provocative way. But what about art or commercial art forms that profit from exoticism and that use it for their business models? How can this be criticised without receiving a response that pleads artistic freedom? Where does one draw the line? Perhaps at the exploitation of others? I believe we are facing a triangle of appreciation, exploitation and rewards, and this triangle is located within a frame of capitalist economic constraints.

I suggest that to achieve permanent change for these problematic concepts and practices the idea of *the field of cultural production* (Bourdieu 1993) must be used. The attitudes of single agents in the field can not solely bring about these changes, but their acts can target other agents or institutions in the field, as they together define or produce meanings.

#### **4.1.3 Cultural and social context of music**

As stated above, music works within a context and artists are influenced by their environment as they respond to social realities. They are confronted with economic constraints and develop strategies to cope with these. Especially since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, music has been listened to in completely new contexts. In many places around the globe, new technological developments took music outside of the respective social settings in which they were embedded:

*Radio and records have been an extremely powerful means of disseminating music to people since the 1920s. Wire recordings, reel tape recordings, and, more recently, cassette tapes have transformed listening habits and musical cultures throughout the world. (Keil 1994b: 247)*

There are several consequences for these developments: new practices and habits develop around new technological means of consuming music. We are facing a change in culture because of this. At the same time music becomes separable from its source and therefore increasingly mobile. The results of these developments can be interpreted in different ways. While some speak of *cross-fertilization* (Slobin quoted by Stokes 2004: 48) others see a danger of *homogenization* (Erlmann quoted by Stokes 2004: 49).

Music has also increasingly become a factor in the political agency of nation states, the social and cultural life of a nation and even as a regulator for the daily life of people. Also in other fields of research, like history, social and cultural life becomes more important and this is inevitably tied to popular music. Parker and Rathbone (2007) write about the popularity of rumba in the Congo:

*Most emblematically, new forms of popular music provided an infectious soundtrack to the struggles of day-to-day life and gave voice to aspirations for a better future. By the late 1960's, the most renowned citizen of the Congo was not the political sorcerer Mobutu but guitar wizard Franco Luambo Makiadi, the leader of T.P.O.K. Jazz and Africa's first musical superstar. Franco's rumba sound swept the continent, transforming Mobutu's Congo (or Zaire, as the nation was renamed in 1971) from the heart of darkness of colonial and postcolonial mythmaking to the „heart of danceness“. The recent expansion of historical research away from the political and economic and towards the social and cultural is beginning to reveal the dynamics of these underlying rhythms of everyday life. (Parker & Rathbone 2007: 132)*

Keil also pleads for an examination of the social interactions occurring around musical forms. Scholars should look at how people make use of their records by analyzing the practices connected to their collections. What habits develop when people are listening to music? (Keil 1994b: 248)

Equally important is the question of how the listener's habits are regulated or manipulated by institutions or nation states. Following Bourdieu's idea of the field, music never comes to the listeners unmediated (Bourdieu 1993). Even through the increased dissemination of records, music did not automatically become commodified. Some states, like Tanzania regulated the production of records, recordings were played only on the radio during

the time of socialism. Music from outside the country was not allowed (*Bender 1985: 140f.*). These regulations had influence on cultural principles, like the constant integration of external (musical) influences on local music (*Askew 2003; Hacke & Reuster-Jahn 2011*). After opening again to the global music market, music styles from outside Tanzania were quickly adapted to local circumstances: *However, the most vital development that turned Hip-hop music into a popular and even a mass cultural phenomenon required recording facilities, appropriate lyrics in Swahili, and organized promotion (Hacke & Reuster-Jahn 2011: 4).* So it becomes clear once again that language and local identification, technology and promotion play a vital role in the field of cultural production.

In the following chapter I will come to the practical part of my research and explain the related methodological reflections, the applied methods, and the analysis and results of my study.

## 5 Empirical knowledge and analysis

In this chapter I will explain the methods of my research and their methodological embeddedness. It will be explained why certain methods were used to gain data, how these methods correspond to the theoretical foundations of my work but also what problems evolved whilst using these methods. Also general reflections on the fieldwork will be given. I will elaborate on how the data of the interviews and of the fieldwork were analyzed and what the results of this analysis are. This will be shown through subchapters on the basic case studies of my work, which are on the record label *Glitterbeat* and the music festival *Druga Godba*. One chapter is on the basic findings that come out of the theoretical foundation, observations and results of the research. The results will focus on the main research questions and the basic theoretical assumptions of the previous chapters. Even if it is stressed in the literature that record labels as institutions are less and less important and other institutions and technologies gain influence (*Stokes 2004: 50*), it should be shown why and how record labels are still important and what their influence and agency looks like. Central to my explanations are the assumption of a *field of cultural production* (*Bourdieu 1993*) that consists of different institutions that are competing for influence and have different kinds of strategies and agency. These strategies and the agency they create are connected to practices of representation (*Hall 2013a*), the production of texts and the shaping of discourses (*Hall 2013a*). Therefore the methodical focus is on the texts and practices that are connected to the field and how they can be analytically related to theory. An important revelation turns out to be role of mediating institutions (whether that is a record label, or a festival – a place or a cultural institution). Practices of referencing, mediating and curating are important in this context. It seems that they are of central importance to the field and cannot be replaced by new technologies, but new technologies serve these institutions as a means to maintain or extend their practices and positions.

## 5.1 Methodology

The basic theoretical assumption of this thesis is that of a *field of cultural production* (Bourdieu 1993) which consists of different agents and institutions that together shape and constitute said field. These agents produce texts and compete for different positions in the field. Now, the methodological strategy is to discover the rules and which govern the functioning of the field by analyzing the texts (what do people say and write) that these individuals produce. Following Bourdieu, what they say and do contains more knowledge about underlying processes and rules than they know (Bourdieu quoted by Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 209). Reinhard Sieder writes:

*Agents structure social relations through their interactions and are at the same time structured through the rules of these interactions, through the relations, connections and resources, within which and with which they are active. (Sieder 2008: 147; own translation into English<sup>7</sup>)*

Sieder wants to express that processes of production are also processes of reproduction of underlying, unconsciously embodied structures. In this perspective individuals are never free in what they are doing, but there is always room for agency. This confirms also Bourdieu's statement, namely that their acting and their practices always contain knowledge, which to a large extent individuals do not consciously apprehend but gain through their socialization within a field. Analysis of what people say or do can reveal knowledge about underlying processes or rules.

Through *subject-centered* and *self-centered* (Rice 2003: 158) qualitative ethnography, texts were gathered and analyzed that illustrate and reveal both something about the individuals and their positions in the field and about the field itself. These texts were produced and collected through qualitative interviews and participant observation in the field. Interview partners recommended other people to talk to, which resulted in a network of people, most of them connected to each other.

An interesting aspect of the network and people connected to this network is to think

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<sup>7</sup> Original: *Die Akteure strukturieren die gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse durch ihre Interaktionen und werden zugleich selbst durch die Regeln der Interaktionen, durch die Verhältnisse, Beziehungen und Ressourcen strukturiert, in denen und mit denen sie tätig sind. (Sieder 2008: 147)*

of it not only as a field, but as individual participants in a certain discourse. Foucault writes that discourse is a concept that not only deals with what individuals say but also what they do. This perspective is therefore also more efficient in terms of analysis than older models and can be related to participant observation (*Foucault quoted by Hall 2013a: 29*).

Crucially the utterances and practices of the interview partners tell us something about their positions in the field, how they navigate through the field and also how they influence it. Various factors such as economic and social background as well as a feeling for the field can explain how they behave and why they take on certain positions (*Bourdieu 1993: 66f.; 75f.; 95*). From certain important positions people can have more influence on the construction of meaning and the representation of certain phenomena and specific groups of people (*Bourdieu 1993: 132; Hall 2013a: 40*). As my interview partners are go-betweens and occupy important positions between different groups of people, I consider their utterances and texts as specifically important for the construction of meaning and the representation of other people. Similarly to scholars, these people operate at a visible level, most of the time at public points of meaning production. Therefore an important feature of my analysis was to look at how they talk about artists, their own positions, their travel experiences, the music, ethics, as well as other people, institutions and so on. Zemp states that *the ways people talk about music can be a significant datum of musical concepts, theory, and experience and can be studied systematically* (*Zemp quoted by Feld 1994a: 92*).

Due to certain developments and changes through an increasingly interconnected world, anthropology had to adapt itself theoretically and methodologically to this changed environment (*Eriksen 2001: 297; Rice 2003: 153*). George Marcus says that from a methodological point of view, we can choose between an approach that contrasts a local phenomenon with the global system, or the approach of *multi-sited ethnography* which follows the object of study to its different stations or locations (*Marcus 1995: 96*). Different anthropologists have stressed that popular culture and especially music are good examples of the processes and changes related to globalization (*Hannerz 1987: 554; Eriksen 2001: 299*).

