Balancing Cooperation and Resources

A Case Study of Transnational Initiatives in the Cultural Sector

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TKAM02 - Spring 2022

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Abstract

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This thesis presents a case study of a Swedish museum's membership in a European network. Drawing on field material gathered through ethnographic methods, such as interviewing, participant observation and autoethnography, the thesis will take two theoretical perspectives: First, it will conceptualize the network membership as a form of cooperation, following Richard Sennett's theory on the subject, and secondly discuss it in cultural economic terms, using Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke's framework. The thesis thus aims to illustrate what opportunities and challenges transnational initiatives like the network membership hold in the cultural sector. Furthermore, by combining the two theoretical approaches, it aims to test and apply Sennett's theory to a concrete case.

The analysis will show that the network resembled a vital opportunity for cultural institutions such as the museum to encounter challenging and enriching exchanges, effectively practicing cooperation. The case study reaffirms the crucial role rituals play in the process of bridging differences, but also reveals them as representing obstacles for participation as experienced by the museum. In this respect, it was an entanglement of economic pressures and individual practices of prioritization, comparison, and motifs of efficiency on both sides that impeded a more successful membership. The thesis thus demonstrates that cooperation is not only a skill that needs to be actively embraced and practiced but is inseparably tied to economic conditions and considerations: Cooperation was ultimately economized.

The findings of this study are relevant on a theoretical level, extending the conversation around cooperation by economic parameters. On a practical level, they provide lessons learned and pitfalls for members of such initiatives as well as their coordinators and political or economic decision-makers setting their budgets.

Keywords: Networks; Museum; Cooperation; Cultural Economy; Rituals; Resources; Ethnography; Self-Reflexivity; Cultural Analysis

Abstract in German (Auszug)

Kooperieren vs. Finanzieren: Eine Fallstudie transnationaler Initiativen im Kultursektor

Anabelle Gensel

Diese Masterarbeit behandelt die Mitgliedschaft eines schwedischen Museums in einem europäischen Netzwerk. Das Material für die Fallstudie wurde mithilfe ethnographischer Methoden, u.a. Interviews, teilnehmender Beobachtung und Autoethnographie gesammelt und wird mit Hilfe zweier theoretischer Perspektiven analysiert: Einerseits wird die Mitgliedschaft als eine Form der Kooperation behandelt, wie sie in Richard Sennett's Theorie zu diesem Thema zu finden ist. Andererseits beleuchtet Paul du Gay und Michael Pryke's „Cultural Economy"-Ansatz die kulturökonomischen Dimensionen der Mitgliedschaft. Ziel der Arbeit ist es damit aufzuzeigen, welche Chancen und Herausforderungen transnationale Initiativen wie die vorliegende Netzwerkmitgliedschaft im Kultursektor bieten. Darüber hinaus soll anhand des konkreten Fallbeispiels und über die Kombination beider theoretischer Ansätze Sennett's Theorie angewendet und überprüft werden.

Die Analyse zeigt, dass das Netzwerk Kultureinrichtungen wie dem Museum eine wichtige Gelegenheit bot, sich an fordernden und bereichernden Austauschen zu beteiligen und in Kooperation zu üben. Die Fallstudie bestätigt die essenzielle Rolle, die Rituale dabei zur Überbrückung von Unterschieden spielen. Gleichzeitig wird offenbart, dass ebendiese Rituale auch ein erhebliches Hindernis für das Museum darstellten, sich aktiver zu beteiligen. Letztendlich war es ein Zusammenspiel aus wirtschaftlichen Zwängen und beidseitigem Priorisieren, Vergleichen und Streben nach Effizienz, welches die Mitgliedschaft beeinträchtigte. Die Arbeit demonstriert somit, dass Kooperation nicht nur eine Fähigkeit ist, die aktiv gefördert und praktiziert werden muss, sondern dass sie auch untrennbar mit wirtschaftlichen Voraussetzungen und Abwägungen verwoben ist: Kooperation wurde letztlich entsprechend ihrem wirtschaftlichen Nutzen rationiert.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie sind auf theoretischer Ebene relevant, da sie Sennett's Diskussion von Kooperation um wirtschaftliche Parameter erweitern. Im angewandten Kontext veranschaulicht das konkrete Fallbeispiel aktuellen oder zukünftigen Mitgliedern ähnlicher Initiativen gewonnene Erfahrungswerte und Erkenntnisse sowie potenzielle Fallstricke. Diese sind ebenso von Bedeutung für die Koordinatoren solcher

Initiativen und politische oder wirtschaftliche Entscheidungsträger, die für deren Budgetsetzung verantwortlich sind.

