Artists without an income?

Critical analysis of the value gap and its impact on emerging artists and the music industry

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to discover what are the consequences of the *value gap*, for the emerging artists and the music industry by critically evaluating the concept of value gap and what it means for the music industry. This will also lead the way to discovering how emerging artists are "making it" in the era of music streaming, and which aspects are playing a significant role in this. In addition, the consequences of the value gap in terms of creating value are discussed, both for the emerging artists and for the music industry. Lastly it is discovered that how is the music industry adapting to the changes that the value gap and the streaming services have created.

The aim is to critically evaluate the notion of the *value gap*, and to discover whether is it a claim coming from the music industry, or are artists of today not receiving enough revenue for their music. The information is gathered by qualitatively interviewing emerging artists and music industry professionals in Finland.

This thesis argues that value gap, is not as simple as the industry makes it look like. There is a common claim, that due to streaming services artists are not receiving financial value in the same way as if they would sell records. Therefore, it is discussed that the latest technological developments in the music industry have made artists careers challenging, but this research argues that the situation is not quite as simple. It is true, that as a consequence of the value gap artists work has come more versatile and multidimensional, as besides making music they also need to perform live, maintain an image on social media, have social connections in the industry and to understand the different hierarchical levels they might be faced with on their way to the success. However, this does not entail that the value is *less*, instead it comes from different sources and formats, as it is not as direct when compared to the times of record sales. These changes have had an impact on all the sectors in the music industry, and significant consequences are visible for artists and enterprises in the music industry.

Keywords: music industry, artists, streaming services, value gap, record labels, media conglomeration, live performance, image, social media, recording industry, music distribution

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1.Introduction

"Music is the literature of the heart; it commences where speech ends." Alphonse de Lamartine (n.d)

The importance of music is by all means important for our society, as it is seen as much more than just entertainment. The universal language of music allows people to express themselves, and to engage with other individuals in the world. Therefore, just like music is ever evolving, so is the music industry surrounding it, and the changes in this industry are important to examine. The music industry has transformed significantly during its existence, and the situation is very different today in comparison with the start of the recording industry.

The music industry, more specifically recording industry, had its kick-start in 1877 when "the talking machine" was invented, which made it possible for the first time to record and reproduce sound. (Hull, 2010). This invention revolutionized the industry, as it became possible to share recorded music with other people in this world. 1950's rock'n'roll era, following with other musically significant eras, enhanced the music industry's position and importance, and new artists and record labels started appearing one after another (Hull, 2010, p.11). For a long time, record sales were the most financially profitable area for the industry, along with "publishing, live performance, studio production, radio promotion, marketing of star image, and sales of merchandise." (Negus, 2018, p.1). In the late 1970s, record labels started creating more music videos for artists, which were displayed on the television. Music was not something you only listened, and the importance of video became significant, especially after television channel called MTV gained massive popularity as a medium for music videos. (Hull, 2010, p.243) Music became something that you also watched, and thus, the music industry had to start adapting to these changes by focusing also on the visual aspects of an artist's career.

Digitalization and globalization in the online environment gained popularity with file sharing, which was one of the most groundbreaking transformations of the recording industry. File sharing was invented in the first place to meet the needs of the audience by moving from physical records into a freer environment where music sharing is effortless, which enhanced the music industry. All of a sudden listening to music was not something that you needed records or television for, but music could be shared online, and you could find anything from the wide selection. This meant that there were no boundaries on how music

was shared, in comparison with previous ways of music distribution such as LPs, records, music videos on television and so on; formats, that were largely controlled by the music industry. File sharing meant that distribution became accessible for everyone, which was a positive thing for the variety of music.

However, file sharing was concerned with many issues, especially when it came to copyright factors, and illegal file sharing started occurring in the online environment. Again, the music industry was forced to find solutions and to adapt to this situation, and streaming services were created in order to overcome these issues that the music industry was facing.

The popularity of streaming services was substantial, as the audiences had the opportunity to listen to music for free or for a small amount, which provided access to a wide database of music from all genres. (Borja and Dieringer, 2016). This also meant all artists were able to share and distribute their music on streaming services easily, and it created new scenarios for the music industry. Consumers music listening habits became very mobile, which meant that people started to listen to music more. For consumers and for the music industry streaming services had a lot of benefits, but the situation is seen more problematic for the artist. This is because artist do not have similar gains from streaming services, as they did from record sales. Music is *borrowed*, and therefore the revenue received is not the same for artists, or the music industry, in comparison with record sales. This is naturally causing questions for the artists as they are not able to rely on the income coming from the streaming services. For artists sake, the streaming services hold too much power in the industry, even though they have made it possible for everyone to share music on their services.

Technology has always played a large role in the development of the music industry, and the movement from record sales to filesharing, following with streaming services and social media, has forced the industry to re-invent itself time after time. Especially now when individuals do not purchase music in a same way as earlier, the situation is drastically different to how has been.

This change is an issue that the music industry has been trying to find solutions and answers for, as it is claimed to be problematic for artists. This dilemma is referred to as *value gap*, which is"[…] the miss-match between the value that user upload services, such as YouTube, extract from music and the revenue returned to the music community; those who are creating and investing in music." (IFPI Global Music Report, 2017). The general claim of the value gap states that the user upload services, such as Spotify and YouTube, do not pay appropriate

revenue for artists whose music they are sharing on their platforms. Some of these user-generated services are trying to circle around legislative rules, and thus in the music industry's opinion artists are not receiving enough revenue for their music. This results in a situation where artists are still distributing their music on streaming services and social media as it is the most used platform for consumers, but it is not enough for an artist's music career to be profitable. This has resulted in a situation where artists are unsatisfied and have had to find alternative ways to make value. It is also claimed that the income of streaming services is not distributed equally, as the amount of music has expanded out of limits and therefore it is not possible to pay royalties for each stream for all the artists. Therefore, the distribution of music is not necessarily the only source of value for artists and the music industry. This is why the artists in the industry have raised their voices and want to find solutions for the value gap where streaming services gain a lot of value, which artists are lacking of. However, for consumers, the current situation is ideal as streaming services provide a large library of music, where all genres exist, and music is found effortlessly and in most cases for free.

It is claimed that the value gap has the most negative effects for artists, and consequently for the music industry, and therefore the interest of this research is to evaluate how is value gap affecting the emerging artists who wish to gain recognition in the industry. Considering what are possible strategies in order for emerging artists to gain recognition and seek out from the competition is of relevance. If music streaming is the main source of music distribution, how are artists aiming to overcome these problems? In addition, how is value created and what aspects is it possibly consisting of, if an artist's career is more versatile and consisting of different factors as it has earlier.

Additionally, the focus of this thesis is to unravel the concept of the *value gap*, and whether is an assumption created by the music industry or is it a representation of the reality the emerging artists and the music industry is faced with. The concept of the value gap can be seen from multiple aspects, and therefore, it is discussed not only in terms of impact for the emerging artists, but also what it may mean for the music industry as a whole. Specific focus is to critically evaluate the notion of the value gap, especially from the emerging artist's point of view who wish to gain success in the music industry.

Aims and research questions

With the empirical material collected from emerging artists and other professionals in the industry, the aim of this thesis is to gain knowledge regarding how artists and the music industry are adapting to the changes that the streaming services and the value gap have created. Value is created differently today compared to earlier in the music industry, and these aspects are studied, in order to understand what it takes to become a successful artist today.

With this being said, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How are emerging artists "making it" in the music business in the era of music streaming?

2. How are emerging artists creating value in the era of music streaming as a consequence of the value gap?

3. How is the music industry adapting to the latest changes regarding streaming services and the value gap?

These questions have not been answered yet in the research field, and therefore in order to understand how the world of music industry looks like today, and how it is impacting the emerging artists position, is of importance. If the society seeks to support the production of music industries, it is essential to investigate the current situation and how it is impacting the entry to the music industry of today.

Therefore, this research seeks to answer an unanswered question regarding the impact of the value gap, when it comes to gaining success in the industry and also how are they creating value. With gaining understanding in these aspects, it is easier to understand what it takes for an artist today to gain recognition and success in the industry, as the industry has changed significantly. Creating value today has a lot to do with delivering to an audience, and therefore it is of importance to ask how are artists adapting to these changes? In what way is value created as a consequence of the value gap, and how is it affecting both artists and the whole music industry? This research aims to find the answers to these questions, and thus gaining a better understanding of how the music industry in the era of music streaming looks like. Gaining insight into these topics will be by hearing experiences from emerging artists and professionals in the music industry.

2. Studying the music industry

As music has become an integrated part of human beings' lives, the changes in the music industry are drawing academic interest as well. Factors such as file sharing, music streaming, and social media have created new circumstances and rapidly transformed the music industry. These conditions and scenarios have been researched from multiple scholars from different research fields, for instance, regarding communication with audiences, the positions of record labels, and the significance of social media. The purpose of this literature review is to map the research field and to discuss the most relevant work when it comes to aspects regarding the current state of the music industry, which are of relevance for this research. Based on these discussions, the aim is to locate a question that has not been answered by previous research before and to discuss whether the previously established realities are of relevance in the music industry today.

Changes in the distribution of recorded music

Distribution of music has become an essential part of the music industry's functions ever since the record format was established. As a consequence of digitalization, digital distribution of music started gaining popularity, and thus file sharing became quickly popular in the online environment. Globalization, in connection with digitalization, made it possible to share music effortlessly online, and file sharing created new scenarios for the industry where distribution was not controlled by the music industry any longer. Alexander (1994) suggested that compression files (MP3 files) will assist on file transferring becoming easy and effortless, which will force the music industry to start considering some significant structural changes. He also discusses how the music industry had turned into an oligopoly (Alexander, 2002) where few firms dominate the distribution across the online environment. As file transfer had made sharing of compressed files possible, this resulted in the music industry's efforts to fight against this legally, but the uncontrollable circulation of peer-to-peer sharing made it challenging. Michel (2006), Hong (2004) and Liebowitz (2004), all conducted individual research on the possible effects of file sharing, and their findings indicated that file sharing did impact record sales negatively, and also there was a notable decrease in the record sales. The researchers indicated, that file sharing did have negative consequences for record labels because of the decrease in record sales, which was of high importance for the financial benefits of record labels. Zentner (2006) discussed the measure

of filesharing on music purchases, and how file-sharing threatens the property rights of digital music as peer-to-peer sharing does make it hard to "evaluate the causal effects of music downloads to music purchases." (p.63). His results indicated that peer-to-peer sharing reduces the chances of purchasing music, which a negative consequence for the music industry.

On the other hand, Peitz and Waelbroek (2005) discovered what the benefits of file sharing for the music industry are. The main finding was sampling, as consumers are eager to pay more "because the match between product characteristics and buyer's tastes has improved." (p.907). Hammond (2014) claims that file sharing had positive effects for the already successful and popular artists, as file sharing provides a wider audience online and visibility for the artists due to the circulation of their music in the online environment. However, in his opinion, this notion is not directly applicable when it comes to artists with less recognition, as their online recognition is not as broad as more successful ones. According to his study, file sharing only benefits those artists who are already supported by other promotional activities, such as advertisements and visibility on television and other media platforms. This promotional support is not often available for smaller artists, which explains why the impact of file sharing is not the same for upcoming artists (Hammond, 2014, p.407). On another note, Tsai (2005) pointed out the issues concerning property rights when it comes to file sharing. In the scholar's opinion, the interests of copyright owners and the public's interests are most often contradicting, and therefore, the question of where is the balance between copyright and public domain becomes problematic. In this regard, she questioned that where is the balance between the record labels and artists, versus the music consumers, and how does copyright fit into this equation.

File transfer had implications for the music industry, especially when it comes to copyright issues due to peer-to-peer sharing, and therefore music streaming was created in order to decrease the popularity of illegal downloading (Thomes, 203). Music streaming was a completely new form of music distribution, which gained extreme popularity rapidly, and thus created wider curiosity in the research field also. Wlömert and Papiers (2016) found in their investigation that free streaming services and paid streaming services reduce music listeners consuming expenses. In their discussion, it was discovered that the low-level cost function of these services makes them more appealing for the audiences in comparison with the previous formats where you had to purchase each record. Therefore, the negative effects

of free streaming for the music industry are compensated by the positive effects of the streaming services. In their discussion, they concluded that the overall effects of streaming for the music industry are on the positive side. The notion of streaming services effects on recorded music has also been studied, and Aguiar and Waldfogel (2018) found that "streaming might reduce sales of recorded music" (p.305) however, "this is depending on the size of revenues from streams, and per track equivalent sales, which suggests that a growth in streaming means reduction in record sales and piracy" (p.306). Also, Aguiar (2017) found that streaming services offer the discovery of new music, and this way simulate alternative music channels that offer mobile consumption. (p.14). Datta, Knox, and Bronnenberg (2018) studied how music streaming impacts listening behavior. It was found that due to streaming services, users listen to much more music and streaming services increase discovering new music. (p.5).

Streaming services are closely connected with social media, and therefore, their importance for the music industry is of significance. Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki (2013) examined the reasons why consumers are listening to music on social media, and their results demonstrated that the most common reasons are personal preferences, individual and collective social identities, participation in user-generated content, communication with other members, and the effortless access to music on streaming services. In addition, social media is used for listening to music, sharing information with other members and also sharing of music. (p.27). Dewan and Ramaprasad (2014, p.118) also found that there is a difference in this whether the question is about about a mainstream artist or someone more unknown and whether an entire album or a single track is of concern.