## 5.2 Methods

### 5.2.1 Interviews

Following the main methodological assumptions (see above), the essential method for this thesis was qualitative, narrative interviews (*Forschauer & Lueger 2003; Sieder 2008*) that leave a lot of room for ideas or topics that are important to the interview partner. Therefore the questions needed to be open and should only provide the stimulus for narrating freely.

One danger or problem of making interviews with musicians or people active in the music business is that the content can come close to that of music journalism. There is always a danger of getting answers that seem prefabricated for PR-interviews. David Hesmondhalgh mentions this aspect:

*There has been relatively little space in popular music studies for the views of musicians and industry staff. This is perhaps because of a worry among researchers that a focus on musicians' conceptions of the creative process would risk reproducing the banalities of publicity interviews. (Hesmondhalgh 2000: 281)*

This is certainly a potential problem, and some answers do give the impression of being a statement that has been ready made before or previously seen in a music magazine. However, I suggest that through an appropriate introduction of the interview partner to the intentions of the interviewer and his or her aims, these answers can be avoided. Also through open questions and long interviews, there can be time and room for in-depth answers.

Forschauer and Lueger recommend that the different perspectives within the field should be represented in the choice of interview partners (*Forschauer & Lueger 2003: 145*). Unfortunately this would have created too much data, only during my participant observation I could also get in contact with different other agents of the field like musicians and the audience. Concerning the interviews, I focused mainly on industry staff and cultural workers, but also music journalists were included who provided some kind of contrasting perspective.



## 5.2.2 Participant observation

As the core method of social and cultural anthropology, participant observation aims at involving the researcher actively in the field that he or she is examining. There is no fixed instruction for the use of this method (*Lüders 2005*), but there are key examples of the use of participant observation in social sciences (*Whyte 1996; Malinowski 2001*). Especially Whyte stresses that the carrying out of this method depends very much on the personality of the researcher (*Whyte 1996: 302*). In general, this method has the advantage of allowing the researcher to find out how the utterances of research partners fit with what they are actually doing (*Boellstorff 2012: 54*). Foucault's concept of *discourse* includes both aspects: *It attempts to overcome the traditional distinction between what one says (language) and what one does (practice). Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge (Hall 2013a: 29)*. The researcher has to be aware that participant observation always means an intervention in the lives of the research partners and in the field in general (*Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 213*). That would necessitate that the researcher becomes part of the discourse and the construction of the topic. This fact cannot be neglected in the analysis and in the results of the work.

Getting in contact with interview partners and negotiating interviews is part of the research and part of the interviews. It can be seen as a kind of participant observation (*Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 200f.*). As a result this is valuable data that should not be overlooked in the process of noting down field experience and also later on in analysis. I paid attention to who my interview partners recommended to me and followed these paths. For the negotiation of new interviews, the earlier interview partners were a reference for the new ones.

After conducting some interviews, it became clear that of central importance for my interview partners and therefore for my research was the Druga Godba Festival. My interview partner Rok Košir, who was director of the festival in 2014, signed me up for the volunteer programme, which included spreading flyers in Ljubljana, promoting the festival at events, hosting bands during the festival and working at the entrance and backstage. All these practices gave me a good impression of the work around and behind the festival. Most of all this involvement made it possible or easier to get in contact with the audience, bands and other festival staff. My tasks included guiding my host band Mulatu Astatke through

Ljubljana, picking them up at the airport, bringing them coffee and taking them from the hotel to the concert location and vice versa. Before the festival I had to spread flyers at certain events, to homes in Ljubljana, advertising the festival at other festivals and so on.

One of my main interview partners, Chris Eckman, invited me to visit his studio in Ljubljana, where he was working on a record of one of the artists on his label Glitterbeat. Sonja Porle, a Slovenian writer, who wrote two books on her journeys to Africa and who made exhibitions in Ljubljana about the toys of West African children, invited me to her home town Škofja Loka, where she provided me with books, CD's and a documentary about herself (Dragan 2005).

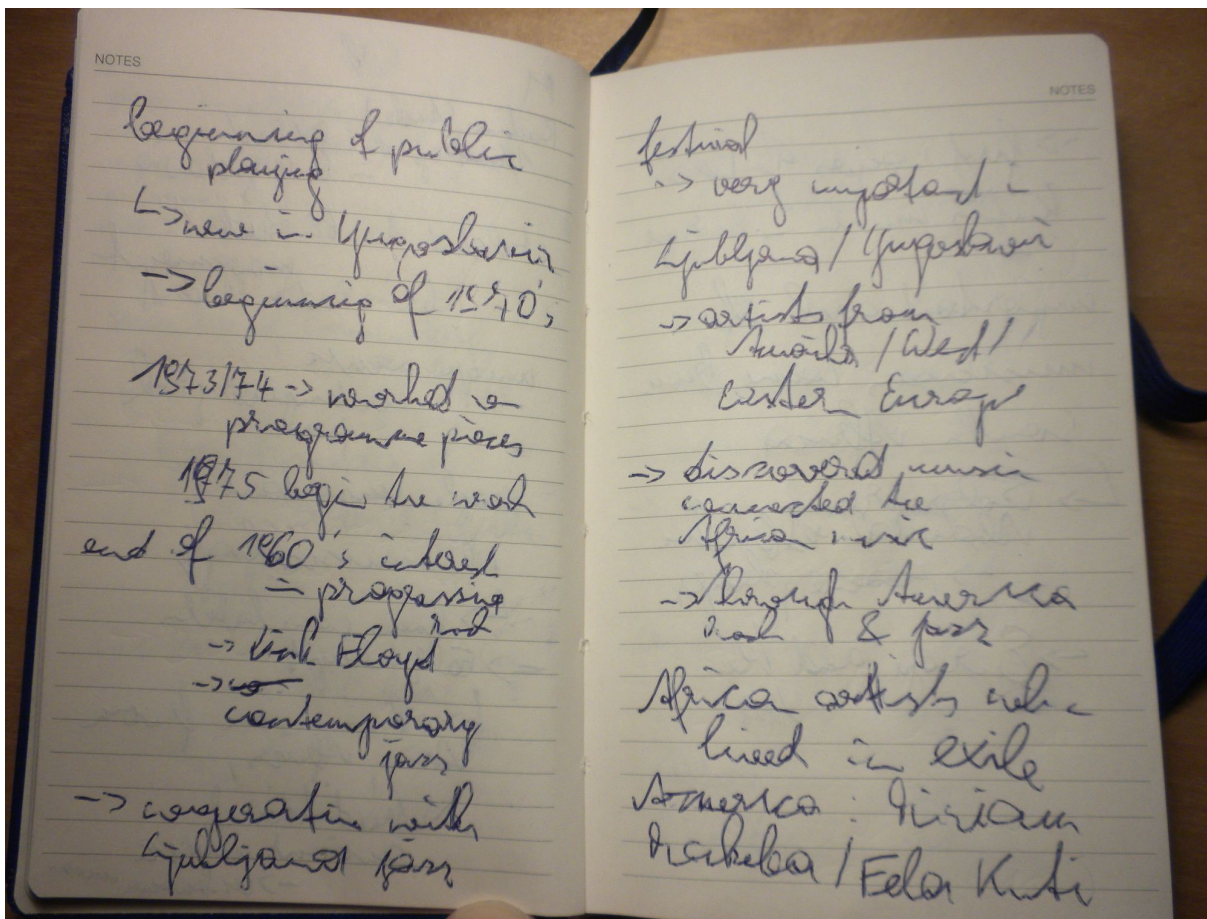


illustration 1: research diary

### **5.2.3 Research diaries and records**

Research diaries are an important tool to note down and preserve information in the context of field work. Following the recommendation of my supervisor in Ljubljana, I used several notebooks and diaries and also occasionally wrote down information in my mobile phone or my laptop. To split up the information on several books or devices has also the advantage that not all the information gets lost, if one research diary or notebook gets lost. I used the notebooks to write down information during and after informal interviews as well as the recorded, formal interviews and to remember important points for later on in the interview. The minutes of some interviews or of field work were only taken some days after the interview or fieldwork, due to time reasons. In general, I was able to write down the information immediately after the meeting or field experience. Furthermore, I used the notebooks to write down important contacts and important ideas that I had at any moment.

The formal interviews were recorded in full length, with the agreement of the interview partners. The recording of one interview was started a bit after the interview had begun, for the reason that the utterances of the interview partner should not be interrupted. One interview was ended after half an hour, following the wish of my interview partner, informal talks however went on for several hours in that case and some of the information was taken down by memory afterwards. All recorded interviews were fully transcribed, using the F4 programme for transcription. In general, with the exception of the notes that I took during the interviews, I preferred to take notes only after meetings with research partners, in order to avoid them feeling uncomfortable. Another source was a documentary about one of my interview partner's that she provided to me personally (*Dragan 2005*).