Schlagworte: Netzwerke; Museum; Kooperation; Cultural Economy; Rituale; Ressourcen; Ethnographie; Selbstreflexivität; Kulturanalyse

Acknowledgments

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1. Introduction

1.1. Defining the Field

In 2014, the European Union launched the 'Horizon 2020' programme[1], an initiative which aimed to foster innovation and research across Europe. One of the projects that received funding under this framework, was a pan-European network to develop rural areas fusing their cultural heritage and actively involving local communities. In 2019, a last round of members joined the network, amongst others, a Swedish open-air museum. The network and the museum are the two institutions at the heart of this study. By investigating the dynamics of their relations, the thesis provides a case study of a network and what transnational cooperation in the cultural sector looks like in practice.

We will approach the network from a member's perspective, by positioning ourselves with the Swedish open-air museum, the site where most of this thesis's ethnographic material is based. During a two-month project in the Fall of 2020, I worked at the museum as an ethnographic consultant. My position involved in-depth immersion in the museum's day-to-day operations and organizational culture, and in the network's rationale and functioning, which allowed me to apply an array of methods. In this study, they include semi-structured interviewing, (participant) observations, netnography and document analysis. As I also interacted with the network as representative of the museum, I will draw on these first-hand experiences as a member, thus applying the method of autoethnography.

1.2. Purpose of Study

Building on this deep-reaching corpus of material, the thesis aims to describe and analyse the opportunities and challenges such transnational initiatives may hold in the cultural sector. In addition to this, the thesis also pursues a theoretical objective, namely, to contribute to Sennett's theory of Cooperation (2013) by applying and testing it to a specific case. To reach this two-fold objective, the following questions are asked: What can transnational initiatives contribute to stimulating societal cooperation? Which tools and processes did the network choose to reach its goals? How did these choices affect the organizations involved? Which factors obstructed those efforts, nonetheless? And to what degree did this lie within the capabilities of the institutions themselves?

To understand the dynamics at work, I will first conceptualize the relationship between the European network and the Swedish museum as a Cooperation, following Richard Sennett (2013). As he argues, cooperation is a skill that needs to be practiced and nourished through rituals. Applied to the network membership, this framework underlines the importance of a common language and practices but also reveals their limitations. To elaborate these, I secondly conceptualize the membership from another perspective, in economic terms, using Paul du Gay & Michael Pryke's framework on the Cultural Economy (2002). Its central argument of how entangled cultural and economic factors are also applied here: Precarious resource situations at both organizations significantly impacted how the network membership eventually played out in this case: How much cooperation could be actualized: Was it considered a resource or rather an additional strain on existing resources?

Specifically, du Gay & Pryke's theory points to how such economic categories, as in this case resources, are always enacted and performed in particular contexts by specific actors. In this respect, I will look at how their different perceptions and assumptions about resourcefulness led the museum and the network to engage closer at certain times while creating distance at others. As this study will show, cooperation is not only a skill that must be actively embraced and practiced. It is also inseparably tied to economic conditions and considerations: Ultimately, Cooperation has been economized.

1.3.   Limitations & Relevance

As inherent in a case study, this specific analysis cannot possibly speak for all cultural institutions that participate in transnational networks. Similarly, my position and interpretation of events have limitations in what I may observe and understand as a researcher, coming from the outside, trying to grasp situations and understand someone else's organization and everyday work. Nevertheless, cultural analysis has come to accept and incorporate this into a transparency strategy, while also stressing the depth of insight that can be procured through ethnographic encounters with the researcher acting as medium (Davies 2008; Sunderland & Denny 2007). The following chapters will thus include self-reflexive passages to articulate the process in which gradual knowledge building and the researcher role are entangled (Davies 2008; Aspers 2009). Beyond these considerations, I suggest there are valuable insights to be learned from this case which are applicable in a broader context as well:

This study can be seen as a rather complicated example of a network membership, as I entered the project to help with an inactive membership. While it generally might be frustrating when things do not run smoothly, these situations disclose important information about cultural processes or relationships and lay bare what we otherwise take for granted (Ehn et al. 2016). Accordingly, the findings of my study are relevant on several levels and for several actors. On the one side, they concern the networks themselves, how they are conceived and communicated to their members. On the other, they apply to political decision-makers how they attribute funding for such initiatives. Finally, it is crucial for cultural organizations in their role as members, in various stages of involvement in the project: from whether they apply in the first place, to how they then participate and allocate adequate resources.