Naveed, Watanabe, and Neittaanmäki (2017) studied the popularity of streaming services and revival of live music, and when these two are combined, it is a way towards a more sustainable future of the music industry. Furthermore, in their discussion, it was acknowledged that a large part of music listeners rely on streaming services rather than purchasing either digital or physical records. Barker (2018) researched the notion of whether music streaming is a sign that the industry has been able to adapt to the digital age. In his view, the notion of music streaming acting as a way to solve the value gap is incorrect, and instead, the revenues from the music industry crashed, and thus the value gap keeps growing stronger than before. The implications of what streaming services have created for the value gap are not extensively researched, but some studies have examined suitable solutions to

overcome the issues of the value gap. Victoriano (2018), examine whether Content ID would be a suitable solution for technologies to address the consequences of the value gap. The author suggests that record labels should work with each other and use the Content ID in order to block their artists' music on YouTube until streaming services are willing to pay fair compensation of the content on their platforms. According to his study, this would be a suitable method for overcoming the negative consequences of the value gap for the record labels and artists. The value gap has a lot do with how the finances are distributed, and Wickström and Defilippi (2016) state that the streaming services "[…] benefit the hits and weakens the niches, which is more positively perceived by major music companies" (p.181).

The popularity of streaming services and social media has made physical formats of music distribution, such as CDs and cassettes, lose their position in the music distribution market. However, there have been studies done about how the vinyl format is making a comeback, which is thus contradicting with the idea that the physical formats of music distribution are not as valuable as they used to be. This can be seen as contradicting view regarding the notion that physical format of music distribution is losing their value, and Sarpong, Dong and Appiah (2017) state that the vinyl record format is making a strong return in the music industry. However, mentioned scholars stress that in comparison with cd and digital album sales, vinyl sales are nevertheless a very niche market, with a small part of the industry revenue. However, McGuineness (2014) predicts that the sales of vinyl will grow significantly, as they serve the needs of both younger and older listeners, due to their old school retro symbolism which is lacking from digital distribution formats. The possible effects of music streaming for vinyl are further discussed by Foucart, Wan, and Wang (2018), as they found that digital music growth had an unfavorable effect on the sales of cd's, but positive effects on vinyl. In this regard, it was discovered that in the music industry, there is a continuum of how different music formats have replaced one another. Meaning, CDs have replaced vinyl, digital music replaced CDs, but interestingly vinyl and digital music have enough complementarities to exist at the same time. This is why these two formats are both existing today, even though their popularity is different, but they are both serving the needs of their supporters.

Implications of streaming for consumers and artists

It has been discussed in the research field, that what are the reasons and benefits behind streaming purposes when it comes to the listener's point of view. Werner (2015) found that happiness is the desired result of music streaming for listeners, and in addition to that, streaming was used as a form to manage emotions. In Werner's discussion, streaming had an emotional status, and streaming was seen as a way to lift listeners mood. Bolduc and Kinnelly (2018) discovered that music streaming services facilitate social interaction through music listening programs. Also, music streaming services provide a place for social interaction among listeners by integrating social media services to their operations. This way, streaming becomes a part of listeners lives, and people can communicate with other listeners through streaming services. According to Hagen and Luders (2017), music consumers are able to connect with others through the social features provided by streaming services, which was found to be one of the reasons why people stream music. However, it was still questioned by the authors how social the streaming experience actually is when communication is occurring in the online environment. It is said, that streaming becomes to be an integrated part of people's lives, as the services fit themselves into the lives of music listeners, due to the mobility of their services (Glantz, 2016). Bennet (2012) also noted that another reason for streaming online is the aspect of *fandom*. As social media and streaming services provide the possibility for sharing, the fans of artists share information and music, also from live performances, with each other on the online environment and especially on social media.

As discussed in the previous section, there have been interesting research results about the reasons why consumers tend to use streaming services, and this point of view is also acknowledged by the music industry. However, not as much research has been done regarding the implications of streaming for artists and music creators. Nguyen, Dejean, and Moreau (2013), found that streaming does benefit artists live performance participation, but this is only for the cases where artists are likely to be found from streaming services. However, social media does make it possible for the artists to gain a global audience online and to engage with their audiences in a way that may assist for a stable and self-sustaining career in the music field (Haynes and Marshall, 2017). Baym (2018) discusses in her book artists relationship with the audiences, and how artists are reacting with the digital distribution, saying "[...] Musicians were among one of the first to have their livelihood challenged by digital media" (p.193). This new challenge meant that artists were forced to

adopt different ways on how to engage with audiences through new digital platforms. In her view, relating with audiences is not that simple, and there are multiple ways to engage and communicate with audiences. Social media pushes artists for authenticity, and focusing on the inner self rather than something fake. In Baym's opinion, "acting distant on social media, and creating a sense of mystery is out" (Baym, 2018, p.197). However, social media and connecting with audiences was proven to be extremely important for artists who have to gain success in the music industry.

The value gap is seen negative from the point of view of the music industry, and artists themselves have also expressed their frustration over the power position of streaming services, and therefore have started an anti-streaming movement. Putzer (2016) discussed this, as thousands of artists put their music out on different streaming services (such as Spotify), and they receive royalties based on how many streams the song has received, therefore as a result of this the more popular artist receive bigger revenues. Consequently, the whole sum of revenues gained from streams are shared in the end with the most popular artists, and the smaller artist will not gain from this share. This has caused some of the bigger artist to refuse to share their music on certain streaming services. For instance, artist Taylor Swift decided to pull out her music from Spotify, and for the following reason: "[...] Music is art, and art is important and rare. Important, rare things are valuable. Valuable things should be paid for." (Putzer, 2016, p.433). Even though these kind of anti-streaming attempts are gaining publicity, they have not had the impact of slowing down the popularity of streaming services. Regardless of the battle that the popular artists are facing streaming services with, as long as streaming stays legal, these services are too powerful to disappear from the industry (Putzer, 2016, p.435).

Situating the topic in the research field

One might question why do cultural industries, including the music industry matter, and why should this field be researched? According to Hesmondhalgh (2013) modern societies rely on three elements of the cultural industries: "the ability to make and circulate products that influence our knowledge, understanding and experiencing (texts); their role as systems for the management of creativity and knowledge; and their effects as agents of economic, social and cultural change" (p.4). The importance of cultural industries is significant for society, and therefore researching the music industry and its' changes is of relevance.

This literature review indicates that there is relatively a lot researching done about file sharing, vinyl format, social media, and music streaming– and how these factors are viewed from the point of view of the music industry, music consumers, music creators, and music providers. However, notably less research has been done about artists and their relationship with streaming services. The research conducted has been mainly regarding the connection between artists and streaming services, but significantly less about how streaming services and the value gap is affecting artists position in the music industry today. Baym (2018), Nguyen, Dejean, and Moreau (2013), and Haynes and Marshall, (2017), did discuss the artist's position in the streaming world. However, their notions are focusing on artists who already have an existing audience.

Also, the notion of the value gap is not critically evaluated, and what kind of effects it might have for different sides of the industry; for instance, for the artists, record labels, streaming services, and consumers. The value gap as a concept is relatively new, and it has gained more acknowledgment at the times of streaming services; however it is not researched from different sides of this equation. Therefore it is essential to consider multiple aspects of the claimed value gap, and whether this concept is just a vision coming from the music industry.

Moreover, as it has been acknowledged by different scholars; the effects of streaming are different when it comes to bigger artists in comparison with smaller artists who are at the beginning of their career. There seems to be a larger gain from streaming for bigger artists as they gain more visibility, recognition and also remuneration through streaming, which they can enhance and maintain through engagement and connection with the audience on social media. However, it is important to questions that what does this mean for the smaller artists who are not widely known, not notably recognized and not receiving much revenue for their music? In regards to this, it would be of relevance to research the possible strategies and steps in order for artists to handle this complicated situation, and to gain recognition in the music industry. Secondly, it is of relevance to question how is value created if there is a value gap in revenues from streaming services.

Therefore, it is evident that there is not enough evidence regarding the artists' contribution to the dilemma when it comes to the implications of streaming, in addition to considering that how the value gap affects emerging artists and the music industry.

Therefore, in my research, I want to find out – how are emerging artists "making it" in this extremely competitive industry, how is value created in the era of music streaming for emerging artists and the music industry, and also how is the industry adapting to all these changes that streaming services have brought.

It can be assumed that emerging artists have challenges when entering the music industry, especially if they are not supported by the record labels, and they have to do the work themselves. The number of artists and the freedom of distributing music streaming services provide has made the field extremely competitive, and therefore, one of the main things to discover is how upcoming artists seek to stand out? Considering the best practices of how to gain recognition, also to how to create value is of relevance for the upcoming artists. As the music field is extremely competitive, how do they gain recognition and value? If successful artists are seen as an example of success, their experiences may guide the direction of how to stay valid in the digital world, which might, in the end, result in value for emerging artists. Successful artists are using social media for their advantage, and therefore it can be seen that even though the value might not be directly visible from social media; but visibility will most likely gain more popularity on streaming services, which will be followed with audience visibility, following with possibilities for more value and so forth. The emerging artists are faced with *fandom* (Bennet, 2012) yet, which might cause different strategies for their purposes. Without this being possible for the emerging artists, my aim is to look into how the emerging artists today are strategically working towards audience visibility and how they are creating value, as value is not created in the same way as at the time of record sales.

Perspectives on the music industry

To gain a deeper understanding of the topic area of this thesis, and the aspects that are going to be discussed, certain theories and perspectives are of relevance. With these perspectives in mind, it is possible to discuss what aspect might have an impact on emerging artists careers, and how value is created for emerging artists. For this case, aspects such as social capital, power, engagement, talent, and changes in the media market and industries are found to be relevant.

Engagement and social capital

Considering why an artist chooses to take the path of a career in the music industry, the role of motivation and engagement when it comes to creating music and performing is of importance to discover. Martin, Collie, and Evans (2016) discuss music motivation and engagement and what role do they play in musicians and artists careers. Authors mention as an important factor *mastery goals*, which suggests seeing success as a goal and a way to develop skills, which are closely connected with performance, practice, and effort. (p.172). Music appears to provide experiences of self-efficiency, and the beliefs and expectations of success can enhance performance outcomes. It is found that there are positive outcomes for musicians who plan, set goals, keep track of their growth and reflect. (p.173). On the other hand, anxiety can be an obstacle for performance, and thus impacting artists capabilities to perform. However, it was found that anxiety in connection with skills and self-management results in enhanced performance. (p.174). If artists have a sense of control besides self-government, the chances for higher levels of motivation and engagement are better. For this research, these are important aspects, as the path from emerging artist to a successful one might be long, and on the way, artists might be faced with multiple obstacles and failures. Therefore, understanding the motivation and engagement of what it takes to be a self-sufficient artist in this music industry is essential. The motivation and engagement with making music and performing is a guiding force for many artists and also an important part in the way of becoming a recognizable and successful artist. Artists have the skills of making music, and that is the starting point of an artist's career, which also needs to be practiced and developed.

Just like in any other industry, power plays a role in the music industry of today in terms of effects and influence. Corner (2011) discusses factors when it comes to the power of the media, in particular, broadcasting and 'new media,' and introduces the notion of "bad power" and "good power." (p. 14). In his views, "power of media is perceived to be in various degrees of alignment or disjunction with other agencies and institutions of power in society, […] most often major corporations. "(p.14). Thus, economic power can be transferred into cultural forms of power, such as music. Soft power is used in these scenarios, if "media contributes to circumstances in society, by perceptions they encourage and the information they provide" (p.19). Thinking of how this might have an impact on the artists' position,

considering the power of media is fundamental. Corner states that "[…] media institutions and processes are practicing their powers systemically, that is to say within the terms of a broader pattern of determining relationships with other sources of power, the vested and often elite interests of which they routinely serve." (p.19). Practicing systematic power is most likely present in the music industry, as enterprises in the field are establishing relationships with other sources of power, which might become challenging for emerging artists. As power often refers to the elite, their power position might have an important effect on the capabilities of an emerging artist to make. Therefore, understanding what it takes to gain success for an emerging artist and also how the music industry works, it is of relevance to discuss how power is practiced in the music industry today, and by whom.

In order to understand how does the music industry of today operates, it is of importance to see how social networks are functioning in the industry. Therefore, the term social capital is essential for this research, as it refers to social networks, norms, and trust that are needed in for a network to function better together, which will benefit everyone in the network. Individuals and society's performance is also depended on social relationships. Multiple scholars are discussing this concept and what it entails, but for this research, the perspectives of Putnam (1993, 2000) and Bourdieu (1995) are the chosen. Putnam (2000) sees social capital as "[…] the social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity" (p.21), and it facilitates social interaction, helps to solve problems with public goods and improves the flow of information. Therefore, social capital enhances individuals' goals and the whole society's functioning, and social capital is also a public good. Social capital for him consists of networks, social norms, and trust. (1993). The basic assumption of Putnam is that active interaction and social networks have the ability to maintain standards and trust in reciprocity that contributes to society. On the other hand, Bourdieu (1995) is approaching the concept of social capital from the point of view of system differences. Membership in exclusive communities or inner circles distinguishes a group member from the others, which brings credibility and credit, which often financially benefits the members. In particular, social capital is seen as elite networks that are socially exclusive from the top to bottom. For Burt (1992) social capital is a resource that is used by the individual in order to enhance their position in the competition between individuals. Social capital refers to social relations, which strengthens possibilities for taking advantage of economic and human capital, and therefore, Burt (1992) sees particular importance in individuals' structural position in the network.