### **5.2.4 Analysis**

#### **5.2.4.1 System analysis**

The basic method of analysis for the data I gathered was system analysis, a kind of

hermeneutical analysis that follows the description of Froschauer and Lueger (2003). Except for interview 3 I could not fully put into practice their criteria for this kind of analysis. This is partially because it is enormously time-intensive. For interview number 3 all the sequences were analyzed according to their description, in order to reveal important patterns of practice. For the rest of the interviews, the sequences that seemed most promising and also the ones that showed similar patterns to that of interview 3 were analyzed in-depth. One disadvantage of selective analysis is that seemingly unimportant sequences can be overlooked, which actually contain important information, according to Froschauer and Lueger (2003: 102).

For system analysis, the sequences of the transcribed interview are paraphrased and then analyzed in different categories (*see illustration 2*). The influence of the interview situation on the text production is reflected in the category *text frame* (Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 150; *own translation*). In the category *life-context* the researcher reflects how structures and world view influence the text-production of the research partner. Following the obtaining of results from this category, one thinks of the consequences that evolve out of them for the interactions of the interview partners (category *interaction effect*) and what this can in turn mean for the structures (category *system effect*) (Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 150f.; *own translation*). The analysis results in different versions or interpretations of the texts which are hypothetical at first. At a later point, one can filter out patterns and dismiss some versions and interpretations.

System analysis essentially sees texts as *Manifestationen von Strukturen und Prozessen* [*manifestations of structures and processes*] (Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 90; *own translation into English*). The facts themselves are not important but the processes and rules that are responsible for these facts. This analysis allows the rules to be observed (Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 103). It should lead to an abstract level of knowledge that points to the structures behind what is said. What can be observed is called a *Phänomen* [*phenomenon*]. A *Struktur* [*structure*] is not the same as a phenomenon but is what is behind a phenomenon and is revealed through the analysis of the phenomenon (Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 211).

Even if the agency of individuals is limited, the mutual influence of people and structures is evident, at least according to the approach of *system theory* (Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 180; 182). This is the basic assumption of my thesis and should be illustrated by my research. This assumption also defines the methods and the analysis of data. All of these theoretical, methodological and analytical assumptions are not only connected but also

influence each other, which means that for the process of analysis, the choice of methods has to be reflected (*Froschauer & Lueger 2003: 194*).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Systemanalyse Interview 1						
2							
3	S/Z Nr.	Thema	Paraphrase	Textrahmen	Lebenswelt	Interaktionseffekte	Wirkungskontext
4	1	Started as a musician, moved into production where he started to have contact with African musicians. Interest in african music started with CD from Talking Heads.	I influence the interviewpartner through associating him with an "African music label"; other aspects of music could be more important for him but I motivate him to talk about this aspect. I put him in the role of the music label owner and not another, like musician. I give him the position to be suited to talk about African music, legitimization seems to come from his work with the label	emphasizes that there is a gap between being a musician and being on the side of music business	he will emphasize these characteristics to the artists he works with; that changes the way he deals with the artists on his label	for the artists it make a difference when they see that they work with a producer who also knows the position of a musician	Erste Memos, Interpretationen
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							

illustration 2: screenshot of system analysis

#### 5.2.4.2 Topic related points for reflection

In the context of world music discourse and music industry research, John Hutnyk offers some interesting points that can be reflected upon in the analysis of the topic. His article *Adorno at Womad (1998)* offers a critical view on hybridity discourse and recommends reflection on the world music phenomenon in a larger context. I will list some of these reflections he offers on the discourse, as it comes close to my research questions and to the overall topic of this thesis. According to Hutnyk, the researcher should ask questions related to

- *the influence of certain individual entrepreneurs* related to the music industry,
- *notions of tradition and authenticity, the wider context of international politics,*
- *market forces and imperial relations,*

- *exoticism,*
- *technological development, in the music industry and in communications and transportation, facilitating the performance of those from far away locations, their recordings distributed world-wide, their images beamed globally via satellite television (Hutnyk 1998: 405f.)*

These points illustrate how many agents and institutions are involved in the construction of the meaning of the term world music and the whole discourse. It is shaped by individuals as well as media, by political factors as much as economic ones. Notions of tradition, exoticism and lifestyle should not be overlooked in this discussion. Increased mobility, technological aspects and commodification practices play an important role as well. The points of Hutnyk effectively summarize the factors I explained in more detail in the previous chapters.

### **5.3 Results: Records labels, music festivals and the role of mediators**

*It is, we suggest, another naturalistic fallacy to believe that the musical object arrives fully formed in the world without the mediation of the author/musician/composer and the corresponding state/stage of production. (Born 2000: 46)*

The following chapters will present the results of my fieldwork and the analysis of the data. The main emphasis is on the case studies of the record label Glitterbeat and the festival Druga Godba as well as the research partners around these institutions that I worked with. Additional data comes from other interviews, online material, magazines, documentaries and the inclusion of the role of the researcher. The results are connected to the literature and theory presented in the previous chapters. James Clifford says that certain people can tell us more about the situation of the world than others (*Clifford quoted by Rice 2003: 153*). I would suggest that this is certainly the case for the interview partners I worked with. Researching practices and structures surrounding music seems to provide significant data (*Hannerz 1987: 554; Eriksen 2001: 299*), which explains the proliferation of scholarship in this field in recent

years. The perspectives of people connected to this field, as travellers, as experts, mediators and producers of commodities and knowledge offer particular information about structures and processes in a field that is increasingly global, while at the same time connected to specific localities. One might say that through the increased distance between musicians and audience, record labels or mobile individuals become even more important as mediators. The demand for their role results from the increased mobility of things and persons, and can have implications for the quality of information. As Arjun Appadurai explains: *(A)s commodities travel greater distances (institutional, spatial, temporal), knowledge about them tends to become partial, contradictory, and differentiated. (Appadurai 1990c: 56).*

The example of music as a commodity, information about the musicians, about royalties, about song lyrics and contents gets harder to obtain as it travels larger distances. This makes some kind of mediation necessary for the audience, which gives increased influence to record labels, music journalism and similar agents in the field of music. If contents are not clear through the music, its lyrics or embeddedness in a context (i.e. ritual), then sounds, aesthetics (Bohlman 2002: 78f.), artworks and the overall presentation of a product or a band become more important (advertisement, documentaries, etc.).

### 5.3.1 Case study Glitterbeat

*It's a decent thing to bring cool sounds into the world, this is nothing to be ashamed of. (I3: 9f.)*

Glitterbeat<sup>8</sup> is a record label that separated from the Germany based indie label Glitterhouse Records<sup>9</sup>. The studio and office of Glitterbeat are located in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, but the label is also based in Germany. The owners of the label are Chris Eckman, who was my interview partner, and Peter Weber. I did a formal interview with Chris in Ljubljana, visited his studio „Zuma“ and met him on several occasions in the city.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://glitterbeat.com/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.glitterhouse.com/>

My initial plan was to research the Germany based label Analog Africa<sup>10</sup> which releases music from African countries, but also South American countries, with a focus on music styles related to the African diaspora in these countries. After the initial contact with Analog Africa was not successful in terms of arranging a meeting, I started researching in Ljubljana. My first interview partners Rok Košir (*see interview 2*) and Janez Pirc (*see interview 1*) both recommended me to get in contact with Chris, whom they knew ran a record label with a focus on African artists and was located in Ljubljana. This made getting in contact easier, as I did the second year of my master programme<sup>11</sup> at the University of Ljubljana.

Rok, who is a friend of Chris, gave me his e-mail address and so I wrote an email to Chris, who agreed to meet me in a café in Ljubljana for an interview. We talked about his musical socialization, his contact with music from Africa, his own career as a musician, his record label Glitterbeat and the musicians that are on the label. We talked especially of his diverse experiences in different geographical regions and in different roles - as a musician, a producer, and label co-owner – and he offered a valuable insight into the field of music.

Chris grew up in the United States of America. He explains that his initial contact with „African music“ was the band Talking Heads that referenced to various African musicians, whose records Chris was then researching (*I3: 1*). Another crucial inspiration was a friend of Chris who travelled to Mali himself and made some recordings<sup>12</sup> during this journey (*I3:1*). Listening to these records and hearing about the journey, Chris was fascinated by the idea of going to Mali himself (*I3: 1*). What followed was an aspiration of Chris to go to Mali himself, which he eventually did. He told me that this trip changed a lot in his life. Chris stated that he didn't go to Mali to get involved in the music scene or to do recordings, like his friend (*I3: 2*). In 2008 he went to play at the „Festival au Désert“ and met the young band Tamikrest. He started to collaborate with this new band and eventually recorded their first album (*I3: 2*). Chris and Peter connected Tamikrest to the record label Glitterhouse, with which they are both involved (*I3: 7f.*).