Although the case study is about real organizations, I decided to anonymize them as much as possible. That is, because they exist not only in my text but are functioning entities and people in the physical world. For one thing, the study concerns at times complicated interactions and relations between these two organizations and their perspectives. It also contains sensitive information such as financial constitutions. As they might be known on a regional or international level, I do not wish to affect their reputation or operations. Equally, the names of all informants and employees at the institutions will be anonymized. However, I will disclose their positions or professional roles to provide an understanding of the structure and organization's dynamics.

1.4.   Previous Research

This case study touches upon several fields of academic research. For one thing, it is situated within organizational and museum ethnographies. Museologist Sharon Macdonald covers this specific crossing of the two fields, discussing her, and her colleagues', own museum ethnographies in England and Germany with a methodological focus (Macdonald 2001; Macdonald et al. 2018). The concrete guidelines and suggestions that she derives for studying museums as organizations, provided important insights and inspirations for this case study, and generating knowledge inside the museum. In a similar manner, Jennie Morgan (2018) takes a methodological approach to her anthropological studies of change within a Scottish museum. She positions change within the wider context of economic pressures that museums face today and examines how the museum staff's miniscule everyday activities together come to form change within the organization. Her work thus touches upon two relevant themes for this case

study. On the one side, this concerns the issue of economic impacts on contemporary museums and on the other, methodological questions of how to study such phenomena: Her approach towards making change visible is transferrable to how this thesis attempts to grasp financial parameters, such as resources within the museum. Finally, Jason B. Jackson (2019) adds a museum ethnography to this canon which explicitly focuses on international collaboration by presenting museum cases from the US and China.

This aspect links to another area of scholarship examining transnational initiatives, or organizations working transnationally, in the cultural sector and heritage field in general. Here Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2007) contributed case studies from UNESCO, where she examined to what degree their policies allow for diversity in a global context and how these are intertwined with economic motifs. Valdimar Tr. Hafstein (2018) critically analyzed whether UNESCO protects smaller heritage practitioners, contrasting these experiences to the institution's official narrative. Similarly, Jan Turtinen (2006) analyzes the negotiations between the UNESCO policies and its appointed heritage site on Öland in Sweden. Rachel Irwin and Richard Smith (2018) offer another perspective on international organizations with their investigations of WHO procedures and motivations. While their research is not situated in the cultural sector, it does discuss rituals in international cooperations, which forms a crucial part of Sennett's theory.

As becomes apparent, UNESCO is a frequent subject of investigation, but there also exist studies on smaller, less institutionalized initiatives and projects, more like the European network in this case study. One of them is an ethnographic study by Sarah Green, Penny Harvey and Hannah Knox of a museum participating in a European project for establishing information and communications technologies (Green et al. 2005). This article, as well as Hafstein's and Turtinen's work, raises issues of power, hierarchies and "moral imperatives", entailed in these projects (Green et al. 2005, p. 807). While hierarchies and power relations also represented an initial theme and analytical thread of the case study in this thesis, the difficulties here seemed to stem more from the institutions' financial precariousness. Notably, except for Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's cases, few of the studies discussed above included financial or economic issues in their analysis. This aspect thus opens another important field of previous research.

Studies on the present economic conditions and practices in the cultural sector, specifically museums, represent the final area of research which significantly informed this

thesis' analysis. Karin Ekström and the contributors to her edited work "Museums and Marketization" (2020) provide perspectives from various disciplines to demonstrate how much neoliberal logics and requirements shape the cultural sector at large, and museums in particular. Nuala Morse and Ealasaid Munro (2018) specifically problematize via two concrete cases from the UK how financial constraints impact museums' outreach and inclusivity measures. Their study discusses these relations with external actors as "practices of care", which take different forms and motifs when confronted with cuts in public spending. While Morse and Munro discuss museums' own, altruistic initiatives, this thesis is concerned with initiatives originating outside the museum and for the mutual benefit, rather than altruistic purposes: Where Morse and Munro examine care, this study investigates cooperation.

The most important inspiration for taking the cultural economic approach as theoretical foundation was Lizette Gradén and Tom O'Dell's work in the field (2017, 2018, 2020; Gradén et al. 2021). They initially applied du Gay and Pryke's framework (2002) to the museum sector, arguing how inseparably intertwined any of the most pressing contemporary questions in museology and heritage studies are with their economic conditions and their performance in everyday life. This thesis contributes a case to this specific field of scholarship of a museum and its transnational collaboration within a European network.