For this research considering aspects regarding social capital, is especially relevant since they are used in order to enhance artists position in the music field. The interest for this research is to discover that how these aspects are practiced by the music industry and by emerging artists. As social capital is a concept that widely affects all relationships in the social world, it is an important factor when looking into what role it plays in the world of the music industry, especially when it comes to social relationships between people in the industry; the emerging artists, the audience, record labels, and other media enterprises. Therefore, it is without a doubt important to look into what role do social networks, and connections play when it comes to upcoming artists aiming to make it in the industry.

Market changes in the music industry

It has become evident from the literature review, that the music industry has experienced many changes during the years, and therefore, discovering how the market is today is vital. Anderson (2014) explains how the market has transformed into multiple niche markets. In his words, "the era of one-size-fits-all is ending, and in its place is something new, a market of multitudes" (p.5). The music industry has been focusing on hits and how to find those, but they are not anymore, the economic force they used to be. There is no longer one single place for hits; instead, they are spread into countless of niche markets. The biggest consequence of this is the "unlimited access to all content of all sort, from the mainstream to the farthest fringe of the underground" (p.6), as there is not such a huge distinction between hits and underground music, the audience chooses whatever they want to listen to. This is seen to be a dilemma for the traditional media and entertainment industry, which has been focusing on producing hits. However, due to the popularity of streaming services today, everything can be found online, from the mainstream hits to the niche genres. On streaming services, the audience is able to skip unpleasant music easier than compared to any other formats of music, in particular, physical CDs and television and radio. (p.22). Anderson sees this long tail market, as positive for the industry, because "if you combine enough of the non-hits, you've actually established a market that rivals the hits." (p.23). The hits are nowadays truly competing with all the other niche markets, and this becomes challenging for the music industry as they cannot control what people are exposed to so easily any longer.

Hesmondhalgh (2013) discusses conglomeration as part of cultural production. Conglomeration as a term refers to "different parts of a corporation relate to each other in such a manner to provide cross-promotion and cross-selling opportunities so that sales would exceed what was possible when division acted separately" (p.197). Cross-promotion is visible in the media landscape in the music industry, and therefore, it is important to question how is this occurring due to the changes in the streaming world. Conglomeration has its own challenges, but is seen as a useful way for enterprises to co-operate as "the same corporation can have stakes in many forms of communication.", and "fewer companies will come to dominate the cultural industries as a whole, other things being equal" (p.200). It can be questioned whether media conglomeration is a way for the music industry to adapt to the changes in the market.

Boyle (2018) explores how the change to a multiplatform online environment has transformed the way the industries spot and develop talent. In his opinion, "[…] talent, once defined largely by its artistic value to now being defined more by its monetary/financial value, has been important in shaping cultural production in the industry." (p.2). This statement implies that the monetary position of an artist is a large part of talent today. However, he also states that "talent led brand identity is much less and even less valuable than it used to be" (p.128). In his notion, changes in the industry and especially how talent is developed today has led to the need of talent agents, who are maintaining and controlling their client's media profiles. In addition, he also makes a notion of the differences of successful and emerging artists by, "there exists a gap between mainstream's [] attempt to nurture new talent and the successful high-end talent that often dominate much of the mainstream" (p. 129). How talent is managed and viewed today is of high importance for this investigation, as talent has a lot to do with how value is created. In this research, talent is highly important to discuss, in order to find out what aspects are determining talent, and in a what way can it lead to creating value in the era of music streaming.

3. Towards research

Methodological approach

The aim of this study is to gain knowledge regarding the emerging artists' position in the era of music streaming and how the claimed value gap is affecting the ways of creating value. Therefore, social constructionism is acting as a guiding approach as it "takes a critical stance towards our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, including ourselves." (Burr, 1995, p.2-3). Social constructionism urges to be suspicious about how the world appears to be (p.3), and this is dependent on where and when in the world one lives. (p.4). This research is interested in the experiences of the artists and professionals in the music industry and what are their experiences when it comes to the implications of the value gap. Therefore, a qualitative method is taken in order to collect rich empirical material, where social constructionist view regarding how knowledge is constructed between people is taken into consideration. Thus, hearing individuals' experiences, values, and opinions is of relevance, as "we construct our own versions of reality between us." (Burr, 1995, p.6).

Flyvbjerg (2011) argues that social science should be focusing on a social phenomenon and be context-dependent. He discusses *the power of example*, and how case studies "generate precisely that concrete, practical, and context-dependent knowledge" (p. 70). Thus, discovering general principles in large samples becomes the most important task. (p.71). In his view, *the power of example* is something that has been claimed to be missing in social sciences, but in-depth, qualitative cases may be useful for contributing to scientific development. (p.77). For this research, the specific case is to focus on what are the implications of the value gap for emerging artists in Finland, which is a concrete context dependent case, as it is possible to generate knowledge that is context-dependent and concrete. The implications of the value gap for artists and for the music industry is a social phenomenon that has widespread consequences, and this case study has the ability to provide in-depth knowledge about the current phenomenon.

By combining the social constructionist view and the power of example by case studies, it is possible to gain knowledge based on individuals' experiences about a specific case, which is

in this study to research the opinions and experiences of emerging artists in the era of music streaming, and their experiences when it comes to the consequences of the value gap in Finland.

Method

Due to the social constructionist view taken for this research (Burr, 1995), it was essential to hear the experiences directly from the emerging artists, and also from with the professionals in the industry who are able to provide a different perspective to the specific case. In order to make the case specific, the scope was set to Finland and to emerging artists, and their position in connection with the value gap. A qualitative approach was used in order to collect empirical material, and for this case, the most relevant method was semi-structured qualitative interviews. Qualitative interviews goal is to "understand the themes of the lived daily world from the subject's own perspectives" (Kvale, 1996, p.27), and therefore it was an ideal method for this study with a social constructionist approach. This way it was possible to gain information about the participants' experiences, as "qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method accessing individuals' attitudes and values" (Seale, 2012, p.209). In order to ensure that the experiences of the interviewees will be obtained in the best way, an interview guide was created to assure that important themes and aspects will be covered during the interviews.

Due to the nature of a case study, the scope was set specifically to upcoming artists and professionals in Finland. This meant that, that as I was located in Sweden at the time, these interviews were conducted through phone and video conversation. This decision was made in order to ensure that these interviews would be possible to conduct, as interviewees were located in different locations in Finland, and scheduling issues could have become problematic. The pilot interview was conducted on the 16th of March, which proved that the interview guide was suitable for this studies purposes, and it was chosen to be included in the data collection. During the time period 17.3.2010 until 6.4.2019 rest of the interviews were conducted either through a phone conversation or a video call. The interviews were conducted in Finnish, which allowed "interviewees to speak with their own voices, and in their own language" (Seale, 2012, p.209). This was found to be essential for this research, as some of the topics discussed were specific to Finland, and this way the interviewees were able to share their stories effortlessly. The interview guide was slightly different for the emerging artists and for the professionals in the industry, as they had a different position in

this case study and the questions had to be modified in order to gain as much knowledge as possible from both interviewee types. My personal position, as also working in the music industry, was found to be helpful when looking for suitable interviewees for this study.

Sampling and conducting research

Sampling was conducted by the use of three methods, for the two different types of interviewees I was seeking to interview; emerging artists and professionals in the industry. Firstly, *convenience sampling* was used, as it is "locating any convenient cases who meet the required criteria and then selecting those who respond on a first-come-first-served basis until the sample size quotient is full" (Robinson, 2014, p. 32). Since I have some connections with people who wish to become successful artists in Finland, I posted an announcement about seeking for potential interviewees on my Facebook-profile and my Instagram-account. This resulted in direct contacts from individuals who see themselves as emerging artists. Their contact resulted in contact with other potential interviewees in their social circle, which is where the *snowball method* occurred. (Jensen, 2012, p. 239). Lastly, as I also wanted to interview the professionals in the industry, *purposive sampling* was used, because "[…] researcher has something in mind and participants that suit the purpose of the study are included." (Etikan, Abubakar Musa and Sunusi Alkassim, 2016, p.1). For this case, I specifically knew that I wanted to interview professionals who have in-depth knowledge about the functions of the streaming services and the consequences of the value gap. The combination of these methods ensured that I was able to find exactly the types of interviewees that this study required.

In total, I managed to conduct nine interviews, where six of them were with emerging artists and three with professionals in the industry. The artists were consisting of people who were trying to make it in the industry either as an artist or with a band. For this case, I had one full-time musician, and the rest also had another career next to their efforts in the music industry. The professional interviews included a producer who works with multiple record labels and two representatives from an organization involved with copyright matters of artists and musicians. The knowledge gathered from the emerging artists and the professionals had differences due to their experiences, and therefore, it was essential to interview both. The emerging artists provided information from their personal experiences, and the professional

in the industry could discuss more the structural changes and the broader picture of the whole music industry. The strategy was to interview emerging artists first, which was found to be a good decision since their experiences provided insight into which aspects are of relevance to discuss with the professionals. This was because, with the information gathered from the artists' interviews, it was easier to see what the implications of the value gap for the emerging artist are; which was also something that was discussed with the professionals.

The length of the interviews varied, from the shortest one lasting for 50 minutes and the longest one being 1 hour 45 minutes. The changes in duration was due to different reasons; in general, the emerging artists were willing to give more time, probably because this topic was interesting to them and close to their heart. The shorter ones were with the professionals, as they had limited time to give for discussion. However, this was not a problem, as the chosen themes and questions were covered, and their knowledge contribution was highly valuable.

Analyzing the data

After all the data was collected, I started transcribing the interviews from the audio recordings. As soon as this was done, the process was of coding was the next step, as "[..] it provides means of purposefully managing, locating, identifying, sifting, sorting, and querying data." (Bazeley, 2014, p. 125). Coding was essential in order to organize all the information and to start seeing certain pattern or similarities occurring from the interviews. Each interview was coded thoroughly in order to ensure that all data was included in the coding process. Firstly, I started with open coding where I had around 100 codes, following with descriptive codes, and lastly ending with analytical codes. (p.126). The codes were organized into categories that were assisting towards a qualitative analysis, which ended up entailing five major themes: changes in the music industry, live performance, artists image, record labels power, and media conglomeration. After the coding was completed, I still every now and then returned back to the data material during the writing of the analysis, whenever it was needed to have another look at the coding process. In addition, I had some notes and keywords that I wrote down during the interviews, which I also went through when gathering the material together. In the open coding and descriptive coding phase, the terminology and the quotations from the interviewees were kept in Finnish, in order to not lose sight of the real meaning of these words, but the analytical codes were translated into English.

Ethical considerations

Qualitative interviews may hold sensitive information, and therefore in this research ethical aspects were taken into serious consideration. A consent form was sent to interviewees, were it was guaranteed that the information shared will be confidential, their names will not be published, the recording will be destroyed after transcribing interviews, and their anonymity will be assured. Due to the nature of the phone interviews and video calls, these aspects were also discussed before the interviews where the interviewees agreed to the terms and conditions of the interviews. Language is also something that should be acknowledged, as the interviews and part of the coding was done in Finnish. There is always a chance that balancing between two languages might have an impact on the result, but for this research, it was a strategic decision in order to ensure that the interviewees were capable of providing as much information as possible. Therefore, as the participants were able to communicate in their own mother language, it was possible to gather information in the most efficient manner. As a researcher, my personal position in this research is also of relevance, as next to being a student, I work in the music industry. It can be questioned whether this would impact the results of this study, but in my opinion, it had positive results for this research. Due to my experience, I was able to use inspiration from my personal knowledge in this industry, which made it easier to locate myself better in the research field in the research area of the music industry. However, as I work in the industry, it was very important to highlight with the interviewees that this study is completely separate from my work, and the information from the interviews and from the thesis will be solely used for the purpose of this master thesis.

Overall, semi-structured qualitative interviews functioned ideally for the purpose of this thesis, which was to hear the experiences from the emerging artists and the professionals in the industry. I was able to gather a sufficient amount of data, which was important to have an in-depth understanding of the case study. The interviews provided important information about how artists are experiencing the changes, and how professionals in the industry see them from the other perspective.

4. Emerging artist's position in the era of music streaming

In this analysis, the empirical material will be discussed in connection with concepts of power, social capital, talent, and the media conglomeration. The most prominent themes are around *changes in the music industry, the importance of live performance, artists image, power of record labels,* and *media enterprises in co-operation.* These factors are discussed in order to gain an insight into what it takes for upcoming artists to gain success in this highly competitive music industry in the era of music streaming. In addition, it is questioned what do the latest changes in music distribution mean for the music industry.