The musical experiences in Mali also made clear to Chris that the structures in the music industry are problematic for the collaboration of western and non-western musicians:

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<sup>10</sup> <http://analogafrica.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://creole.univie.ac.at/>

<sup>12</sup> The recordings have been released as an album, which is already sold out:  
[http://www.sublimefrequencies.com/item.asp?Item\\_id=14](http://www.sublimefrequencies.com/item.asp?Item_id=14)



*(T)here are ethical issues involved in all of this and I think that these are profound issues and I think profoundly misunderstood issues with collaboration of western musicians or western labels and African musicians. I think a lot of the accepted conventional wisdom about it is completely wrong but it doesn't mean that there's not things that have to be considered. You know, the power thing just based on commerce and money is just way out of balance, I mean you and I are rich people (...) just by the definition that you are there, you are rich. So you obviously go into these situations, very out of balance situations, in terms of, you know, that kind of power is which of course increases the level of responsibility, you know, infidene amounts, you have to be very careful how you navigate these things. (I3: 3)*

The general economic situation makes collaboration between western music business institutions and African musicians structurally imbalanced in terms of power-positions, which has implications for these interactions and negotiations. Depending on the individual abilities to recognize this imbalance, the agents develop different strategies and are more or less careful how they act. Chris, for example, is aware that international music production is a sensitive area that is also the target of a negative critique of collaboration. When he criticizes the *accepted conventional wisdom* (I3: 3) it becomes clear that he is aware of this critique, but from his own experience does not fully agree with its general conclusions. In his opinion, the problem is structural and the individuals can only try to be sensitive to this imbalanced situation, adapt to the respective context and act according to their own moral standards.

He explains that his agency is not to help the artists he works with (I3: 12) and he consequently also tries to avoid being paternalistic towards the artists. For example, when artists that he works with came to Europe, they were spending money on things that Chris thought were unnecessary for them, but he avoided to tell them, that they shouldn't buy things because he didn't want to be paternalistic (I3: 6). He talks about the importance to his friendship with Tamikrest, apart from that, he wants to have a correct business relationship with the artists on the label. He is aware that a business relation in this context is often accused of appropriation or exploitation, which makes it a delicate field of operation:

*I think because of all the things that have gone wrong in these kind of relationships, the only thing you can really do right is to be completely honest and transparent. I think*

*that's your only fundamental obligation, beyond that I don't, you know, beyond that every move you make can be called into question, I think, honesty and transparency, this is fundamental to any good relationship, so that's the most important for us, you have to be. (I3: 6)*

This way of dealing with the situation is also necessary because of the large distance that sometimes exists between artists and label Infrastructure can a problem, as for example the internet is not always available where Tamikrest live (I3: 7). If decisions have to be made, Chris cannot always consult them immediately. This means that the relationship depends on mutual trust. Even if he knows about this dilemma, he cannot by himself change the structures, but has to work according to his own moral standards. It is hard for the individual to influence these structures. Western music business does not have any limitations and can make use of the imbalance. Democratic, egalitarian collaboration is difficult because of this, as Chris said, *just by the definition you are there, you are rich (I3: 3)*.

The economic system and the way of dealing with money apparently work differently in Mali. Musicians are paid differently than in the western context (I3: 3; 4). That means that in an intercultural context of collaboration, individuals have to rethink their own assumptions about things like money (I3: 3; 4). After Chris' first experiences in Mali he concluded that he had to adjust his working method to match how things are handled in the music business there. He also explains the societal context of this different way of handling things when it comes to music:

*You know, it's a very specific orientation to music because the role that music plays in these societies is much more integrated than it is here. You know, music for us – this is something on the side – this is, you know, as much as we love it to be the center of our lives and et cetera, of culture – it's not. You know, there's a lot of things that is more central. Music in places like Mali – it is very much the center of culture and musicians themselves are very much the center of – obviously the central point of and there's not a single music activity that doesn't have – even in these extremely poor countries and Mali is one of the most poor in the world – where money does not exchange hands. You know, nobody shows up to play on television in Mali for free, you know, nobody – practically you don't even do an interview with a journalist for free – the journalist gets*

*paid (I3: 3).*

Music is here portrayed as something less relevant in the “West” but as central to culture in Mali. Of course, this comparison or opposition is a generalization, as for individuals like Chris, music is probably everywhere the center of life. However his observation indicates that he experienced activities and situations in Mali that informed him that music as a field is located differently within society there. As a phenomenon of central importance, music is described as closely related to economic and social activities like weddings (I3: 5) and to the associated circulation of money. This, according to Chris, seems strange, as Mali is considered a poor country. In this context, he does not stress the poverty in the country as a critique or qualification, but in order to demonstrate HOW important music is in Mali. This importance also involves other connected areas in this field of cultural production, like journalism, that seem to profit from this position that music has.

Not only music but also musicians are located differently within society in Mali and Burkina Faso (I3: 5). From his experience as a musician, Chris discerns the difference in these positions in the respective contexts. Whether his description conforms to the real situation in Mali is not the point, but the way he interprets these observations in different places reveals something about his position, his acts and how he then talks about the differences. He is careful how he portrays his observations. At several points he stresses that what he says should not be taken out of context (I3: 4; 9). He avoids talking about „African music“, in fact it was I who started using this term at the beginning of the interview (S3: 1). There is a care not to use terms like “Malian music” or “world music” in an unreflected way (I3: 12f.):

*(W)e have to be very careful by using terms like „African music“, „Malian music“, and „world music“ is just a non-starter for me. This is the stupidest thing. Maybe it had a moment where it made some sense, but this, this is a really, you know, I, ahm, I'm always very careful of, let's say, accusing someone else of being paternalistic because I know that people throw this at us even sometimes, so I have to be very careful, like, how I shoot back, but I think that „world music“ is a very paternalistic idea, it's like the very euro-, anglocentric world: all, everything else. I mean, even European folk music is thrown into this world music bag. This „grey other“, you know (...) I mean, I don't see any reason why Tamikrest can not play on a stage next to Animal Collective or, you*

*know, really, we have to be approaching that point, in cultural development, where we really are not ghettoizing music (I3: 12f.).*

This tells us that there is awareness of the critical discourse about these terms. For example, the term „world music“ is criticized as it comprises so many musical styles and works through a kind of othering that forcefully groups styles not considered western into a monolithic block. As I explained above (*see chapter 2.1 and chapter 3.1*), this is problematic for different reasons: it does injustice to the different music styles and it creates an opposition and thus gives the impression that there would be no creative exchange. Chris is against „ghettoization“ of music and gives the example of the artists Ben Zabo and Tamikrest, who played in Europe at indie festivals or in clubs (*I3: 13*). For him, the audience is ready to break with these outdated and eurocentric categorizations, but the structures stand in the way of this change, as they are already established and form the expectations and attitudes of the audiences (*I3: 13*). Even if he is against the concept of „world music“, he is connected to this scene (*I3: 13*). In 2014 Glitterbeat received the *WOMEX Label Award*<sup>13</sup>. Chris stressed that he wants to avoid paternalism (*I3: 13*), but he explains his involvement in the scene with the necessity of supporting the careers of the artists on the label (*I3: 13*).

Promotion is seen as the central job of a record label (*I3: 9*); if a label has a good reputation, this has positive effects for the artists (*I3: 10f.*). Like other musicians (*Byrne 2013*), Chris sees the influence of the internet as destructive. Record labels can provide preselection for the audience (*I3: 11*) and this is one reason why they are still relevant today. Lots of small labels and individuals preselect music from analogue (*funkhauseuropa 2015; Misra 2014*) or digital sources. My interview partner DJ Marcelle suggests that technological developments, like modern methods of travelling, influence the availability of music from different countries or the interest of audiences through individuals who go there to curate music (*II4: 5*). One could ask if the increased availability of music causes the demand for institutions or individuals who curate music, or if the agency of the curators achieves the increased interest. The increased availability of music is obvious, but this has not erased inequality of access to technologies, media and travel within or between countries (*Spivak 2008*).

Record labels preselected music according to their various dispositions. Glitterbeat

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<sup>13</sup> <http://worldmusiccentral.org/2014/10/29/top-world-music-laurels-presented-at-womex-2014-awards/>

could release even more music from Mali, but too many releases cannot be processed by their audience (I3: 9;11) and therefore cannot be marketed. Therefore the label owners have to choose what they release. Some of the acts are easier to promote in the western market and they sell more, maybe because their sounds are more familiar (I3: 8). Tamikrest, for example, are very influenced by the Dire Straits and Mark Knopfler, which seems to be an interesting phenomenon related to a specific local situation (Backer 2015). When it is stressed that the music Glitterbeat releases represents *their* perspective on the music and *their* taste (I3: 10; 11f.), it becomes clear how much individual agency and taste can in return shape the image of a local or national music scene somewhere else. Publications of these records in Europe do not necessarily represent the current trends in their respective countries. It can be that the taste of the label owners is represented or - more generally - the aesthetic parameters of the prevailing discourse the label owners are involved in, for example the „world music scene“.