1.5.   Disposition

The thesis initially describes all the necessary components in the background of this case study: Chapter two introduces the two institutions involved in the case study with their individual setups, namely the European network and the Swedish open-air museum. Then, in Chapter three, I outline where the material of this case study originated, what methods and methodologies I used to procure it. Chapter four comprises the theoretical frameworks and concepts relevant to the analysis, with Richard Sennett's theory on cooperation in 4.1 and Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke's Cultural Economy approach in section 4.2.

In line with the theoretical basis, the subsequent analysis will also be structured in two parts. On the one hand, I examine the network and the museum's membership in cooperative terms, and on the other, discuss its cultural and economic contingencies. In Chapter five, I will thus argue with Sennett's theory why this network can be considered a positive example of the complex cooperation he suggests. The first section accordingly addresses the

opportunities in transnational networks. In section 5.2, I will then explain how this network qualifies as supporting cooperation by analysing the tools and practices employed. Section 5.3 looks closely into how these played out in the museum's particular network membership and what complications arose.

   To explain these difficulties, we will move on to the cultural economy approach in Chapter six. Section 6.1 will first explain, how cooperation in the network membership related to economic conditions and issues of resources, especially at the museum. Section 6.2 examines how these conditions were enmeshed in the institutions involved, i.e. what assumptions and perceptions existed about what was resourceful about the network membership. Furthermore, it discusses how the museum's perception of the network changed over time and what factors this depended on. Section 6.3 analyses the consequences of these different perceptions and activities for the network membership. Simultaneously, this will shed light on the network's economic situation and how this equally impacted the possibility of cooperating with the museum. Chapter seven brings together all findings from the analysis and under 7.1 discusses their implications for applied and theoretical contexts. Finally, section 7.2 illustrates fields for further research on economic structures, gender, as well as hierarchies and power relations.

2. Background on both Institutions

As this study involves two organizations with their specific structures, departments and actors, I will, for the reader, establish an understanding of the network membership. By explaining its circumstances and setup, I intend to facilitate the navigation and understanding of the analytical chapters. Furthermore, since I decided to anonymize both institutions, as explained in the introduction, I will also refer to their employees, not by names, but rather by their functions or professional roles. In addition, this choice calls for some guidance and 'practice' upfront with the more operational parts of the study. Vocabulary is one. Thus, I will first briefly introduce the network and its origin story and then the museum in more detail.

2.1 The European Network

The European network started in 2018 as a research project of a prestigious Italian university, where its main project coordinators are still working today. It is EU-funded, and consists of a plethora of partner organizations, ranging from UNESCO and research institutions to municipalities and smaller organizations like NGOs. Its main objective is to develop rural areas through cultural and natural heritage by actively involving local communities and essential stakeholders. The project team had first procured the themes and criteria most relevant to enhance successful rural development according to previous research and experience. They had then selected and analyzed twelve rural areas as positive examples of these criteria, to derive transferrable strategies for other areas which were not as far in their development process yet. Then, the network chose six more 'members', who were supposed to learn from the positive examples. Together with their local communities and the help of the network partners, they were expected to create a project plan on how they could enhance rural regeneration in their region. In 2019, the network with 18 members, opened to another round of applications for such 'learning members'. Consequently, 17 additional rural areas were invited and joined. However, there were distinctions in how closely these additional members affiliated with the network: only some received funding for network activities or directly consulted with the project coordinators and partners.

This is where the open-air museum enters the picture as one of those rural areas that qualified in the last round, in 2019, to be part of the project and develop their heritage-led regeneration strategy. Since then, it has participated in some activities, like webinars offered

for their member group specifically, and exchanged further information about the museum, but eventually struggled to follow the network activities closely and to integrate them actively into their day-to-day operations. Therefore, a closer look at the museum's structures and setup will help first give a general impression of their situation and challenges. In the later chapters (5 - 7), I will then distinguish the specific implications for the network membership.

2.2 The Open-Air Museum

The museum itself is situated in a rural region in Southern Sweden and lies about 30 to 40 minutes by car from the next bigger city. It showcases farm life from the 19th century in its original location. That is to say, the main museum building consists of a former farmhouse and is surrounded by a heritage landscape of pastures, woods and little streams. Today the museum's coordinator and his team try to farm the surrounding fields as much as possible according to the original techniques used back when the farm was still operating. Apart from the original farmhouse, its courtyard, an adjacent garden, additional buildings had been added over the years. Such compilation reflects similar farms of that time, such as water- and windmills or a malthouse. During summer, animals from native breeds, such as pigs, goats and geese inhabit the pastures and small ponds. An on-site farmworker lives in a farmhouse (not open to the public) on the museum premises and cares for the animals. The open-air museum is open all-year round. However, the farm buildings are staffed and open for visits during the summer season and a select number of annual events.