4.1 Changes in the music industry

Moving away from traditional ways of music distribution

As it has been mentioned earlier, there have been some fundamental changes in the music industry when it comes to music distribution, particularly in the last few decades, which is due to the adaptation of digital technology in creating, sharing and licensing of music (Negus, 2018). This change has been especially significant when the streaming services have gained popularity, as they have prominently transformed the music industry by allowing everyone to share their music freely online. These factors have transformed the way artists work today, especially in terms of the creation and distribution of music, and therefore, it is interesting to discover how are emerging artists experience these changes.

> "People do not necessarily make full albums any longer; instead, everyone goes on a single basis." (Kalle)

Kalle mentions above that due to the popularity of streaming services, the tendency for releasing full albums is not as popular as it used to be before the rise of digital distribution. Previously buying a single was probably not as an easy option as purchasing a full album. Nowadays huge amounts of music are available on streaming services, which makes it harder for artists to stand out from other competitors, that might be one of the reasons why releasing a full album is not as beneficial for artists any longer. Streaming services do not provide much of financial revenue for artists, which might result in artists focusing on enhancing their

career in other ways other than creating an album, which presumably is a time-consuming process in comparison to releasing singles. This can be imagined to be a strategic adaption from the music industry to adapt to the changes in the market.

> "As a big part of artists' income has been record sales earlier, and now when it has practically completely disappeared, or it is so small that nobody lives by it, it has changed everyone's source of income in the industry." (Matti)

The interviewee describes how streaming services do not provide much of revenue for artists, or it is not enough to support yourself. The changes in the income of music distribution has had an impact for everyone in the music industry and artists seem to feel this on a very concrete level, as they are not able to rely on the old patterns of earning revenue, such as selling records. It is found that the income has changed for everyone in the industry, which is most likely a consequence of the value gap (Naveed, Watanabe, and Neittaanmäki, 2017). However, the effect is most likely different for each sides of this situation. In general, the value gap is seen as problematic from the artists' point of view, but it is beneficial for streaming services and also for the consumers. The interviewee's experiences seem to suggest that these changes have forced artists to find alternative ways to make value.

> "Earlier when people still bought records, a small artist could get rich super quickly. When records were still selling, artists could get a lot of money quickly, especially in the times of touring" (Julia)

Julia's experience implies that earlier it was easier to gain success and wealth as an artist, especially if your records were selling and you were touring. It is true that earlier the industry and artists mainly relied on record sales, and therefore, the situation was very different as only a smaller segment of artists was controlling the charts. However, the issues have previously been about gaining access to the possibility of recording music, as the technology was not as accessible, and following with connections to record labels as they were the only source of distribution. Nowadays, recording music has become more accessible for anyone, and there are countless studios, people have the possibility to record music at home with their computers. The interviewee's experiences are likely an indication of how the music market has changed in the media landscape, and as Anderson (2014) stated nowadays "bigger hits are competing with an infinite number of niche markets, of any kind" and "the formerly compliant mass market is scattering. As the simple picture of the few hits that mattered, and

everything else didn't, is becoming a confusing mosaic of a million mini markets and micro-stars." (p.5). The movement towards streaming services has created a countless number of niche markets, with massive amounts of artists and bands. Therefore, now the issue for artists is not about how to access the audiences like it used to be before the current accessibility of music distribution through streaming services. Any artist is able to share their music online, and that is why the main problem is about how an artist, especially an upcoming one, is able to stand out from those niche markets? Julia mentions in her comment that artists of today have a lot more work, and maybe this is an indication of the fierce competition in the music field. It is rather hard to define what is *more work*, but it is true that the description of what it means to be an artist today in the era of music streaming is different, than compared to the time before streaming services. Perhaps artists work has become more versatile and complex, as it is not any longer to so directly managed by record labels. This is especially challenging for an upcoming artist, as previously if you had gained success as an artist, it was easier to stay valid and at the top, as there was a smaller number of competitors in the field. Therefore, possibly artists of today not only have to find ways on how to stand out from the competitors but also how to stay valid and recognizable for the audience?

> The artists do not benefit from using the streaming services so much, even though these services are great for the consumer which I get and it makes this direction reasonable, but for artists and musicians' sake it is the gigs that bring the money to the table." (Topias)

As the interviewee sees it, artists do not benefit from streaming services that much, which might seem like that from the artist's point of view, but the issue seems to be much more complicated. One significant benefit from the streaming services is the fact that all music genres are available, and thus, each artist is able to share their music online. Anderson (2014) says, there is "[…] unlimited and unfiltered access to culture and content of all sorts, from the mainstream to the farthest fringe of the underground." (p.3). All kinds of artists are able to deliver to an audience, and as the content on streaming services might not be as controlled by industry leaders as at the time of record sales, which means that the audience can choose themselves what kind of music they want to listen. Thus, it can be said that artists do have benefits from the possibility of delivering to an audience, even though the direct financial benefits would not be as significant, and the competition is much more extreme. His statement suggest that streaming services do have an impact on gigs, and how value is created.

“Our band has released few singles with music videos, and the plan is to now work on our album. [...] I mean of course when we only have few songs it also impacts our ability to get gigs, and it anyways seems to be harder to get gigs for a band. “(Matti)

Matti describes above how the direction of releasing singles is impacting their abilities to receive opportunities for live performances. As this is a symptom of the streaming services function, and artists have had to find other sources of income, performing live seems to have become essential for artists. Artists experiences entail that streaming services have created a complex cycle for artists. Firstly, it has completely transformed the form of music distribution; secondly the success on streaming services seem to have an impact on other aspects of an artist's career, such as live performance, which is important in order to overcome the lack of income. If an artist is adapting to the needs of streaming services, which is releasing singles, this might not meet with the needs of live performance opportunities where you need enough music to perform live. How do upcoming artists overcome these issues, and what are the main problems when it comes to delivering to an audience by live performance?

4.2. Live performances

Implications of the value gap

Streaming services have made it more challenging for a starting artist to stand out from all the competition, and therefore it has become essential for artists to seek to perform live in order to gain access to an audience as the recognition by the audience is not guaranteed through streaming services. Not only is performing live important in terms of being exposed to an audience and possibly receiving financial revenue, but it also seems to be a rewarding part for the artists themselves when it comes to the whole process of making music and sharing it with the audience.

“It is [live performance] where I feel that my character and what I want to express through my songs get through most fruitfully. I could never imagine being an artist that does not perform live, as it is the best part of this job. All the processing and creating songs that lead to that moment, and playing gigs are the place where you also receive all the feedback. Even though it is at times hard and you have to give a

lot of yourself, it is still that moment where you are faced with the feedback, and other people's reactions are so great. In a way, you can think of making music as a monologue. First, you start creating the song, play it a lot, record, and then you take it to a group setting, where it becomes a group conversation. You bring your ideas and thoughts to this tribe, which is a significant part of the process, and that is why I could never imagine just creating a monologue and leaving it there." (Julia)

After a song has been created and usually following with recording and lastly the possibility to share the music with this audience. It is of relevance to consider what role do streaming services play here, and distributing your songs on streaming services most likely enhances your chances to perform those songs live. Artists could focus on recording their songs and distributing them on streaming services, but in order for an artist to perform live, it seems to entail more work than that. Just like Julia mentions, it is one of the best parts of the job, and aspects such as; passion, joy, goal, and believing in their music, were mentioned by interviewees when describing their motivation towards creating music. For an artist creating music can be a lonely process without interacting with other people, and thus the live performance is the moment where the empowering social interaction with the audience takes place. Streaming services do not provide this social interaction with the audience, and therefore, performing live has become significantly important for artists for many reasons.

"I guess it is just the love for the sport – performing, making music and all of it is just so amazing" (Laura)

The importance of music and performing is the guiding force for artists in order to continue to try to gain success in the industry. Martin, Collie, and Evans (2016) mention that music provides a sense of self-efficiency and that motivation and engagement play a large role in artists careers. If success is seen as a goal (p.172), this enhances the developing of musical skills. It can be imagined that if you have been practicing for years to play an instrument or to sing, and once you get recognition for your skills by an audience it is a fulfilling feeling. This might be one of the reasons why artists keep trying to reach for their dreams, even though there are countless of other artists trying to reach for the same goal. The significance of live performance is without a doubt extensive for upcoming artists, as it provides an opportunity for exposure but also for human interaction, which is not always guaranteed in the music creation and practicing phase. Perhaps this why live performing is also essential for the artists in the era of streaming services, as it can be a lonely process all the way from creating a song until distributing it, finally hoping to get to opportunity to perform it to a live audience.

Therefore, an important question is; how do you get to perform to audiences as an emerging artist?

> "Playing cover gigs, you get quite easily, especially if you don't expect to get too much money from it. During summers and around Christmas it gets more" (Kimmo)

Interviewees mentioned two kinds of gigs that they are involved with; cover-gigs where they perform someone else's material or gigs where they get to perform their own songs. However, as an upcoming artist who probably does not have that much of music material either, it can be challenging to get those opportunities to play your own music as you do not have recognition by the audience yet. This is when you might need to do cover-gigs so that you are exposed to an audience, which might lead to some other opportunities in the future. As you are not expressing your own work, but someone else's, getting cover-gigs appears to be much easier according to the interviewees. The motivation to play cover-gigs was not as high, and it does not seem to be as self-fulfilling or motivating for the artists (Martin, Collie, and Evans, 2016), as they are not able to express their own message. Even though playing your own music is most likely the most rewarding part, emerging artists might need to do a lot of work before getting to that stage since their own music does not have an audience yet. Therefore, in order for an artist to gain recognition and acknowledgment by the audience, they might need to consistently perform other artists material, which might result in the end for audience visibility and gigs where you can play your own material.

The declining live music scene

It has been mentioned by the interviewees that the live music scene has changed in Finland, which acts as part of the reason why it is challenging for an upcoming artist to gain opportunities to perform live. The consumers use streaming services for many purposes when it comes to finding artists, which might be part of the reason for the declining music scene.

> "... On the other hand, the gig locations are less in Finland, and if you think that a band gets 500-600 euros for performing at some pub - that does pay anyone's living" (Jukka)

> "I think actually there are gig opportunities available for artists, but it just tends to be more for the bigger artists which does not make the industry that versatile. I

mean when you think of all the Vain Elämää-artists, almost all of them have now sold out arena-size shows, but these are also the same artists who control the top 10 on streaming services." (Kimmo)

The lack of financial value coming from streaming services pushes artists to perform live more, in order to gain recognition and value. This is most likely applicable for artists in all genres, not depending on how successful you are. Therefore, this implies that possibly this is about hierarchy here, as more *successful* artists gain more opportunities for live performances, which might look like a decline in the live music scene for emerging artists. The ability to perform live requires recognition and the ability to perform to an audience, which is why more successful artists in the genre are controlling the live music scene. Next to this, audiences of today are saturated with music, and thus perhaps it is not usual any longer to go to see an unknown band or an artist. If the audience has the opportunity to check music from streaming services before going to a live performance, this naturally has an impact for the artists live performance as well. Media does have power in this sense (Corner, 2011), and soft power is practiced in this scenario, as it entails, "[..]contributing to the way things are in a society, to circumstances and events, the information they provide, and the feelings they generate, whether directly or combined with other factors." (p. 14). This notion can be linked with streaming services, as they do have an impact in the current live music scene in Finland, and in the way that the audience also consumes music as well. Therefore, the mentioned decline by interviewees seems to be a consequence of the power of the streaming services and how they have created a situation where the more successful artists in their genre are controlling the live music market. Thus, this does not necessarily mean that there is a decline in the whole music scene in Finland, and for all artists. This seems to highlight the importance of streaming services, as the artists who have gained popularity there have been able to possibly even perform more, which would suggest that the success on streaming services also has positive impacts on artists' abilities to perform live and creating value. Therefore, it can be questioned that is the value gap the complete truth, as streaming services seem to gain more value for an artist when it comes to other aspects of their career. In addition, perhaps the decline of a live music scene is more dependent on the genre and even location.

> "I just think that it is all because of this electronic music trend, I feel like nowadays all music played is somehow synthesized and actual instruments are missing. I

think and hope that this is just another trend and wave of music, and people will soon want to hear more instruments and actual people playing them. (Jukka)

The artists interviewed in this study are from mainstream music style genre such as pop and rock, which also most likely played a significant role when it comes to their experiences in the live music scene. Thus, Jukka's comment above seems to indicate the competition in the mainstream music field, and it might seem like as other genres are taking away their opportunities. As the more successful artists seem to control the live gig scene, in this study were part of mainstream music, which most likely played a part in their answers. As competition is high in these genres, it might seem like those other genres that are gaining popularity are taking away their opportunities. Thus, Jukka's comment seems to be a reaction to the competition about how to stand out, when other genres are possibly more dominating due to current trends in the music industry. It can be imagined that the genres that are seen as mainstream, which means that they are popular among the audiences, are a threat to the other genres when it comes to gig locations.

"For example, in the capital area it is a bit more common to go see a band you do not know, but the further north you go, less interested people are to go see unknown bands. Only if we could get people interested because the experience of live music is always so special." (Sami)

In addition, the location must also have an impact on the chances for an upcoming artist to gain opportunities to perform, which is essential if you aim to make it in the industry. Centralization of activities around the capital area is also common in Finland where most gigs are located around the capital area. As an upcoming artist, it would be ideal to be located where the gig opportunities are, in order to increase your chances to perform. However, it might not be necessarily enough if your music genre is trending, and you are located correctly, but you need to have some sort of social connections to people in the live performance scene. Interviewees mentioned that they got their gigs through connections, and "puskaradio," which means that someone tells about you to someone, who talks about you to someone else and so forth. This highlights the importance of social capital, where individuals can use their social relations in order to gain financially (Burt, 1992). In order for you to gain those opportunities for live performances, you need to have some kind of social connections with the people in the industry, which might consequently lead to financial gains and recognition by the audience.