Apart from aspects of music curation, the influence on the sound is another question. The music of several musicians on the label is mixed in a studio in Ljubljana. Mixing the music and choosing which records are used for that is left to Chris' own discretion. If he is not happy with the quality of the recordings he gets, for example from Mauretania, he would decide to send the musicians to Europe or the United States in order to record in a different studio (I5). Therefore through this position a musical mediator can influence the sound and the aesthetics of the releases as well.

Hesmondhalgh recommends also including business aspects in the examination of record companies (Hesmondhalgh 2000: 301). On an economic scale, labels take on the role of investors (I3: 7f.). Hence, they experience some pressure for their investment to result in an output which takes the form of an album or record (I3: 2; 4; 7f.; 11).

The discourse about „African music“ is itself shaped by publications, labels and their stories and also by references. For example, Chris explains that one of his first experiences of „African music“ was the band Talking Heads, an American rock band that was including African influences in their music:

*(M)y interest in African music I think very much started around 1980 when this Talking Heads record „Remain in Light“ came out, this collaboration with Brian Eno. I mean, African music was maybe some ethnic folklore records or something I got up to that point. I really had no idea, it wasn't on my map at all, you know and they started to*

*reference to artists like Fela Kuti and King Sunny Adé and I was so taken with that record that I started to check out the other, let's say more original sources (I3: 1).*

What becomes clear from this utterance is that even if there is no clear definition of „African music“, people have a concept or an idea of what it is. It seems that not only the descent of the musicians or patterns in the music make it „African“, but how musicians talk about it and whom they reference. It then also becomes clear that there are some more and some less „original“ or authentic agents.

An interesting aspect of the discourse about „African music“ is the importance of musical centers, music scenes and music festivals. For one thing specific places are important when considering the availability of records and information (I3: 1; I12: 5) and other places are important when desiring direct encounters with the scene and musicians. Chris' initial contact with Malian musicians, for example, was at the „Festival au Désert“ (I3: 5). The next chapter will deal with these aspects using the example of the festival „Druga Godba“.

### **5.3.2 Case study Druga Godba festival**

The international festival Druga Godba was founded in 1984 and first took place in 1985 in Ljubljana (I15: 2). Co-founder Zoran Pistotnik explained that it evolved out of the Jazz Festival, from an approach that had a broader understanding of jazz music (I15: 2), one that would also include *African jazz* and *ethno elements* (I15: 2). Zoran's interest in African music was represented in the programme of the festival: *African music and African artists have been part of the programme on Druga Godba. I know that from all these years, it has not been any year that in the programme, ahm, has not been one or- but usually more than one African artist (I15: 2).* Zoran has been quite active in the cultural scene of Slovenia. Apart from organizing the Druga Godba festival, he had a show about music from Africa on the radio station „Radio Študent“<sup>14</sup> for more than 20 years, before quitting in 2010 (I15: 2). Zoran stresses how important it was that individuals provided material and engaged in these programmes (I15: 2;3). My interview partners Tatjana and Sonja shared Zoran's interests and were invited by him to contribute to the show (I6; I12:4).

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<sup>14</sup> <http://radiostudent.si/>

Again, for these radio shows, the role of festivals is evident. They were an important source of information and material. Zoran explains that they were driving around to visit festivals, where they got in contact with people who could provide them with information, promo material and records (II5: 3). Radio, concerts and festivals are institutions that can initiate the interest in certain cultural phenomena, as the example of Rok Košir illustrates:

*I started to go to highschool and in my class, there were several schoolfriends, that were really like going to the concerts and one of them started to work as a guard, in, ahm, Križanke, which meant that all concerts were for free, basically all, so we started, when I was fifteen I started to go basically to all important concerts. At eighteen I was already a veteran in music scene, I knew lots of music and he was also guard at the Križanke, when Druga Godba was there. It was in the eighties, second half of the eighties and even though I was basically from the rock'n'roll background, it was always my first music, I got really stuck to this- also world music, jazz music, ahm, all sorts of different musics (III: 1).*

Križanke is a famous open-air concert location in Ljubljana. The festival Druga Godba goes on in different concert locations all over Ljubljana. One of the locations is Križanke, it is also the biggest location for the festival. Rok, who is now director of the Druga Godba, experienced a change in his musical socialization and interest through the festival and it affected his life quite a lot:

*I think it was, yeah, it was '99, first of June, my birthday. There was Malian night in Druga Godba, ahm, it really changed my perspective towards the music. I decided also to go to West Africa, as I told you, that music struck me so hard that I had to go there to see what's going on there. So I went and I started to really listen to a lot of West African music and at that time I was also a journalist, I was writing also articles about, ahm, also about music, about culture, but lots of them about music, several topics about music, which was on Druga Godba (III:1).*

From the example of Rok, we see how the festival influences the interest and can have consequences for the biography of the attendees. Rok became himself active in the production

of knowledge about music and culture, as a journalist. Again the importance of places and locations becomes clear. Locations and festivals build up a reputation, become a regular meeting point, a place where social interactions happen and information is exchanged. Importantly they make connections between places. Rok still feels the need to go and see for himself the places where the musicians come from. This yields an increased flow and availability of information, a kind of infrastructure of information and experience.

A similar story is told by Janez Pirc, who used to write for a music magazine and was a DJ at the events organized by „Družba Afriški Kulturni Center“<sup>15</sup> in Ljubljana, an organization of people of the African diaspora of Slovenia. His initial contact with „African music“ was through listening to a broadcast of a concert of Druga Godba on the national radio of Slovenia (I7: 1). He explains how important the festival was for him:

*(T)hey had for me, personally, they had an influence on me, (...) that I listened to the concerts on the radio and I initially started to, I began to investigate African music more, just because of Druga Godba Festival. I have to admit this, they had a tremendous role for many of the people, for many of my friends, (...) that they introduced African music, music from, I don't know, Australia or somewhere else, that maybe the people here in Slovenia had no clue about it and Druga Godba brought these musicians here and, wow, people were happy about it (I7: 13).*

Also Janez' interest in music from Africa comes from Druga Godba. The festival extended his musical horizon and also his friends also had similar experiences. He further explained that the festival established itself as an of institution and people trusted in its name. They came to the festivals without even knowing the musicians. They were confident that the festival would curate new and interesting music for them (I7:12). It seems that similarly to what was mentioned concerning record labels in the chapter above, musicians and bands can profit from the reputation of a festival. Janez explains, for example, that it works this way for unknown Slovenian bands who play at the festival, which provides them a chance to make a name for themselves (I7: 14).

Janez has a fear that through the institutionalization of the world music scene, international festivals would rely too much on world music fairs and lose their innovative

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.afrika-kc.org/>



character due to the impact of these fairs, where music groups are promoted (I7: 13). He is in favour of going out to discover music through a direct encounter with the musicians and subsequently travelling to their respective countries. As he knew that some people from Ljubljana, who were also involved in the Druga Godba Festival, had travelled to Mali, he also decided to go there:

*I had a wish to go to Mali because of the music, I mean it's really – African music, especially Malian music – is, was and still initially is also one of my gateways to Africa, generally speaking, you know. Through music I also got into culture of different African countries, different parts of Africa. (...) I heard a lot of Malian musicians already on the radio here and later on I got some of their records, I've been to some of the concerts, so I really had a strong wish to visit this „Festival au Désert“, „Festival in the Desert“ in the North of Mali (I7: 7).*

Similarly to Rok, for Janez the festival was also an important factor in his interest and then his journeys to African countries. Mali seems to have a special reputation what concerns music and the „Festival au Désert“ seems to be of particular relevance, as already noted in the example of Glitterbeat Records. Rok also attended the „Festival au Désert“, even before it was named as such. In fact he kept on returning to Mali and its neighbouring countries:

*(N)ow I've been to West Africa six or seven times, I started to travel quite regularly there, also to Niger, Nigeria, ahm, Algeria (...) and I went to visit African musicians, Malian musicians, that was the idea. And I met, like, Afel Bocoum, Vieux Farka Toure, I went to, later, Ali Farka Toure's family and his house, ahm, Boubacar Traore (...). Ahm, and we also went to meet, ah we went to meet Umo Sangare also and at the end of this journey we went to Festival au Niger, which is basically a bigger festival than Festival in the Desert, it's more Malian, it's not international (I11: 4).*

Festivals are important factor in the respective music scene and the musicians are connectors between these places. Once there is a connection between two places it seems that more people make use of this connection. Obviously Mali is a famous site concerning music, but also certain local particularities in Slovenia caused a connection to this country. What we

also find here is the prominence of nation states as a principle of categorization and branding for „world music“. This is a phenomenon that has been practised in academic discourse and advertising since their conceptions (Bohlman 2002: 93f.). Encyclopedias, academic books and guides (Bohlman 2002: 93; Bender 1985), compilations and events (I3: 12f.; I 11:1) practise this organization around nation-based categories.