Taken together this encompasses a vast estate. Nevertheless, the open-air museum may be considered small, especially when it comes to staff resources. Apart from the farmworker, the primary coordinator is responsible for cultivating the pastures and maintaining and improving the buildings in a historically accurate way. This undertaking demands a significant amount of time, expertise, and money. Most of the time however, when the museum's coordinator is not out at the farm doing practical work, he is in the office of the parent museum situated in the nearby city.

In the following, whenever I write of 'the museum', I refer to the open-air museum since it is the main subject of this study. When writing about the parent museum, I will specify this. All guides, gardeners, constructors, or craftsmen also belong in the parent museum and come for specific projects or activities to the open-air museum. Similarly, the

communication, events and finance departments cover both, the parent and the open-air museum and are located in the city with the parent museum.

There is no entrance fee for the open-air museum, only an option to donate. This points to one of its main challenges. On the one hand, it incurs considerable costs to run, while on the other, having little financial returns. The free admission puts the site in a precarious position with the parent museum, mainly when allocating staff and financial resources. Furthermore, its somewhat reclusive location, i.e., being difficult to reach by public transport, further complicate issues, for visitors and when staff has to be brought there. This adds another crucial task to the responsibilities of the open-air museum's coordinator, namely finding additional resource channels to run the museum activities and maintain and develop the premises.

The museum was already part of several regional networks but, with the European network, the museum hoped to gain access to financial resources from a European level and to exchange knowledge with members who were facing similar struggles as themselves. Three employees had been involved with the application in the parent museum and knew about the open-air museum's membership in the European network. This group included the director of the parent museum, a staff member responsible for attracting financial resources through research channels, and the open-air museum's coordinator[2]. Apart from these three, who were involved with the network or knew about it, I interviewed employees from several other departments in the open-air and the parent museum. Although they did contribute crucially to my understanding of both institutions' setup and workings, they will not play a primary role as informants in this study.

3. Material & Methodology

The material of this study originated from a project with the Swedish open-air museum in Fall 2020: I worked as in-house consultant at the parent-museum to analyse the European network and the museum's membership in it. For two months I collected ethnographic material from the organization in situ as well as from the European network digitally. The museum had asked me to investigate the fit between their own organization and the network. Specifically, they wanted to know what benefits and potential the membership offered and conversely, what they could contribute to the network. As a form of organizational ethnography (Gellner & Hirsch 2001), the project had a clear brief and goal, which was an important feature for gaining insights and results.

Due to the condensed project period of eight weeks, and an additional pre-study of several days, the project also represents a case of short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan 2013). This methodology is characterized by "data intensity" and a strong focus (Knoblauch 2005, p. 1; Pink & Morgan 2013, p. 353). The intensity here resulted from being immersed in the organization as a full-time employee, constantly being surrounded by other staff members and potential material. While this provided a wealth of insights, it also bore the risk of growing too big to order and analyse in this short period of time. Accordingly, maintaining a strong focus was vital in the interplay of short-term and organizational ethnography. As in any research project, further questions and problems emerged along the way, which I was not able to interrogate in the scope of this project. On the one side, this represents a disadvantage of this specific combination of methodologies. On the other, it can also be seen as revealing additional fields of investigation for the future. In the following sections I will elaborate on the exact methods I employed as well as ethical and self-reflexive aspects which arose over the course of the project.

3.1 On Methods - A Bricolage Approach

Being situated inside the museum as a researcher, I chose interviewing and participant observation as main methods for my research on the museum. These methods are commonly recommended to be applied in combination, since they both complement and test one another (Tjora 2006, p. 430). They allowed me to understand and question what I witnessed in my immediate environment. Interviews delivered concrete, subjectively factual accounts and

perceptions which could then be contextualized through how staff members acted, often unconsciously and sometimes contrarily, in their daily business and interactions (Löfgren 2014, p. 77). Working inside the organization alongside other staff members shed light on the frames beyond what was said in interviews, and generated information through the processes and dynamics surrounding them (Macdonald 2001, p. 80; Nairn et al. 2005). I furthermore had one walk-along, turned "work-along", where I accompanied the museum coordinator during his work on the grounds of the outdoor museum. While performing his tasks, he explained to me what he was doing, gave background information or associative stories and replied to my questions. This method proved effective since it allowed me to combine interviewing and observation for one informant and situation. At the same time, its data intensity, having to process visual and auditory information while also conducting an interview posed one of its main challenges.