The general statement from the interviewees was regarding the fact that there are not that many gig opportunities any longer, and more successful artists take the ones that are there. Perhaps the venue and gig location owners are also adapting to the changing needs of the audiences due to streaming services (and value gap), and therefore ensuring that the artists they are hiring for their locations have a guaranteed audience and therefore the possibility to gain value for them? Besides, streaming services and social media have made it possible for the audience to check music before a concert, and therefore, the audience is not necessarily seeking for new music by going to see unknown bands. In this case, being an unknown artist is challenging for gaining live opportunities, as you do not have the audience yet that will come to see your own music. That is why upcoming artists of today are forced to find other ways to create awareness about themselves, and this entails much more than just performing live. Artists career seems to be a combination of multiple factors, which might consequently lead to those future possibilities of having big enough audience of your own to sell out gig locations.

4.3 Artistic image

The music industry has gone through changes in their distribution as moving first from radio to television, and then from the popularity of MTV and other music video channels, following with distribution in the online environment; such as file sharing and streaming services. All these changes indicate that the artists imagine is not solely about songs any longer, but also the way that artists look, and that is why the importance of an artist's image and visuality has grown significantly due to the developments in the media world.

> "When you imagine back in the days, you only heard songs from the radio, and you had no idea what artists looked like. Then you started loving artists for their music. For example, when we have all these singing competitions and all, where the starting point is how to create a brand based on your looks and persona, and after that comes the music. When you think of Eveliina and Sanni (note: popular Finnish female pop artists), you know so much about their personal lives on social media and how they are also in their private lives, but how many could point out their songs?" (Julia)

Before the popularity of broadcast media, a television in particular, the image of an artist was a lot more private and the audience did not have that much knowledge about artists appearance.

Due to the first wave of television, following the rise of the internet and social media, the importance of the visual has become more and more important. (Boyle, 2018). A few decades ago, TV channels and other media sources such as magazines were controlling the visual images of artists, and big corporations such as MTV were having power over (Corner, 2011) the media and also which artists were visible. Nowadays, due to the popularity of social media, the power is not within a certain broadcaster or a radio show, as everyone is able to create content on these social media platforms. Therefore, power has moved from broadcasters and other business forms in the industry to the general crowd and individuals. Anderson's (2014) notion about the niche markets, can also be seen in the media landscape of today's artist and social media. Not only are artists competing with the streaming numbers, but they are competing for the visibility and popularity on social media and other media sources. As the competition is higher than before, how are artists of today, ensuring that they stand out from the competition in the current media landscape?

Starting artists vs. successful artist

Indeed, visual aspects are important for an artist of today, but there are differences when it comes to visuality and social media for upcoming artists and successful artists, who already have gained an audience.

> "I find it annoying how nowadays all bands and artists should be right away "ready packages," with a lot of songs to play, well thought through image and a lot of social media presence." (Antti)

The ready package referred to here, is possibly a strategy and a consequence of the competition in the industry in order to make it as an artist. However, there are possible differences when it comes to whether you are a successful artist or an upcoming artist, which is something that Baym (2018) also notified. A common experience in the artist's opinion is that everyone should be already "ready" at the start of their career. Back in the day, as the number of top artists was less, the artists had to re-invent themselves in order to keep up with the trends of each time. Therefore, it seems that this ready package was also reinvented time after time, in order to stay interesting for the audiences. However, nowadays, due to the massive number of artists, perhaps it is more sustainable to seek to create a coherent image which stays in the audience's mind? A ready package could be seen as where the artist image

is coherent and clear from the start on; people would remember you and associate you to your music. In order to establish a long-term career, it might be the most beneficial strategy for an upcoming artist to create a stable image that they seek to maintain through the years. Therefore, it can be assumed that the ready package is the industry's way to highlight certain artists, as they will stay in the minds of the audience easier. However, the idea of a ready package is contradicting with the idea, that an upcoming artist should seek for all possibilities to perform, and to maintain their image.

> "The pressure of being visible to everyone is part of an artist's career, but it is also very difficult to try to be perfect all the time." (Topias)

The idea that everything should be perfect seems to create pressure for emerging artists, as they are at the very start of their careers. It seems to be rather challenging to seek for perfection when you have to share a lot about yourself when you are a performing artist. If you are an upcoming artist, and you are supposed to deliver to an audience as much as you can, it is likely that people will also see your growth in the industry as an artist; therefore, does this mean that the idea of a ready package even exists any longer? Perhaps the idea of a "ready package" is just a concept from the past where record labels had a say in how artists should sound and look like. As anybody is able to share their content on social media, what would this mean in scenarios where the "ready package" would be delivered first, following with a music career second?

> "I mean like these social media celebrities like Benjamin Peltonen and Arttu Lindeman, who are youtubers or something and now they are making music and are very successful" (Laura)

Laura talks here about scenarios, where artists have firstly become successful through social media and afterwards have started creating music. In this sense, they are as well upcoming artist, but for them, their image and social media presence have brought success. In these scenarios, upcoming artists are probably faced with different issues as they are to some extent already a "ready package" with a recognizable image, even though it has not been necessarily associated with music in the first place. These artists possibly already have a large audience, and they can deliver their music to this audience, so does this mean that these artists have "made it" in the industry? It is also interesting to think that how is the music industry taking advantage of these situations where an upcoming artist already has a large audience in the

media landscape where visuals are of importance, for example on YouTube. The power position of media is quite essential in this case (Corner, 2011) as the artists in these scenarios already have the capability to deliver to an audience. Are these scenarios creating more competition in the field for other emerging artists, who have the same starting point as a starting artist, but there is a massive difference in the size of their audience.

Social media

If the most beneficial strategy is to maintain an image and try to aim to deliver to an audience, social media has a major power position in the music industry. Social media is the main media source nowadays, and it is a commonly used platform for creating visibility and recognition.

> "Nowadays when we have the social media world, and you could get sponsoring income from different companies when you wear a certain clothing brand, or so, it seems to be quite profitable especially for women." (Kalle)

The artists interviewed talked about the importance of social media and what it meant for their careers. It was noted that most of the time, the idea is to one way or another to promote yourself as an artist there, in order to gain visibility, which will hopefully gain recognition. Therefore, it also works as a forum where artists are maintaining their image. However, the usage of social media is different for whether you are a successful or an upcoming artist. Nancy Baum (2018) explained the importance of social media when it comes to connecting with the audience. Though the situation must be different if you are at the beginning of your career and do not have that much of an audience to deliver to. Therefore, you might need to seek to engage with other audiences, such as co-operating with other businesses that expose you to their audiences. This way, an artist also uses their social capital in order to create communities on social media, and thus creating awareness about themselves. This is also a way for artists to overcome the notion of the value gap, by creating value for themselves. Therefore, it can be said that social media has multiple functions for an upcoming artist; it is a place where to engage with the audience possibly, where to collaborate with other brands, and where you create financial value in addition with social capital, that can also be seen as part of the value. It can be seen here that the consistency of the artist's work is very different than what it was before social media, and it also is part of how value is created. Perhaps

social media has taken over other visual forms from the past, such as music videos and even CD covers that were possibly the only form of visuality before broadcast media. Also, it would be interesting to discover how is co-operation with other brands and promotion of products on social media established, are they in general orchestrated by record labels or are artists organizing them themselves?

4.4. Power of record labels

The function of record labels

Back in the days, record labels were possibly the only forum for an upcoming artist to gain recognition and popularity in the music industry. However, as the growth of high-quality, low-cost recording technology became popular, it meant that more artists had the possibilities to share their music without the help of record companies (Hull, 2010). As record labels previously held a lot of power when it came to signing artists, creating music for them, and finally distributing this music to the audience; but now as any artist could do this on their own by sharing their music on streaming services and maintaining connections with the audience on social media – what is role and function of a record label any longer?

> "Well, they (record labels) do still have a huge function, especially when it comes to gaining visibility and being brought to the wider audience. Through record labels, all artists go to different tv-concerts and others, so they do still hold a big meaning, but it is more like PR activity and sharing music on Spotify and others. Like for example, if a punk band wants to make a record and share it on Spotify and make money out of it - then good luck. It is practically impossible to do if that album is not being promoted at all." (Jukka)

Today anyone can have a successful media career (Boyle, 2018, p.2), and therefore artist technically would not need a record label in order to *make it* in the industry. This has become challenging for record labels as "[…] after decades of executives refining their skill in creating, picking, and promoting hits, those hits are suddenly not enough." (Anderson, 2008, p.5). The previous function of a record label was distribution, which is not that challenging for artists any longer, and therefore, record labels have had to find alternative ways to make themselves valid in the industry. Therefore, their position has changed to ensure that artists

are exposed to the audience as much as possible on media, and ensuring that their artists stand out from the competition. As the music industry has transformed into multiple niche markets (Anderson, 2008), record labels have had to make themselves somewhat exclusive in order for artists to need them. Thus, record labels have started to use their position in the field as forms of power in the media (Corner, 2011), by ensuring that their signed artists receive as much visibility with the audience as possible. The record labels are in this regard also practicing their financial power, which is the significant difference when it comes to the upcoming artists who are trying to gain success in the industry on their own. As a business record labels have made their practices exclusive, as they can by financial power gain more visibility for their artists, which is the key factor in today's world for artists - to stand out from the other countless artists.

> "I have thought a lot about the importance of the record labels, considering that will record labels turn meaningless, but I still think that role of the record labels is about finding talent and taking it to the next level. In a way enhancing the talent, and I also don't believe that the basic function of record labels will change based on my background (note: he has worked for major record labels in Finland), where they are focusing on developing on talent will change that much. In a way, we have multiple channels, where there are global opportunities for sharing music all the time, and therefore, in my opinion, is that distribution is not the issue here. But despite standing out from all the noise, usually, the label also brings needed credibility, most likely more opportunities for wider play, for example on radios and such. In the best scenarios, the record labels are also capable of building the artists career and taking that talent to the next level." (Sami)

Talent, as a term "[…] was once defined by its artistic value, to now being defined more by its monetary/financial value, has been important in shaping cultural production in the industry" (Boyle, 2018, p.2). The record labels have positioned themselves as key factors when it comes to developing and maintaining talent within their artists, but this key factor has a lot to do with their financial position in the industry. Due to the value gap, the music industry has had to find alternative ways to gain value, which has made the artists position more versatile. Not only are the artists aiming to gain success on streaming services, but they also need to ensure their visibility on social media, broadcast media, and any other possible sources that would gain visibility for them. This has, in turn, changed the idea of developing talent. Nowadays talent is also about record label to ensuring that the artist image is coherent and recognizable, and their music is standing out. The combination of an image and the music is perhaps something that the record labels seek to maintain, and thus their power position controls the skills in maintaining these aspects of an artist's career.Boyle (2018)

refers to this kind of act from record labels, as " […] "talent agents", whose job is to mentor and manage the career and media profile of their clients." (p.7). As Sami mentions it, "finding talent, and taking it to the next level", is about finding artists who have qualities in them that could make them interesting for the audience, and after that ensure that they are visible to the audience and maintaining their image and social media presence in order to gain recognition for them. Mentioned credibility can also be questioned, as depending on artists, perhaps not every artist wants to be associated with certain record labels. Even though some artists would want to fight against the power system that the record labels have created, this might be challenging for upcoming artists since they necessary do not have the skills needed to develop their talent to the level where they could gain audience visibility for a career in the industry. Thus, this is the strategic position the record labels have created for themselves, not only holding power in terms of financial value, but also having a monetary position in the industry when it comes to visibility on other media platforms.

Support for the artists

In addition to ensuring that artists are broadly visible for the audience, the record labels have also gathered decades of information and experience about how to make in the industry. Boyle (2018) stated, "individuals who are active in the field, have some degree of practical knowledge of this: they know how to play the game, and they might have views about how the rules of the game are changing." (p.8). As record labels are institutions, including professionals from different fields, they have the knowledge needed that the upcoming artists are lacking.

> "I am a visionary in a way that I have a lot of ideas, but I feel like I need some people around me to help me with that vision. I mean, I do have all my songs, but I still feel like I need people with knowledge. Just so that I would not have to take responsibility for everything and find out everything on my own, which I am really bad at. I am creative, and when I am in that flow state, the last thing I would like to focus on is some social media presence, which is also why I would like to have a team around me to help with these things so that I could focus on the music." (Julia)

As artists core talent comes to creating and performing music, their interests might be in solely focusing on that. This is why it is assumed that the reason why artists want to sign with record labels is the fact that record labels are able to assist on when it comes to gaining

visibility in today's world where streaming services are controlling the scene. Bourdieu (1995) sees social capital as forms of elite and exclusivity of networks, which creates an exclusion from the top downwards. This creates a sense of inner circle, which creates trusts and also often financial benefits for the participants. This form of exclusivity is most likely something that the record labels are seeking to create, by ensuring that the connections with other businesses in the field such as tv, radio, and other brands are functioning. Accessing this exclusivity and inner circle, is something that upcoming artists would have a significantly difficult time to achieve, and thus the record labels have made themselves very valid in this sense.