Rok and Chris from Glitterbeat are good friends and also travelled together in West Africa. Glitterbeat artists were part of the programme in Druga Godba of 2014 and especially in 2015. Rok knows some of them personally, Tamikrest, for example, played at one of the concerts, Rok usually organizes once a month in his living room<sup>16</sup>. Travelling fulfils different purposes in this context. It provides new inspiration for activities in the cultural field at home. Travellers get first hand information, make contacts and can maintain contacts they made at special occasions, like a concert. Another aspect is the acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1993: 75f.). It confers expertise and credibility on the travellers, the consequence of which can be an invitation to present these experiences and knowledge publicly. Sonja Porle, a Slovenian writer, who has travelled to African countries since she was young, wrote two books about her travel experiences and was also invited to talk about „African music“ on the Slovenian radio:

*I think I returned once to Slovenia and it was Bogdan Benigar, at that time was a very young editor, you know, at Radio Študent and he asked me to make, if I could make a couple of programmes about the traditional Ghanaian music (...), you know, play this music, ahm, but also later, you know, we would do another programme, about the contemporary Ghanaian music or history of highlife and (...) I started passionately, of course, collecting records here and there, and living in England, ahm, this was rather good at that time, ahm, because probably, mostly because of this, you know, ahm, record company, Sterns Africa, ahm, very, you know, this was one of the major labels of African music. (I12: 3)*

As a source for her radio shows she used her own travel experiences as well as the music she got from the record label „Sterns Africa“ which also used to have a shop in London which provided a seminal location for acquiring records but also for getting information on

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.delo.si/druzba/panorama/v-pinelini-dnevni-sobi.html>

current trends in „African music“ which was booming in London at the time Sonja was living there (I12: 5). Through her presence in the radio shows, Sonja could not only give her own perspective of live and music in Africa but also spread information she obtained in one of the centers of musical trends in Europe.

Sonja thinks that it is always the work of *enthusiastic individuals* (I12: 6) that keeps a festival like Druga Godba or a music scene going. How events are received does not always follow a certain logic. She explained, for example, that 2014 was a good year for the festival, but for some years it hadn't quite worked as well as it used to:

*I think after 2001, I think, something strange has happened. It's like, ok, maybe, ahm, the general situation in the country, but, or maybe economic crisis, but it's like that we stagnated. You know, the concerts, Druga Godba was this year first time again very well visited, but we would have fantastic musicians and big stars and it was empty, hm. It just somehow doesn't even matter who comes. (I12: 6)*

On the recommendation of my supervisor in Ljubljana, I talked with Rok in order to apply for the voluntary programme with the Druga Godba, which meant that I was working on the promotion of the festival, working at the entrance and merchandise and also hosting the musician Mulatu Astatke and his band. Based on the experiences of working at the festival, I wouldn't have guessed that it hadn't been as well visited the years before. Some evenings were quite hectic, as lots of people came to the concerts and most of them were sold out completely. But also Rok explained that the concert scene in Ljubljana used to be much more vivid in the eighties and nineties, but experienced a low about a decade ago. The organizers of the festival found a strategy to cope with this difficult situation:

*Druga Godba became really big in the nineties with, ahm, several big African stars, Cesaria Evora, for example, sold out Križanke. Youssou N'dour almost sold out, Salif Keita was always full, Gotan Project a bit later, these were golden ages of Druga Godba. But then, slowly the whole scene started to decline, after the year, I don't know- hm, Druga Godba was still very good at the beginning of the 21st century, but somewhere in the mid- mid, like 2005, 2006 and on. Last few years attendances were not very good, actually bad, so that's why last year we decided to make a new concept,*

*we talked a lot about what to do. Ahm, yeah, we decided to go more into this festival scene, to be more like a festival, so best non-stop programme. And it worked out, I think. Last year it was financially so so, but, ahm, everybody who came was extremely satisfied, so we decided to do it again, this year it worked. (I11: 2)*

As was mentioned, the name of the festival can work by itself, but also external factors can have a negative impact on events so that new strategies have to be found that compensate for external problems. Apart from strategic and economic issues, Janez Pirc thinks that also structural issues can have an influence on events. He experienced other events where concerts couldn't happen because the musicians simply could not get a visa to enter the country (I7: 14).

Even if the dynamics of the Druga Godba were influenced by different internal and external factors, the recent years were positive in terms of visitors and also economically. Druga Grodoba still has a reputation as an institution in terms of the presentation and representation of international music in Slovenia. In 2014 Songlines magazine<sup>17</sup> nominated Druga Godba as one the 25 best international festivals 2014 and it was also prominent in the media in 2015, for example in the German press<sup>18</sup>

From this chapter it becomes clear how important festival are as places that not only offer music and entertainment but are also manifestations of music scenes, centers for connecting people and source of information. For some individuals, Druga Godba evoked the desire to travel and later write about their experiences. Individual agency provides information not only for the respective music scene but also for other media that reaches an even greater audience, like the radio. Radio stations often depend on the initiative of enthusiasts to collect material for the programme, which gives these individuals the possibility to speak about music and cultural phenomena as a kind of expert. The same can be said about festival organizers who acquire a specific kind of knowledge about music and processes related to it. In the next chapter I will reconsider the role of mediators which was addressed in the two previous chapters.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.songlines.co.uk/>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/slowenisches-musikfestival-weibliche-stimmen-beim-druga.2177.de.html?dram%3Aarticle\\_id=321426](http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/slowenisches-musikfestival-weibliche-stimmen-beim-druga.2177.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=321426)

### 5.3.3 The role of mediators

*The curatorial aspect of much of the production of world music and world beat should not be underestimated. (Taylor 1997: 28)*

From the examples in the chapters above, it can be concluded that individual agency and also that of institutions can create an interest where there is not even knowledge or awareness of a phenomenon. If the agents take on important positions in relevant institutions like academia, radio or the like, this agency can be even more effective and reach a vast amount of people. New media and technological possibilities have further increased possibilities for spreading information, which has different effects: it becomes even easier to obtain information and to reach people, but it also creates the problem that there is too much information available. Zoran Pistotnik told me that today there is too much information sometimes. He criticizes the quality of the information which he thinks is not only superficial and often bad. He is also concerned with the presentation of the information, he suggests that there is a lack of historical knowledge and also of personal stories related to the music (II5: 4).

One result of the spread of the internet is that it is easier to find or present music on the internet. This also means that musicians themselves can promote their own music online. However due to the large amount of material on the internet, what actually occurs is a struggle for attention, as was illustrated with the quote by Daniel Miller in *chapter 2 (Miller 2010: 113)*.

Record labels, contrary to what was often projected, still matter. They are a kind of filter, online as well as offline. They curate music, create a reputation around their label, create an aesthetical guideline, provide networks for the musicians they work with and invest money. Small labels with famous people who run it can offer to the audience personal stories. By creating a reputation of being a reliable source of information and having an aesthetic programme that corresponds with that of the listener, or customer, they can become an important hub of information or material. Nevertheless record labels, especially smaller ones, have to struggle with certain limitations in their everyday work. They have to face

monopolization in the music business and assert themselves over big record companies, especially in the context of decreasing numbers of record sales. So with a high degree of personal investments, small budgets and a small number of workers they are often trying to create a product that they would like to buy themselves. Very often, they cannot even release everything they would like to.

As was mentioned in *chapter 5.2.1* scarcity is important in times when people are overwhelmed by information. Therefore, labels are not trying to release as much music as they can, but select from a wide range of possible artists that fit with an aesthetic programme created by the label and try to make an adequate choice. Reducing the number of releases seems to be an important strategy, as Chris noticed:

*You know, and a little bit like Analog Africa is a really good example, they do very few releases, three, four a year, you know, it's an event everytime he releases a record. Awesome Tapes From Africa, I think they do two releases a year, maybe, so if you are trying to do ten, ahm, you have to be very careful, how you do it. So, yah, I would like to live in a world where I didn't have to think about these things but you do actually. You can be pretty much bankrupt real fast, if you don't think about it. (I3: 9)*

So for economic and promotional reasons, labels reduce the number of releases, even if they could or would like to introduce more bands to an audience. Also they have to be careful taking risks in terms of what band they release because it might be problematic for the overall reputation of a label if a band does not conform to the aesthetic programme. This makes it clear that the whole representation of „African music“ is limited by economic constraints and thus the existing image of „African music“ in the West tends to be reproduced by presupposing a conservative audience that tends to prefer familiar sounds (*I14: 4*). I suggest this despite my conviction that audiences of capitalist societies are looking for new sounds because these new sounds are still supposed to be at least partly familiar.