In total, I conducted fourteen semi-structured interviews and several informal chats with the museum staff and one network coordinator. All interviews were conducted in person at the museum, except for one video call with the network coordinator situated in Italy. The interviewees signed informed consent forms, which disclosed the purpose of the study and that their identities would be anonymized as far as possible in the subsequent analysis. At the beginning of each conversation, I explained again the subject and context of my study and asked whether the participant was comfortable with the interview being recorded, to which all informants agreed.

At the museum, I selected participants who worked with questions of resources and outreach, since these topics were closely related to the network membership. On the side of the network, I interviewed a network coordinator, who was familiar with the museum herself and had been suggested to me by the museum staff. Apart from her, I tried but struggled to recruit more informants from their ranks. This resulted in a limited number of interview perspectives from the network, which I compensated through applying other methods to retrieve a plethora of material on the network. Such a bricolage approach (O'Dell & Willim 2014, p. 790) can ultimately be a strength rather than weakness, as different methods contribute different aspects of one issue and together combine to a multi-faceted whole.

Two subsidiary methods for gaining a fuller understanding of the network were document analysis and netnography. I accessed internal documents as well as articles or documents published by the network to educate members and the public on their work. I

supplemented these with video recordings of past educational webinars and presentations uploaded on the network's website. The website itself, their social media channels and emails distributed among members generated additional netnographic materials. These diverse sources complemented one another as they varied in styles of communication and brought forth different facets of the network. The webinars and documents provided a clearer grasp of the network's rationale and structures, of how it was conceived, while the interview gave me an impression of how it was lived and practiced. These various materials together uncovered what different understandings of the network existed at the museum as a member versus among the network coordinators themselves.

The objective of this study is ultimately to contribute a member's perspective on how a transnational network operates and functions. Accordingly, the focus of my fieldwork was on examining the museum's concrete experience of it. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, I employed netnography and document analysis also on the museum's side as subsidiary methods. Examining for example their own social media channels and website, I analysed how these aligned or contrasted with the respective communication outlets of the network. Documents like their application letter gave me insights into the membership process and how it changed over time.

One challenge of this research project was that the membership was at a stagnant stage when I started the project. Therefore, there existed limited participation and knowledge about the network at the museum. Here I took on a more active role, apart from being a researcher, and acted as museum representative and contact person to the network. This two-fold role contributed a third key method to my bricolage methodology, namely autoethnography. I actively took part in a so-called "Duplicator Forum" of the network and prepared a presentation with the museum coordinator beforehand to introduce the museum to the other members and define it in network terms and parameters. I also created a profile on the digital networking platform and made myself familiar with the internal functions and guidelines. I thus drew upon my own experiences of navigating the network structures, tools, and activities, which provided crucial insights I could otherwise not have obtained. However, it should be noted that autoethnography is always entangled with subjective interpretations of the researcher and the findings risk being influenced by explicit or implicit motivations for the study. I will elaborate on this aspect in the next section concerning self-reflexivity. Being aware of this possibility, I took care to combine my autoethnographic findings with those derived from other methods to compose an analysis of different perspectives and sources.

3.3 Ethical Considerations & Self-Reflexivity

The main ethical questions that arose in this research project stemmed from studying a complicated network membership and relationship between two institutions. There was little direct communication between the two organizations involved, stuck in a rather passive state with mutual misunderstandings and misconceptions. I as researcher found myself becoming an intermediary between both parties, having to balance my own objective of inquiry with not worsening, but preferably improving their relationship. This challenge has two main implications, concerning (non)disclosure of sensitive information on the one side, and on the other, how this information was created by me as active participant and interpreter in the first place.

A window on the grounds of the open-air museum, reflecting my own positioning in the field and methodological choices

Photo; Anabelle Gensel

Especially in the context of this written analysis, as product of the research project, I faced two contradicting intentions. I aimed to work as closely and candidly with the

material as possible, as I do consider the findings to be of value not only for this membership, but other organizations and collaborations as well. At the same time, I am aware that I am interfering and influencing institutional ecosystems, to speak in the metaphorical words of Donna Haraway, who urges us regarding our research participants that "They – we – are here to live and die with, not just think and write with." (Haraway 2016, p. 125). During the limited project time, I indeed "lived with" these institutions and their staff, I got to experience their genuine enthusiasm, their achievements, and visions for their work. In this thesis, however, I am focusing on the complicated aspect of their interplay and treating other sensitive information such as financial constitution. To protect my sources, I decided to anonymize the institutions and all actors involved as much as possible.