The idea of a record label holding information is also a way of practicing systematic power (Corner, 2011), by sharing information through social relationship as a form of social capital. Not only are record labels sharing and using important information with their signed artists, but also external stakeholders. The reason why record labels are co-operating with external participants is also to enhance both of the participant's businesses, and this way, all participants ideally gain. The artists who do not have social relationships to other businesses in the industry gain recognition, the record labels gain financial value and broadcasters, and other forms of media gain audience engagements and so forth.

In order for upcoming artists to reach this point can be challenging, as they need to pass all these hierarchical steps, and this is why it is more challenging for upcoming artists to have all the information needed of how to do this. The record labels have positioned them in the "inner circle," which would be extremely challenging for an upcoming artist to gain access to without having social connections with the record label.

In addition, is the previously mentioned concept of the ready package, also a way for the record labels to manage their artists by maintaining their coherent image in the public eye?

Becoming something with the help of record labels

As mentioned in the sections above, record labels hold power when it comes to maintaining talent and creating an inner circle where others in the industry do not have access to.

However, how does this work and how are record labels practicing power if they are seeking to find new artists?

> "Yeah you have to work really hard to get your songs out, for example, *Minna* got really lucky, because when we did her first single that got released, it did not go anywhere. But when she got together at Warner with *Janne* and they started making music together. But it was a struggle at first at Warner when they wanted *Matti* and *Mikko* to make all songs, and I said that don't do that. If a woman has her own voice and she can make songs let her do it. "[..] I was the one who introduced *Minna* to the record label, and I was also part of the negotiations with her and the record label." (Jukka)

It seems to be that it is beneficial for upcoming artist to have some social connections to people who have connections to the record labels. The record labels exclusivity perhaps expands to other makers in the industry, for example, producers and songwriters who can spot possibilities in the upcoming artist. However, record labels have the power over upcoming artist, as it is important for some upcoming artists to get signed by a label in order to gain access to the knowledge, tools, and strategies to what it takes to stand out from the competition. In some situations, this might mean that artists might need to sacrifice some things, for example, the opportunity to make their own music, like in the example above. As making music needs to motivating in order to engage (Martin, Collie, and Evans, 2016), which is essential in order for an artist to create music, if this chance is taken away what would it mean for their career? Are the tools and knowledge the record labels are able to provide along with social connections to other companies in the industry enough in order for an upcoming artist to make it? As the record labels know how to play the game, and how to strategically position their artist in this industry, and as an upcoming artist, you might need to compromise your own ideas regarding your music and image in order to come to an agreement with the terms set by a record label.

This seems to entail that even though everyone has the possibility to make it in the industry, but record labels have created exclusivity when it comes to knowledge and relations to other companies in the industry, in order to make their artists stand out from the competition. For a starting artist this might mean that in order for you to get access to all of this, you need to agree to the power the record labels are practicing by setting terms that are best for them in financial benefits. All of this appears to circle around financial value, power, and social relations. Next to financial value, social capital can be seen as extremely important value that

the record labels hold power on. Also, as there are more artists today available than earlier, is the audience also participating in defining what is considered as talent, by listening to the artist that they actually like and not solely by artists that are provided by the record labels?

4.5 Media enterprises in co-operation

Media conglomeration

It is much harder for the music industry to control what the audience is exposed to when everything is available online on streaming services, and therefore different companies in the industry have started to merge in order to control which artist is visible. Due to the availability of social media and streaming services, there is access to all kinds of culture and content from the mainstream to the underground. (Anderson, 2014). This spectrum of content has made it harder for organizations in the industry to make sure that certain artists are more visible than others. Therefore, media conglomeration has become a norm in the industry, also in Finland.

> "One thing that scares me is the power of Nelonen media, and how it affects the whole industry. I have heard from quite successful artists, that they are not able to participate in Vain Elämää-show because of Nelonen." (Petra)

> "I mean it is sick how these media platforms start to control everything. When you think of this Nelonen media thing, and for example when they got mad at Mikael Gabriel who did some tv show for another channel, and since then they have been blocking him from all their radio stations and tv shows. And also I know this other artist who is forced through his record label to do these stupid media appearances, like for example performing at the Temptation Island-show, because he knew that if he would say no to that there is a high chance it could be the end for his festival appearances, tv shows, and radio plays." (Matti)

The interviewees above describe a scenario in Finland where a certain media organization bought a record label, and thus people outside this scenario started to worry this might mean for the future of the music industry. This form of co-operation can be seen as a concept of media conglomeration, where corporations purchase other companies from a different field, in order to cross-promote and cross-sell. (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p.197). Media conglomeration means that certain companies will hold power over the industry, and this way

"media institutions and processes are exercising their powers systemically, that is to say within the terms of a broader pattern of determining relationships with other sources of power, often elite interests of which routinely serve to maintain" (Corner, 2011, p.19). This form of media conglomeration is, therefore, blocking the emerging artist's possibilities for visibility in some media platforms, which is exactly what this conglomeration seeks to do. It is likely that media conglomeration is the music industry's way to fight against the competition, by controlling with artists get to gain visibility with the audience. Therefore, this is how the industry uses their financial power over other artists in the industry, by basically purchasing visibility for the artists that are in co-operation with other companies. This is naturally challenging for emerging artists, who are not financially supported by record labels, and they need to do a lot of work on their own. In order for emerging artists to make it in this industry, it seems that next to possibly getting involved with record labels, which are controlling their power and social capital when it comes to connecting with other companies in the industry, following with media conglomeration that would guarantee wider visibility with the audience. However, will this visibility lead to success as an artist, and is there a chance this media conglomeration does not always have only positive consequences is another issue. It seems like that artists can be seen as an object, which is something that also reminds of the older patterns in the music industry, where the record labels had a lot to say when it came controlling their artists. This suggests that the industry still today uses power and social capital in order to control which artists gain recognition, but due to the changes in the industry they rely on media conglomeration nowadays in order to succeed in this. This is another form of exclusivity and "inner circle" which the companies seek to create together, in order to use their financial power to ensure success for the artists they are concerned with.

One might question that does media conglomeration mean that only certain artists are gaining success in the industry?

> "What is also bad, is that especially in Finland that everything (in the music scene) sounds the same. Same producers, which are like three or something, are on top of the lists so of course, everything sounds the same. Naturally, there are also special kinds, but most of it is similar production. It also makes it super narrow that what kind of music is sold for consumers. We should have more different kind of music, not just one genre that is good enough for radio's and Spotify."

Conglomeration seems to be the music industry's way to control the changes in the market, where everyone is able to share their music. This can be linked with how the situation was

with when records were selling as well, as fewer artists were successful. As today, anyone could make it in the industry; and thus, conglomeration is the industry's way to make sure that certain artists are ensured visibility in the media landscape. Artists that have become successful on their own, for example by having their song becoming an online hit without the help of external parties, must be the worst kind of threat for the people working in the music industry. These artists have proven that it is possible to gain recognition and success in the media, without support coming from the outside. These scenarios prove that it is possible to gain success on your own, but it seems more unlikely and the time and place must be right for these situations. These internet sensations are solely guided by the audience's preferences, as they usually start to circulate around from user to another.

Interestingly, are these artists the ones that the audience actually chooses to listen to? Previously record labels and their partners in the industry could define which artists gained access to an audience, but nowadays, this is also possible if an emerging artist gets lucky and achieves recognition in the online environment. In order to prevent this, the different stakeholders want to conglomerate and create exclusivity with record labels, which means that instead of trying to make it on your own the emerging artists would at least have higher changes for visibility with the help coming from record labels. Even if conglomeration can be seen as an industry's way to keep control and to try have an impact in which artists are raised above the competition, if the criteria for being a successful artist is the ability to deliver to an audience – this is something that media conglomeration and record labels can create for emerging artists.

5. Conclusion

As mentioned, this thesis aims to gain an understanding of how emerging artists can "make it" in the era of music streaming, and how upcoming artists create value as a consequence of the streaming services and the value gap. Theoretical perspectives on social capital, power of media, engagement, talent, and the media conglomeration were analyzed in connection with the empirical material, which results in making few conclusions about how the music industry of today functions.

This research is contributing to knowledge in the research field about changes in the music industry, by discovering how emerging artists are succeeding in the industry, how value is created and how is the music industry adapting to the latest changes. In this section, I will answer each research question individually, and at it end offer some final thoughts about this topic.

How are upcoming artists "making it" in the music industry in the era of music streaming?

It is relatively challenging to define one guideline or formula of how emerging artists will "make it" in the era of music streaming as a consequence of the value gap, and as one interviewee formulated it *"It is almost dependent on how the stars are aligned, whether you will make it or not.".* However, in this research, it was discovered that there are multiple factors that might have an impact on how are artists have higher chances of gaining success in the music industry today. Therefore, there are some best practices or strategies that might enhance the chances for an emerging artist to stand out from the competition.

The importance of engagement with music was found to be significant if an artist seeks for a sustainable career in the music industry. Motivation and engagement are essential (Martin, Collie, and Evans, 2016) as success might not happen right away, and you need to work consistently and with a goal on your mind in order reach closer to the success. It was also discovered that being an artist today is more complicated than previously, and therefore enjoying the multiple aspects of being an artist would be ideal. Old truths about engaging with the audiences are still valid, but an artist today has to also maintain these connections in the online environment. It might take a while until an artist has "made it", and therefore if the motivation behind becoming an artist is making money right away, there might be some

disappointments in the way. Gaining recognition and success seems to be path that might seem endless when the market is broad and the competition very high, but there are ways on how an artist is able enhance their position in the music industry.

Digital distribution of music is important, and especially sharing your music on streaming services as it seems to be a key factor in order to gain possibilities to play live music. The importance of performing live seems to be significant for artists, and especially for emerging artists. The opportunities of performing live, both cover gigs and your own music, are important in order to gain recognition and visibility in the music industry. The more an artist is visible for the audience, the higher are the chances are that someday you can play your own music to an audience. Due to the highly competitive aspect of the live music scene, there possibly are few ways that might enhance the chances of performing live. Social networks and inner circles (Putnam, 1993) are important in order to gain possibilities for performing live, and networking seems to be the most used way to get gigs.

As the music industry has moved to a more visual direction, firstly by music videos and following with social media, understanding the importance of the visual image of an artist is essential. In the era of music streaming, creating a coherent image that is recognizable and will stay in the audience's minds, is a clever strategy to stand out from the market of multiple niches (Anderson, 2014). Social media is an ideal medium form maintaining artists image and to promote yourself. When thinking of maintaining of image, and delivering to an audience, every artist should use social media. However, the situation might be different when an emerging artist might not have a huge audience yet, and they might lack the skills of how to use social media most efficiently. This is why Boyle (2018) assures that in cultural industries there is a need for talent agents, who manage their clients' social media presence.

Even though streaming services and social media have made it possible for everyone to gain success on their own, and rationally thinking there would not be a need for record labels, but it was found that they still have an important position in the music industry. Now when distribution has become accessible for everyone, record labels have had to find ways on how to stay valid, and maintain their power position in the industry. (Corner, 2011). Their power seems to be about holding knowledge about how to make it in the industry, and social connections with other enterprises in the industry. Record labels hold important knowledge regarding how to spot and manage talent (Boyle, 2018), how to play the game in the music industry and how to co-operate with other companies in the industry; which are exactly those

factors upcoming artists might not have information of when entering the music industry. By externalizing these aspects to a record label, the upcoming artists have more time to focus on the creative part, which is making music and performing live. Therefore it can be said, that even though it is possible to make it as an artist on your own, but the exclusivity record labels have created circling around financial power and social capital (Bourdieu 1995), record labels have established a powerful position in the industry, which means that it is beneficial for an artists to turn to record labels.

In order for an upcoming artist to be able to deliver to an audience and to gain recognition, media conglomeration (Hesmondhalgh, 2013) seems to be something that they are most likely dealing with, especially if they are signed by a record label. Media conglomeration in the music industry most likely brings visibility on television, radio, festivals and social media through co-operation with different brands. Trying to sign deals with companies as an unknown artist working on your own seems unrealistic, and therefore if an artist wishes to receive promotion on a wider scale, they are probably going to need the help of record labels to connect them with different businesses. This suggest that in order to gain recognition with the audience, media conglomeration is a way for the music industry to ensure that certain individuals gain more screen time, which would be for this case the emerging artists.

How are emerging artists creating value in the era of music streaming as a consequence of the value gap?

The value gap defined by the music industry refers to the fact that authors and music creators are not receiving value enough for their music from the streaming services, which has consequently made it harder for an artist to make money in this industry. Due to the borrowing function of a record on streaming services and on social media, it is true that the value received is different from previous traditional record sales. However, the notion of a value gap is not necessarily as simple as the music industry makes it look like, and the statement coming from the music industry about artists not making value appears to be much more complicated.

The music industry has transformed fundamentally in the era of music streaming, and so has how value is created. Creating value is a much more complex combination for an artist now than earlier, and it consists of multiple aspects that artists were not faced with previously.

The music industry's argument of the value gap means that people do not receive much of revenue from the streaming services – but if success in streaming services mean more success in the live music scene, is this a counter-argument against it? Meaning that if you get streams, you do get value of some sort. This maybe comes in different forms and sources, but streaming services do not reduce your source of income as an artist instead, it instead seems to enhance it.