The potential danger, however, is the reproduction not only of an outdated image of what „African music“ should be, but also of an opposition or a binary thinking between „self“ and „other“ (*Bohlman 2002: 37*). Music is mobile and open to social practices of interpretation or consumption. As explained above, certain phenomena (i.e. hip-hop) are the result of particular historical and sociocultural developments. But these phenomena ultimately

are not bound to a certain geographical location but are adapted elsewhere (*Hacke & Reuster-Jahn 2011*). Musical forms are mobile, increasingly so for the last couple of decades due to technological innovations. Musical forms can be reinvented and reactivated through individual interest anachronistically.

This is not to debase collective or individual artistic achievements or creativity, but creativity also has to be seen as a way of working with what the artist captures from his or her environment (*Hallam & Ingold 2007*) as the global flow of media takes musical styles and trends around the globe. So people experience or include musical influences more or less consciously. This is a dynamic process that of course raises ethical questions, questions of copyright, appropriation and so on. All of which are hard to answer. On the one hand, copyright can be seen as protecting the rights and achievements of artists, on the other hand they are standing in the way of free artistic use of all materials available that could possibly be integrated in a new work or art. This raises questions especially in the field of trans-cultural exchange, where the framework is not as clear as in, for example, a national context (*Feld & Keil 1994*).

The focus should also be on academic and non-academic discourses. As my interview partner Max Zimani stressed, the question still has to be: who is allowed to speak for whom (*18*). The state and its institutions, like universities, and therefore also scholars, shape the discourse and take part in representational practices (*Bourdieu 1993: 250f.*). Even if the aim of my work is to question categories, terms and practices, my own work is not free of *representational vocabulary* (*Bohlman 2002: 37; see also chapter 4.1*). To agree with Bourdieu, I am also part of the field that produces the meaning of art:

*Thus, as a field is constituted as such, it becomes clear that the „subject“ of the production of the art-work – of its value but also of its meaning – is not the producer who actually creates the object in its materiality, but rather the entire set of agents engaged in the field. (Bourdieu 1993: 261)*

I am well aware that in this thesis the perspective of several agents, like musicians, is largely missing, but the focus was explicitly on the roles and representational acts and utterances of a different category of agents in this field of cultural production. The influence that individuals or a group of people can have should be evident from the examples. The

choice of which musician plays at a festival (I7: 12) or the opportunity to speak on the radio about a topic (I13) offers the ability to reach a lot of people with one's decisions and ideas.

#### 5.3.4 „Africa“ as „label“

When it comes to music, the term “Africa” often has more positive connotations than in other discourses. The term can be used for marketing purposes and to appeal to people who are in this positively interpreted discourse (*derstandard 2015*). This is why some record labels use the “label” in their names, for example Analog Africa, Awesome Tapes From Africa or Africa Seven. Below is a reproduction of how the label Analog Africa describes itself on its Facebook-page:

*Analog Africa releases unusual African music from the 70s, music with a certain twist that will surprise you or that you didn't expect to hear from Africa, and that often had a strong impact on ist (sic!) country of origin. Frequently these recordings – all fully licensed – were never released outside of Africa before. Considerable importance is also placed on detailed liner notes telling unusual stories about unusual musicians, complete with rare photographs, interviews and full discographies. Analog Africa founder Samy Ben Redjeb was born in Carthage, Tunisia, to a Tunisian father and a German mother. He was brought up in many different countries, such as Sweden, Tunisia and Austria, and is now based in Frankfurt, Germany. The idea of the label started in November 1999 when he came across a recording by the Green Arrows whilst digging for vinyl records in Zimbabwe. (ben Redjeb)*

Paul Gilroy says that it has to be questioned WHY somebody uses certain terms as there can be either a policy of appreciation or a negation of diversity (*Gilroy 1993: 80*). If one considers the description above, it becomes clear that the strategic use of the term works towards a more diversified image of “African music” as they are trying to release “unusual” music. At the same time this also indicates that there is a predominant image of “African music”. My interview partner Sonja was using a strategy that presented Africa in general in a positive way in order to combat traditional stereotypes, as Janez explains:



*(S)he has done a lot, you know, to bring, ahm, a positive image of Africans, generally speaking, as being creative, as having a long history, ahm, of musical traditions and so on. She really contributed to this positively, sometimes even, even some Africans complained that she is speaking too positive (...), not unrealistically, but that she just sees the positive side of African culture, but anyway, somebody had to do it. (I7: 14f.)*

A deep understanding of this image and the surrounding discourse would need an extensive examination of the creation of this imagined kind of music, which would also have to assess other factors that had an influence:

*The connotations attached to musical representations and appropriations are potentially more labile and unfixed, and perhaps at the same time more aesthetically and discursively fertile, than those of the visual and literary arts. Thus, a stress on reception as the final phase in the production of meaning does not wipe out the need to pursue the history of musical representations, but rather opens up the need to trace the „social life of sounds“ through their several states ever more attentively. (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 46)*

Similar to Hall, who explains that meaning is never finally fixed (*Hall 2013a*), Born and Hesmondhalgh explain that connotations can change as well and that this counts for music even more than for other fields of art (*see also Lipsitz 1994: 144*). Following Appadurai (*1990b*), they suggest to include a focus on the *social life of sounds* (*Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000b: 46*). This could mean including historical representations as well as a focus on the other agents in the field who contribute to this representation. Bourdieu says that what people actually buy, when they purchase a piece of art is the name or the status of the artists (*Bourdieu 1993: 75*). In that case, the artist works as a kind of “brand” or “label”. If the same painting would be said to come from another painter, would the buyer still be interested? If the same song did not come from one's favourite band, but a band that is not well-known, would it be promoted? Would the audience still listen? In my interview with DJ Marcelle, she states that she sometimes has the feeling that people would just be interested in a record because of the context. The listener might get interested in a recording just BECAUSE it is

from Africa, even if the music is not interesting (*II4: 7*).

We have to acknowledge that *we are our discourses* (*Agawu 1992: 266*), so the more we take care of our terminologies and get to know about certain phenomena (*Bourdieu 1993: 230f.*) the more our categories and our language change and come closer to an adequate representation of human cultural achievements. And at the same time it will also become clear how many players are involved in these processes of cultural production.

## 6 Conclusio

This work provides an insight into the field of cultural production with a focus on transnational processes of collaboration and locally embedded processes of meaning production and representational processes. Record productions, organizing festivals and media presence are examples of these phenomena. The research partners are portrayed as having a mediating or curating position in *the field of cultural production* (Bourdieu 1993). Through the position they acquired through certain knowledge, experiences, travel and attraction to music or the cultural field, they can in turn have influence on other people's knowledge in, interest of and image concerning certain phenomena. The work focuses primarily on the production of images about “world music” and “African music”, including an analysis of the terms and concepts. The main research question concerned the position record labels and world music festivals occupy in the *field of cultural production* (Bourdieu 1993). The case studies about the label Glitterbeat and the festival Druga Godba have emphasized the role of the people involved in these projects as having an agency that mediates between different contexts and people and curates music according to particular personal or general aesthetic standards. Their acts and connections can build a kind of infrastructure between different places, for example between Mali and Slovenia. Personal friendships, recommendations and interests in music can intensify these connections. Music can work as a gateway for travelling to Mali (I7: 7) but people can also be gatekeepers to the European music scene (I 3). Countries can work as a kind of “label” in a sense that their reputation in terms of music can attract people to it. People like Chris Eckman can also be a “label”, as his reputation as a musician or producer can put the musicians that he works with in the spotlight. The record label that he founded acquires reputation and builds around a certain aesthetic programme that conforms to his taste. Artists on his label can gain attention because of being on his label. At the same time, as an investor, Chris and his colleague have to take care of the reputation of the label and pay attention to how new bands fit with its overall aesthetics. Chris is influential in the choice of music, the way he talks about music and the artists on his label and it is possible for himself to acquire symbolic capital when he is successful in his choice of artists.