Nonetheless, I decided to include some details in presenting the field material, such as the employee's roles. Unlike the actual identities of the institutions, I considered them to be relevant for the understanding of the analysis and for contextualizing the empirical material. Using photographs represented another dilemma. Since I already abstracted the institutions to a high degree, photos offer an important medium of personalizing them; they help create a more distinct, tangible, and vivid image for the reader and make the institutions more relatable to other contexts or situations. At the same time, these characteristics of course increase the risk of making them identifiable. Accordingly, I worked with a select few images, only where they contributed significantly to the analysis and tried to crop or blank the most prominent features. However, the ethical struggle remains between generating a comprehensive, thorough analysis and not rendering descriptive or photographic elements too distinguishable.

Another aspect worth ethical consideration is my own positioning or "situatedness" in relation to the subject of study (Haraway 1988, p. 583; Mohanty 1984, p. 336; Skeggs 2002, p. 13). Charlotte A. Davies stresses in "Self-reflexive Ethnography" (2008) to acknowledge the ways in which the researcher impacts and shapes her results. Or as Skeggs (2002) puts it: "To ignore questions of methodology is to assume that knowledge comes from nowhere allowing knowledge makers to abdicate responsibility for their productions and representations." (p. 17). In my case these methodological decisions started already with what I chose as research topic and subsequently deemed worth interrogating: Out of two potential research projects at the museum, I chose to focus on the European network, which had already been written off by two of the employees initially involved with the network.

In arguing for this project, I aligned myself with the third museum employee who still regarded the network membership as potentially beneficial for the museum. Accordingly, I intended to procure as much information as possible about both institutions to possibly find overlaps or obscured advantages. This motivation could be seen as a bias. However, as Davies states (2008, p. 6), there never exists a neutral perspective, rather our responsibility lies in reflecting and disclosing our own assumptions and interpretations. I was very aware of my own motivation from the start, but only tried to use it as catalyst for procuring any knowledge, also that which would prove the network less suited for the museum.

Moreover, my positioning changed repeatedly throughout the project process. Being situated at the museum soon presented another potential bias, since I felt myself growing into an actual member of their team. After all, I did not only act as researcher, but also in the role of their representative to the network. Immersing myself in their everyday life and engaging in numerous conversations, I felt their views translating onto me and started to share their struggle of how to integrate the network activities into their operations. At other times, when having gotten more of an emic understanding of the network, I took a critical stance towards the museum's views and felt torn between both the institution's passions for their own objectives. Then again, there were times where I distanced myself to all of them in an attempt to adopt a researcher lens, trying to "clinically" dissect the different motivations and take a "meta-position" (Verran 2013, p. 147).

My desk at the parent museum where for two months I was involved in their everyday life; acting as researcher and contact person to the European network

Photo; Anabelle Gensel

However, as these developments make evident, there is no objective position in conducting cultural analytical research. For my project, these various roles and perspectives in fact offered an advantage, because they allowed me to genuinely formulate a member perspective on the network and familiarize myself with its challenges and needs. In Davies' discussion of self-reflexivity, she concludes that although the researcher is always entangled in the results, there still exists an "independent social world" (2008, p. 6). In my case, it was the processes of relating, sharing, and contrasting the different views I encountered and adopted, which let me sense an overall picture of the network membership, assembled from diverse sets of "infra-levels" (Verran 2013, p. 147). Although this process proved challenging throughout my fieldwork and analysis, I see it as a methodological strength and an argument for pursuing "critical proximity" rather than distance (Birkbak et al. 2015, p. 266). Taken together, these processes sensitized me to the various perceptions and made me even more receptive to incongruent pieces of new information to deepen the analysis.

4. Theories & Concepts

If Chapter two has provided us with the vocabulary and 'infrastructure' of the thesis and Chapter three fleshed it out with concrete material while also elaborating on its origin, this Chapter will now introduce the tools to turn, knead and process the material to reach new levels of understanding. To help structure and make sense of all the ethnographic material I gathered in the field, I used two theoretical frameworks. This way of proceeding allows us as cultural analysts to put individual observations from one specific case into a broader context. It lets us discern the relevance of small details and incongruencies, gradually see more of them and eventually aggregate them into a bigger picture or relate them to bigger questions (Gradén 2013). By procuring a deep understanding of the issues we study, we can bring a more profound and varied view of problems into applied contexts (Sunderland 2013), such as companies, cultural institutions, and others (O'Dell 2017). This can prove to be a valuable gain and open new perspectives to organizations, which usually must be concerned with much more practical considerations to keep day-to-day operations running. Similarly, the analysis of empirical material can probe existing theories anew and complement them, thus advancing research in academic fields as well.