The important notion here is to understand, that the value is not necessarily achieved as quickly as at the times of the record sales. The value might come later from different sources, but once an artist has gained more visibility, there is no evidence that their income is of any smaller than earlier. Creating value seems to have a lot to do with visibility and recognition, and the ability to deliver to an audience in different ways. Live performance seems to be the most important aspect when it comes to financial value for emerging artists, in addition to gaining recognition. Even though for an emerging artist this value might not be much in the first place, but the connecting with professionals such as venue owners seems to be a key factor when thinking of potential opportunities for the future. Secondly, the recognition and visibility on social media have the potential of creating value, for instance, by co-operating with other companies in the industry (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). However, this value might have a lot to do with record labels, as they seek to create exclusivity with other brands in order to enhance the visibility of their own artists. Thus, by practicing systematic power (Corner, 2011) the record labels have the possibility to control a lot of an artist's value creation with the external participants of the industry. If an artist gets signed by a label, that most certainly ensures better financial value than if they would seek to gain success on their own. Especially since record labels can use their financial position as a way to seek out for those potential artists, that they see having talent that meets with the preferences of the audience (Boyle, 2018). If an emerging artist is not connected with a record label, it might be challenging to approach other companies and media houses in the industry with the hopes of co-operating and gaining visibility. This way the record labels are also creating value for themselves by managing talent (Boyle, 2018) and thus using their exclusive knowledge on this as a form of financial power.

Value for emerging artists consists of multiple aspects, but in order to recreate value, an artist must create visibility, which is done by different ways of delivering to an audience. Engaging with the audience both in the live performances and on social media and other media platforms that will enhance the chances of creating value. The key factor in this is that the record labels and other companies in the industry have the financial power to "buy" more visibility for their artists, and thus this visibility will likely lead to financial value.

Therefore, it can be said that creating value is not solely dependent on artists own efforts, and therefore emerging artists may need to go through multiple steps during their career in order to create value. This is possible to achieve on your own by sharing your music on streaming services and by promoting yourself on social media, but the chances are likely better if an artist gets connected with other companies in the industry.

It can be also concluded that the notion of value gap, is only expressing one form of value creation, which is the income coming from music distribution in the online environment. There are multiple other ways for artist to create value, but it might entail a lot of work and patience.

How is the music industry adapting to the latest changes regarding streaming services and the value gap?

As it has become visible through the years of recording history, the music industry is repeatedly adapting to new technologies and the needs that they are assessing. Moving towards streaming services and social media has also meant large adaption from the industry as a whole. Just like any other enterprises, the overall aim of music industry is to make financial value. Therefore, all these practices of power and conglomeration are created in order to keep control and to maintain their power position. It can be questioned, that is the notion of value gap, which is created by the music industry, also their way to seek to keep control? Streaming services and social media platforms are the ones who are having the control over the content, and therefore music industry has also had adapt to these needs even though they might not be always beneficial for the music industry's needs. The music industry cannot any longer focus on production of hits and music, instead their focus is set to spot those talents (Boyle, 2018), in the market that is full of artists trying to gain recognition. Therefore, perhaps their spotting of talent is not solely based on musical skill, but aspects such visuality and social interaction with the audience is also important for emerging

audiences. The music industry itself is trying to make changes to the value gap notion, as it means that streaming services hold power over their artists music. The ever repeating changes are not a new phenomenon for the industry, but the extremely popularity of streaming services did bring new challenges for the music industry. In this case they are trying to overcome these issues by creating more hierarchical positions for their artists, by ensuring visibility on other media sources.

Concluding thoughts

It must be noted that these aspects are dependent on many factors and situations, and therefore these realities cannot be generalized. Instead, aspects discovered in this research are seen as factors that might be impacting emerging artists career and their creation of value. It can be said, that taken into account these aspects mentioned regarding visibility and gaining recognition, the chances for "making it" in the industry are enhanced if an artist connects with record labels who also manages the talent of an artist.

In addition, it can be said that value gap has always existed because it is a common claim in the cultural industry that the artistic work is not getting enough income. In this case, as the streaming services have revolutionized the industry, it left traditional businesses in the music industry hanging as their income changed in a short time. This is why new forms of value creation were created, and today the world has more options and variety of music than ever before.

Even though the music industry might see the streaming services as a threat, but in the long run they seem have a positive impact. Consumers are able to listen to music easier, and record labels and other media enterprises have found their way to stay valid in the industry. Streaming services are also especially important for emerging artists, as their music is accessible for anyone, which means that the chances for being discovered are also higher.

Perhaps, becoming a successful artist is also about *being at the right place, at the right time*.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interviews

"Julia", 25 years old, musician, interview 22nd of March 2019

"Matti", 30 years old, musician & school teacher, interview 28 th of March 2019

"Topias", 29 years old, musician and sales manager, interview 24 th of March 2019

"Laura", 21 years old, musician, interview 16th of March 2019

"Jukka", 40 years old, producer, interview 5th of April 2019

"Kimmo", 42 years old, representative of a music organization, interview 4th of April 2019

"Sami", 35 years old, musician and sales representative, interview 25h of March 2019

"Antti", 24 years old, musician and developer, interview 30th of March 2019

"Petra", 31 years old, representative of a music organization, interview 2nd of April 2019

Appendix 2. Interview guide

1. Could you start by telling how you got into making music and becoming an artist/musician?

2. Do you make revenue out of your music? How? What is the main source of revenue for you?

3. How do you publish your own music? (Independent or through a label, which platforms etc.). Are there any other ways you would like to publish your music?

4. What are your thoughts about how the industry has changed, f.e. when thinking of the transformation: CD→filesharing→streaming services?

5. Do streaming services and social media impact the way you publish your music?

6. How important do you find external stakeholders (f.e. record labels) for artists to "break" in the music industry?

7. How do you seek to stand out from the competition?

8. How do you seek to engage with the audience? How relevant is social media for you in this regard? How do you communicate with your audience?

9. Being an artist can be rather challenging if you are not signed by a label, and you have to do a lot of work yourself; What motivates you to continue making music and gaining recognition?

10. Do you have any strategies/creative ways you try to make it in the music industry?

11. How would you hope the future for the music industry to look like? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the current situation, when being an artist in the industry today?

Appendix 3. Consent form

Kirjallinen suostumus tutkimukseen osallistumista varten

Tutkija: Jenny Lohiniva

Ohjaaja: Fredrik Schoug

Tutkinto-ohjelma: MSc in Media and Communication Studies

Tutkimuksen aihe: Value gap ja sen vaikutukset aloitteleville artisteille

1. Vahvistan, että minulle on kerrottu riittävästi tutkimuksen tarkoituksesta ja omasta roolistani haastateltavana.

2. Ymmärrän, että osallistumiseni tähän tutkimukseen on vapaaehtoista ja että minulla on oikeus keskeyttää tutkimukseen osallistuminen ilman, että minun täytyy perustella päätöstäni.

3. Ymmärrän, että vastaukseni äänitetään ja että nauhoitettua materiaalia käytetään ainoastaan tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksiin. Ymmärrän, että minulla on oikeus pyytää nauhoituksen keskeyttämistä missä kohtaa haastattelua tahansa. Vahvistan, että tutkijalla on oikeus tehdä muistiinpanoja haastattelun aikana.

4. Ymmärrän, että henkilöllisyyteni jää vain tutkijan tietoon. Vahvistan, että minulle on kerrottu yksityisyyteen ja luottamukselliseen tietoon liittyvistä yksityiskohdista (esim. nimien muuttaminen yksityisyyden suojaamiseksi) tarpeen mukaisesti.

5. Vahvistan, että minuun voi olla yhteydessä haastattelumateriaalia koskeviin jatkokysymyksiin tai selvennyksiin liittyen.

6. Vahvistan, että olen ymmärtänyt kaikki tämän lomakkeen kohdat ja että mahdollisiin kysymyksiini on vastattu tyydyttävästi. Vahvistan osallistuvani yllämainittuun tutkimukseen. Vahvistan, että olen saanut allekirjoitetun kopion tästä lomakkeesta.

Päiväys:

Haastateltavan allekirjoitus:

Tutkijan allekirjoitus:

Appendix 4. Interview sample

22.3. 2019

"Julia", 25 years old, Finnish, musician

Would you want to start by telling how you have come to this point as a musician/artist (however you wish to be called), and what are you mainly doing now when it comes to music?

Well, I studied to for three years to become a musician at Tornio pop-jazz conservatorium, and before that, I also had a feeling that I will be making music, and my occupation will be a musician. But at the school, this thought became clearer, as I had to do a lot of cover-music, which is also nice, but I focused on composing and writing in the end. At this school I also participated in singer-songwriter training; it made it even stronger for that I want to make my own music, which is the thing that interests me the most right now. We also talked a lot at school about musicians' rights, especially when it comes to distribution, meaning which are the most common channels, etc., also from the consumers perspective. We aimed to find data about what rights we have, what our role will be in this music industry and music business, which really enhanced my interest for this industry. Also, what are the possibilities for distributing music, and how income should be divided?

Okay, so it seems like you have been making music for some time now?

Yeah, but when I was younger, I never thought this would become my occupation, I did not go to music schools or so. It was even quite surprising even for myself that I decided to start studying music, it was not given. That is why I also wanted to keep music as a very special thing, not make it too occupational, so it would not take the joy out of creating.

Was there some turning point etc., that made you want to focus more on music?

Maybe it was after high school, when I worked at kindergarten and so, and realized that this kind of 8-16 work is not suitable for me at all. I had earlier also made my own songs, but at that time I also got some kind of spiritual awakening, especially about our society. I think I am a little bit different from the norm in our society, and I think a bit differently, and therefore slowly I started to find my own voice in lyrics, and what I wanted to say became really important for me. I realized that I have a huge need to make music about what I have been through, but also I wanted to shake some societal structures. I realized that damn I do

have a lot to say about certain things, and especially about those things that people don't usually talk about. Because I am in a way a person that does not want to make songs about basic things such as love, but it is really important to me that I participate in a conversation where not everybody would, and I can dive into sensitive topics through my songs. I often go into personal and difficult themes in songs that you don't necessarily talk about so often, so it became a need inside me talk about those topics. And we are still on this road.

What role does financial value play for you in music? Are there some other values that are also important?

Well I do feel like through music is it the only way I want to be involved in this monetary system, and music is something that I feel right making money out of, and I also deserve it. Nowadays it is easier to define my own value, that I am allowed to ask money for this, and it does not feel as weird as it did earlier. Now I believe that I have talent in music and I am allowed to make money out of this. But I would not make music only out of money, it is not the most important thing for me, but I do feel like when I give something, I should get something in return. Of course, I get a lot of audience's reactions, but I also think it is important that you do not get an actual payment, and in these kinds of situations it feels right. So, it also depends on the situation. Cover gigs are a bit different, but even if you get food or something like that, that is already great. I think it makes a huge difference whether I get to play my own songs or not. But I definitely do feel like music is my mission in life and my occupations, and therefore money does play a role in this.

Now when you have gained a bit of recognition as an artist, how was it impacted the way that you appreciate your work?

My self-esteem in this has grown a lot, and the school also helped massively in this since it was really highlighted that all artist should ask financial value as much as you feel like you deserve. We talked a lot about how musicians' occupation is worthy, and you should always ask remuneration from a gig, and how being a musician is not a hobby, and not many understand how much work it can be. It is just as valuable as any other occupation we see as important.

Yeah, it seems like that there is quite a lot of work, you just don't go somewhere and sing..

Exactly, it is the invisible work and preparation that is in a big role for artists and musician, which is the part that the audience does not see. And professional skills are dependent on how well we do this preparation beforehand.

I guess especially if you are not under a record label and you have to do a lot on your own.

Precisely!

How important are gigs for you then, as it seems like they are quite essential for artists?

It is [live performance] where I feel that my character and what I want to express through my songs get through most fruitfully. I could never imagine being an artist that does not perform live, as it is the best part of this job. All the processing and creating songs that lead to that moment, and playing gigs are the place where you also receive all the feedback. Even though it is at times hard and you have to give a lot of yourself, it is still that moment where you are faced with the feedback, and other people's reactions are so great. In a way, you can think of making music as a monologue. First, you start creating the song, play it a lot, record, and then you take it to a group setting, where it becomes a group conversation. You bring your ideas and thoughts to this tribe, which is a significant part of the process, and that is why I could never imagine just creating a monologue and leaving it there.

Especially now when not all of my songs are on Spotify or other streaming services, and people come up to me after gigs and ask where they can listen to these and the songs are still kind of in a process; I do really suffer when I have not been able to get those songs out yet. This makes me feel like I am not only making music for myself.

Have you published something yet?

Not that much, most of everything is still in the cupboards. It has been a bit problematic, because I do not have a concise band, and I am a bit conflicted because I would not want to publish anything that is not finalized, meaning that there would be only guitar and singing. I have shared some demos that I made with a friend, and I have sent them to some people by e-mail if they would want to co-operate somehow. Now when I have been sharing those songs, they have started slowly come back to life. When I was younger, I was offered a record deal, where we recorded quite many songs. I used to sing a lot of demos for one producer who sent them forward to record labels, and one record label got interested in me, but the music style would have been "iskelmä" which is not my thing at all. So, I said like, no way, no no.