The knowledge of how record labels can have influence on the musical taste and knowledge of people comes from his own (musical) socialization:

*(P)people want people to curate things for them. And you know, in the best labels, of my youth, you know, labels like Rough Trade in the late seventies and early eighties, and Sub Pop run from, you know, in Seattle and things like that, I mean these were, they were a curating vision. That's what you do, you know, you preselect. You know, you are trying to make a statement and, you know, and in that regard, I think, you know, what we are trying to do is, we are not trying to say to somebody that we are delivering a balanced view of Malian music or a balanced view of African music or a balanced view of anything. You know, this is what we did. That's what we are putting out – as simple as that. (I3: 11)*

From the reascending numbers of vinyl record sales Chris concludes that the possibilities that the internet offers cannot replace the curating practices of other institutions like a record label. He compares his label and its activities to labels like Rough Trade or Sub Pop and explains that the way they work is through personal interest and curation of music, which people need as a reference. The point is that he also distances himself from providing a *balanced view* of the Malian music scene. He can only offer personal stories and a personal point of view. The audience remains with the responsibility to form their own opinion or view on the Malian music scene. As Chris is familiar with critical voices in the discourse about “world music” he stresses his own perspective and does not want to speak on behalf of other people. Still he discerns basic differences between African and Western musicians. He sees a difference in terms of agency between “African musicians” and “Western musicians”, where the first try to be a voice for their respective people and raise awareness of their political situations (I3: 14). According to Chris, they see themselves as related to their people rather than being “African” musicians. He is fascinated by the background and the stories of the musicians he works with, but his main concern is not to offer them a stage for their political opinions but maintain aesthetic and musical standard of his label (I3:14). The interest in the world music scene for stories is evident (Morgan 2013). Chris' concern seems to be more the lack of inspiration of Western musicians. He sees the term “world music” and the adherent scene as too exotistic and having a narrow approach to music. That is why he also criticizes the ghettoization of music at Western festivals. He wants to see the artists of his label on stage with musicians that make similar music or have a similar artistic approach, but not under the

umbrella of “world music” bands or “African” bands. His record label is nevertheless successfully established in the “world music” scene and it is difficult to free the label from these overriding structures. Similar to what the label can offer to artists, the “world music” field can provide labels and artists with infrastructure and a stage to present their music to an audience, like world music fairs.

Of course, the flow of music over the internet and other aspects of globalization and technological development offer possibilities to create new structures or platforms. However the increased availability of music also creates the problem that there is too much information and music and this reinforces the existing structures which served the purposes of preselection and curation. Record labels or individuals thereby become centers of information, hubs for the curation of music. Through practices of referencing, their prestige can be transferred to less known artists. Artists can hardly go without the promotional infrastructure and knowhow that the labels have to offer.

Similar to a good reputation of a record label, the reputation of a music festival can help artists to get attention from the audience. Janez Pirc describes this effect, when he says that he and his friends trusted the festival Druga Godba blindly for the choice of artists. They just went to the festival without knowing which artists would play, but they trusted the curatorial know how of the festival organizers. The organizers of the festival used to build networks to other festivals. They went there to gain information about trends, get promotional material and get in contact with other organizers. The influence of other festivals was not only important for their own festival, but also for surrounding practices in cultural production. They used the material for radio broadcasts and the archive of the radio station. Also festivals outside Europe, especially in Mali, were important spaces to travel to. For Chris Eckman these festivals were the start of his involvement with Tamikrest and other West African musicians. Some of my interview partners were inspired by the Druga Godba festival or the recommendations of people from this context to travel to Mali and get in contact with musicians there and attend the Festival au Désert as well as others. These journeys and experiences then inspired them to talk or write publicly about their acquired knowledge. Through their journeys and an interest in the stories they are able to tell, they entered themselves into other positions in the field of cultural production, like journalism, talking on radio shows or the organization of exhibitions. Importantly, they built a kind of music scene of people who are active in the process of cultural production, they are friends, maintain

contact with musicians from different parts of the world and are in contact with the African diaspora in their country.

The curators are involved in creating a positive image of different parts of the African continent and beyond as well as the appreciation of its cultural forms. Thus they are working to contradict the mainstream image about topics related to Africa. This can happen through broadcasts on the radio, books, exhibitions, articles in magazines or direct interventions at institutions, like the example of the contribution to a schoolbook. Talking about and playing music from Africa and the African diaspora is a central part of these practices. The radio as an institution has an important role in this process, it provides an archive of material, can broadcast live concerts and it offers the possibilities for personal stories to be told and accompany the music.

I suggest that one can find such groups of people, who are working passionately on the presentation of a special cultural or geographical region in which they are interested in many European cities. Ljubljana or Slovenia is an example for this phenomenon, but it also has its unique qualities. The question evolves of whether music is a big international field which includes different music scenes or if there are several small, national fields of music. The particular fields are to some extent connected to their respective nation state and its institutions. I would suggest that a field of music exists in every nation state and is very closely tied to national policy concerning this field involving various institutions. On a global scale, these fields are connected to each other in multiple ways, through exchange, individuals, corporations and media technologies.

## **61 *Final remarks***

My research brought up a couple of issues and opened new questions to me. A complementary view on other positions in the field, like that of the musician, would have been interesting. What do artists think about how their music is represented? How do consumers respond to the “labels” that are used in the context and promotion of music? The influence of the internet on listening and consumption habits in relation to music would also be an interesting field of study.

In the context of record labels and probably of the music industry in general, aspects

relating to gender could be researched more broadly, for example why this field is so male-dominated. The addressed aspects of gender could be further elaborated by posing questions such as: How does socialization and life history influence interests in certain kinds of music? How are the *position takings* that Bourdieu (1993) describes related to gender? A dynamic understanding of culture that this thesis took as a basic premise emphasizes the possibility for change of the structures in different areas of society.

Importantly greater equality and democracy in social structures can be achieved by making use of the possibilities that new technologies offer. These possibilities would have to include mainstream media presenting more differentiated information about social and cultural phenomena. The obscure reproduction of stereotypes of all kind as well as fake images of authenticity have to be a main target, most of all for the academic critic. The enthusiastic work of my interview partners can be seen as an attempt to break with these stereotypical images and I hope that my work has given them a greater platform to do so.

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## 8 Appendix

### ***8.1 List of interviews and fieldwork***

1. Interview with Janez Pirc, former music journalist (Muzca), 14.02.2014, minutes taken from memory
2. Interview with Rok Kosir, director of Druga Godba festival, 28.02. 2014, minutes taken from memory
3. Interview with Chris Eckman, Glitterbeat Records 07.03.2014, recorded interview
4. Informal meeting with Chris Eckman, Glitterbeat Records 10.03.2014, minutes taken from memory
5. Arranged meeting in the studio of Chris Eckman, Glitterbeat Records, 12.03.2014, minutes taken from memory
6. Interview with Tatjana Capuder, Radio Student, 10.04.2014, minutes taken from memory
7. Interview with Janez Pirc, former music journalist, 07.05.2014, recorded interview
8. Interview with Max Zimani, choir member of an African choir in Ljubljana, 27.05.2014, minutes taken from memory
9. spreading flyers for Druga Godba Festival 21., 22. + 26. 05.
10. Participant observation Druga Godba Festival, hosting Mulatu Astatke, 29.-31. 05.
11. Interview with Rok Kosir, director of Druga Godba Festival, 25.06.2014, recorded interview
12. Interview with Sonja Porle, writer, 27.06.2014, recorded interview
13. Informal interview with Sonja Porle, writer, 29.06.2014, notes taken from memory
14. Interview with DJ Marcelle, DJane, 19.07.2014, recorded interview
15. Interview with Zoran Pistotnik, founder of Druga Godba, radio journalist, worker in ministry of culture of Slovenia, 18.09.2014, recorded interview



## ***82 List of European and American record labels that release music related to Africa***

Africa Seven

Analog Africa

Awesome Tapes From Africa

Buda Musique

Crammed Discs

Discrepant

Glitterbeat Records

Honest Jons Records

Hot Casa Records

Outhere Records

Matsuli Music

Moi j'connais

Mr Bongo

Sahelsounds

Strut Records

Subway Records

Sublime Frequencies

Warp

## Abstract English

This paper deals with the position of people active in the cultural field related to the discourse of „African music“ and „world music“. Through an examination of the practices and utterances of these individuals, it tries to answer the question of how they are located within a field that Bourdieu calls *the field of cultural production* (Bourdieu 1993). Bourdieu's concept is extended with aspects of technology, globalization and representation (Hall 2013a). The results show that the actors take on a mediating role through their acts of curating, selecting music and writing and talking about their experiences. They therefore contribute to the creation of cultural products and images about „others“.

## Abstract Deutsch

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit den Positionen von Menschen, die in jenem kulturellen Feld aktiv sind, das mit dem Diskurs über „Afrikanische Musik“ und „Weltmusik“ verbunden ist. Durch eine Untersuchung der Praktiken und Äußerungen dieser Individuen versucht sie die Frage zu beantworten, wie diese Personen im *field of cultural production* (Bourdieu 1993) positioniert sind. Das Konzept von Bourdieu wird erweitert um die Aspekte Technologie, Globalisierung und Repräsentation (Hall 2013a). Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Akteure eine vermittelnde Rolle einnehmen durch ihre Akte des Kuratierens, des Auswählens von Musik und durch das Schreiben und Reden über ihre Erfahrungen. Dadurch tragen sie zur kulturellen Produktion und zu Vorstellungen über „andere“ bei.

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Since 2009	Secretary of Organization PAPO Frankenburg-Tansania
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1999-2007	B(R)G Ried im Innkreis
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English	Fluent
Kiswahili	Basic