So interesting – seems like it has been quite clear for you what you want to do in order to say no to such an offer?

Yeah, I mean in a way it would have probably given me quite a bit of visibility, and maybe that could have led for the opportunity to make my own music. But then I would not have been true to myself with the music that I do not connect with at all. I have always had a feeling inside, even when I was younger that I would never have thought that I make my own songs, that there is some other way – some feeling in my soul that I will start making my own music.

And now you are aiming to get your own music forward and getting your own voice to be heard?

Absolutely, I have always visualized situations like these interviews (laughter). I have gone through scenarios in my head what kind of things I would like to talk about in interviews. I think I have a lot say, not just through my sons and I want to participate in conversations, and I would see that as very natural for me.

When thinking of publishing music, how would you like to do it? Perhaps independently or through a label?

Hmm I am not sure do have a strong opinion on that, but I would not see working with a record label as a bad opportunity at all. But I see myself in the creating process more and would like some advice from record labels. I have never seen record labels as bed, naturally I do not have that crazy experience with them, who knows if my opinion would change. I think what it more important, is which record label I would be working with. I would gladly work with a record label, or if I would a producer that I connect with then I would probably also publish independently. In a situation that I would have not found a producer to work with, then I would definitely want to work with a record label – I don't see as a utopic idea at all. But I believe the surroundings should be right, and maybe I would not feel great in a massive record label.

Why do you think that?

Well I am in away against everything super commercial, and then I am not sure would that go along with my own values. I am afraid that I will get the feeling that I am cheat on myself and I would be at the wrong place – but I am not sure since I do not have that much of experience in this area.

It is a very interesting factor that basically you could as an artist make it on your own, with the help of social media and so on, but it entails a lot of work especially if you would do this on your own..

Exactly, exactly. My own energy is much more feminine, where masculine is functional and project-oriented, and feminine is more creative and sensitive, which is something that I think my artistic side is connected with. Therefore, when I am at this feminine energy, I would not want to get involved with the masculinity, so that is why I would love to work with people who would like to do this, and then I could just t stay in the flow. This way I would get to be creative and make music, and I would not need to use much of my energy for stuff like gaining visibility and more concrete factors relating to this job.

What are your thoughts when it comes to the changes in the music industry – when thinking of how we've moved from CD's to downloading music online, to streaming?

I mean it has changed a lot, earlier when people still bought records, a small artist could get rich super quickly. When records were still selling, artists could get a lot of money quickly, especially in times of touring. But nowadays it means that artists have a lot more work - when cd's don't sell, and all music is on streaming services it does require much more work for artists compared to when earlier most income came from record sales.

How do you get your gigs nowadays? Do you promote them?

Now when I am still quite a marginal artist, by someone just knowing me. I represent maybe like new age genre, so I have kind of my own circles where people want to listen to music like this, so that's how. Those people who know me and my kind of music tells about different events where my music could be suitable; but I could definitely do a lot more promotion on my own as well (laughter). When the problem is that I don't have a consistent band to play with, and I would want to perform with a band or at least with some back up pianist or so, even though I do trust myself more nowadays that maybe I could be alone as well. Usually it goes that I randomly perform somewhere, and then people have contacted me if they've seen me or heard of me, I have quite a lot of friends in the wellbeing industry and that is how people tend to asks. So very efficient (laughter). So somewhere you always get gigs, even though I would

love to have a lot more, but I know it has to do with my insecurity about whether I'll be able to handle everything alone, so it little bit takes away the excitement of yes I can come here and there. On the other hand, I think there should be a lot more music where you are incomplete, I don't really like the style that by the time everything is finalized and all nuances are perfect and then you can go an perform, I think sucks. If you think of music of today, especially the artists who are controlling the charts at the very top, there is not a single mistake anywhere- everything is so smooth, and all notes of each singer are perfect. I think this also tells a lot about the situation in a society, where and how everything is so perfect in the social media world and elsewhere, even though life is not always so perfect. I think the behavior in social media is also affecting the music industry, and how there is not a single crack anywhere in the music industry either. That is why I think all music is done with a machine as well, because a machine is able to do everything perfectly. But it is humanity and instruments that make it sound like actual people are playing. It is quite sad that we are moving towards a very technical world, where you go to gigs with a laptop. I understand it, but I still belong more to the supporters of organic music.

How do you see competition in the field? What do you see as the biggest competition?

I myself see competition very damaging, and it impacts very much. I think that there would be room for everyone, but what makes the competition worst is the fact that only certain individuals are highlighted. Of course, it is natural that a big group likes some artists, like Beyoncé, which maker their fan base grow. And then it is understandable that that gets recognition, tv and radio time because they are so popular. I think it can be quite harmful, like for example how in our school it was always focused on how you need to be visible if you want to succeed. So, it was talked a lot that there is a lot of competition, but I think it can get really harming if you start thinking about it too much that how much there is competition. And I notice and see how there is a lot of toxic atmosphere and envy that comes in the industry, and it can be quite toxic what comes from it when everyone wants to be in the spotlight. I believe that what finally draws people's attention, is the trust that people want to hear and see authenticity. Meaning if I do my own thing, and there is no other way, and if people start to relate to my music, then it is meant to be. In the music business I think the starting point is trying to

please some others, and you try to create something that we think people like, at point the personality disappear. The source of creativity should blossom naturally, and if you create a fake-audience to the music you think everyone likes, and you start serving that audiences – than people should be wondering that where is the natural part of this human being. Luckily this ideology is slowly falling apart, at least I hope so. Because it is not sustainable, and we have a lot of evidence from artists who have lost in the middle of all of this music industry stuff, because you lose yourself, the perception of yourself and your identity and everything you are made of. No wonder that people start to use drugs and stuff when they get super confused about who they are.

Yeah especially if you are not given the opportunity to be yourself, especially if you think for example if a record label would give an artists a framework they should be as an artists..

Absolutely, you easily connect a connect a conversation to old days where you only heard music, from a gramophone or something, and you had no idea how people looked like, only about what they sound like. And then you started liking a person based on their music. Nowadays when we have those singing competitions and all, the starting point is to seek for a brand, which we start creating based on looks and after that comes music. If you think artists like J.Karjalainen or other bit older artists, their interviews are based on their music, and nobody knows much about their personal life, but everybody knows their music. But nowadays artists like Eveliina and Sanni, everyone knows their private life from social media, and then music comes as a second. But how many know how they are as personalities, and how many could point out their music? I would be ready to go back to that stage where I would be visible based on my songs and not the way that I look or sound like. Style is important, and it is part of an image, and I would love to do something like wear one dress for a gig for a whole year.

Okay so kind of as a counter attack towards all the branding in the industry?

Yeah, style does not define me. I understand that a lot of people like that, and there is nothing wrong with some people liking to dress up or being stylish, but in my opinion often this is one of the first things that artists are being created. And then the competition is about wow

how nice like look like, and not wow what great music I am making. But I do think that competition is created based on the created framework, and artists and humans do not naturally want to compete. This idea that there is room for all of us to share our artists, and the idea that having my own music out somewhere is not taking anything away from other artists. Somehow the thought that we should always compete for the opportunity in the spotlight, makes me wonder why? I believe that the people who resonate with my music, I cannot force others to like it, and therefore I have trust that yeah I am doing my own thing and if it means success then great, but I would not want to make music from the starting point that I want to be visible somewhere out there. First thing should be whether you want to make music for yourself, and if the answer is no, then I would not start making music.

Yeah it makes you think how rewarding that would be. But if you think about communicating with the audience, and how probably quite a lot of it happens on social media, what do you think of this?

I would love to say that I do it too, but I must admit that this one of the most difficult things for me. Often, I try to be like, now I am going to be more active on social media, but for me it is really difficult. If I do something intensively then I always focus on it 100%, and that is why it is super challenging to be doing some social media at the same time. For example, if you go to a gig it is hard to start taking videos for social media or something, it is just not on your mind. It is challenging for me, but I do sometimes post singing videos on Instagram-stories and so, but it is hard to put them out there without thinking too much about it. But it is not a problem for me to be visible on social media, and therefore I would love to have social media specialist working for me (laughter). Some people like updating social media, but I think if it feels bad for you and you making music is your thing, then being active on social media is annoying since you should basically do so many things at the same time. And I do like social media and updating there, but I am definitely not that person who enjoys it all the time. So it would not be a problem for me. And if you think of artists that are already successful, they do not have this pressure about it because they are already successful and people come to their gigs. When you think of visibility on social media it is great, and you do get a lot from it. And I have also got a lot of comments through social media, if I have posted something from my music, so you do realize that people react.

When think that nowadays you have maybe thought of social media, gigs and competition which is all quite a lot – what motivates you to keep going with your music?

Well I believe in my songs quite a lot, I believe when you have your own thing and you own message, that the world needs it. People and I need those songs, and somehow comfort and being incomplete in life, and connection with the nature is one of the themes in my songs, and also, what people need. I want to talk about how it is okay to be incomplete and not create a fantasy. As an artist I would like to be ordinary and human, easily approachable, an artist that creates a message of how we are all equal. Even if I would be more visible it does not mean that I am more valuable, but we are all the same. It motivates me to idea of creating a better world, and I believe we are now at a stage of transformation and people start to wake up the reality that we need support from each other, and the power of music is so huge that I believe it can make a huge impact. So even the idea of making a change for humanity is really motivating, since I believe music plays a huge part in fundamental changes that the society is going through slowly. Even a very deep dream about that maybe my songs could even have an impact in this system, "uudenlaisen toivon siemenen kylväminen".

What lovely thoughts! So, the idea of making an impact in this world – I guess the feeling would be different If you don't perform your own songs?

Yeah, for example the idea that I have done song about unconditional love, and even when I sing about it is not reality yet, but I feel that my songs are in a way a manifested mantra in a pop frame. I think I sing about things that I want to have in my life, and in a way, I manifest through them, and I start to manifest towards a world that I hope we will start living by. When I perform somewhere, and even the idea that someone in the audience feels like I understand their world, even though I basically talk about myself – but these themes are so collective, that even though it is only my experience these feelings and experiences are similar for everyone. So that way from that personal becomes a collective experience. And somehow it is music first for me, but for example at gigs I would love to talk about important things, and maybe do things that are little bit different. I have a deeper feeling that we would start changing the big position of an artist and their ego, that you can be incomplete and unperfect and it is okay. Starting to break some boundaries and norms about who gets to be an artist. On social media I have showed my own vulnerability, and my own opinions and it is natural for me to show my real emotions. Through social media I could as an artist show more my soul and thoughts, and if people would start to follow it would be an opportunity to share my own thoughts more.

Nice thoughts. When you'd still think about publishing, how would you like to do this?

I do like the idea that I would first have couple of singles following with an album. I would love to make an album, it is a whole piece of art. Album is the dream, since after people would listen to it and then I would get to play a whole gig with the songs from the albums, because there would enough songs to make it possible. So, release a song here and there, and make a music video for each. I would definitely want to make music videos, it would be lovely to combine image with music, because it would experience for many senses, and I have visualized a lot of music videos for my songs. So there is plenty of ideas.

How do you wish that the music industry would look like in the future?

Well the monopoly position of Spotify and YouTube, and this power position is not good, and the fact that they have so much power because it affects opportunities quite a lot. If few bigger companies decide on everything it sucks. The good thing about them is that you are able to share your own music even if you are not signed by a record label, which is great. On the other hand, for example vinyl is quite refreshing, even though it is quite marginal and only for a certain group of people. I do really like the excitement of cassette and vinyl, even though I don't think it will be crazy popular in the future.

Yeah it is interesting, that the physical forms of music are nostalgic…

And maybe I would like people to go to gigs more, and people would appreciate these experiences more. I also hope that technology would start get bit annoying for people and you would seek for experiences in real world and not only online. Like for gigs. On the other hand I don't see it as a bad thing that we would start adding more music on Netflix from gigs and so on. So, this question is a bit challenging when thinking of what we could do. Maybe we could also break some boundaries, like we could organize gigs a little bit differently. Now they are always somewhere inside in the evenings, but it would be nice to expand from this idea. It affects when you are not a well-known artist that you have to work a lot, but luckily the government also gives culture grants and so on. Of course if the government would support visibility a bit more, and maybe give more cultural experiences for the audience too. When people stay home so easily, how could we make a changed in this and get people going to concerts? I mean you do get culture support tickets from workplaces, which probably enhances this. But then I am not sure whether there is a difference, if you go see Juha Tapio or to 45 Special to see some marginal band.

Yeah definitely. Okay those were my questions, thank you very much – do you have something else you would like to add still? No, not really. I think I said it all!

Appendix 5. Example of the coding process

Theme	Category	Codes
Changes in the music industry	Engagement, Motivation	Passion, enjoyment, practice, sharing with others, communicating, new situations, streaming services, lack of value, feeling alone, teamwork, joy, performance
Record labels & Conglomeration	Power, Talent, Industry changes	Interaction, help, support, promotion, PR, marketing, talent spotting, new challenges, pressure, skills, social media, media, television shows
Live performance, conglomeration, record labels	Social capital, Power of the media	Social interaction, competition, networking, exclusivity, image, money, power, pressure, contracts, co-operation, hierarchy