The theories that came to primarily inform my analysis, are Richard Sennett's theorization of Cooperation (2013) and Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke's framework on the Cultural Economy (2002). In the following, I will introduce them both shortly to give a general understanding of the theoretical foundation, before applying them to my material in the analytical chapters. With their specific concepts, the key features, or components of a theory, they will guide the analysis like signposts. They helped me see patterns or confirmed the ones I had already seen but not known whether to trust them. It is through them, that I was able to conceptualize the dynamics I had witnessed in the field and extract which parameters they might be depending on.

4.1 Cooperation

Richard Sennett's book 'Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation' (2013) encompasses a sociological analysis of cooperation, its conditions, and hindrances. One of his first and main arguments that is crucial for this thesis, is that Cooperation is a skill that needs to be actively practiced (2013, p. 6). However, according to Sennett, society today has tended

to fall out of practice, a phenomenon he labels as "de-skilling" (p. 7). He acknowledges that cooperation is a tough and challenging endeavor. It often involves "people who have separate or conflicting interests, who do not feel good about each other, who are unequal, or who simply do not understand one another" (p. 6). Accordingly, his book resembles a guide to achieving more successful cooperation.

Above all, he proposes a dialogic way of communicating (p. 14), which he opposes to a dialectic way (p. 18f.). Dialogics are primarily focused on listening (p. 15), carefully considering the "specifics" of what others say to delve deeper into their understanding (p. 20). The aim here is not necessarily to come to a mutual understanding, but to truly engage with one another throughout the dialogue. The outcome is relatively open-ended. This process can enrich all parties and leave them more sensitive, with a more complex and profound understanding of their different perspectives (p. 19f.). Dialectics on the other hand, while based on listening as well, do aim to eventually reach "common ground" (p. 18f.). The conversation is thus more goal-oriented, focused on finding underlying similarities or overlaps that might lead to such an outcome.

Similar to Dialogics and Dialectics, Sennett introduces another dichotomy, the subjunctive and declarative styles (p. 22f.). The "subjunctive mood", as he phrases it, is characterized by "tentativeness" (p. 22) and by posing questions rather than making definite statements (p. 23). This approach is opposed to the "assertiveness" in the declarative style, which strives toward closure (p. 23). It already becomes apparent, that the subjunctive mood fits more with dialogic communication, "that world of talk which makes an open social space, where discussion can take an unforeseen direction." (p. 23)[3]

In the context of this thesis about transnational initiatives, what will be of special interest to us is his second chapter, 'The Fragile Balance - Competition and Cooperation in Nature and Culture', where he discusses exchanges. Exchanges are understood by him as "the experience of give and take among all animals." (p. 72). Notably, he does include humans in the category of animals, as primates. Sennett distinguishes between five different forms of exchanges (p.72), which range from purely cooperative (1) to competitive on the other side (5):

1) Altruism   2) Win-Win   3) Differentiating Exchange   4) Zero-Sum   5) Winner-takes-all

He stresses that neither cooperation nor competition is more natural than the other but that there are some exchanges where the balance between the two is best, namely towards

the middle of the spectrum (2 & 3) (p. 72). I build my later argument on the third one, Differentiating Exchange, as it is most apt to the context of transnational networks. Sennett characterizes this exchange form as encounters "to establish territories and define the borders between them" (p. 78). These borders are never fixed and become spaces of exchange and ongoing negotiation (p. 79). According to Sennett, when they do not work in this way, i.e., do not allow for exchange, they represent more of a boundary, which acts as separation. Both, borders and boundaries, are what Sennett calls "edges" and structure territories (78f.). He makes this concept more concrete by transferring it to social encounters, where it usually involves people who do not know each other or who only met briefly.

To facilitate cooperation in such exchanges of encountering and negotiating differences, Sennett introduces rituals as "tools" (p. 87): They include a repertoire of symbols for interactions which is specific to the group or occasion and originated from an external party (p. 86-88). With reference to Clifford Geertz's and Victor Turner's contributions to the field of ritual studies, Sennett points to the aspect of "theatrical performances" inherent in rituals (p. 89): The group's repertoire of symbols can gain "a meaning of their own" (p. 89) and extend everyday reality (p. 93). This means, that rituals and their idiosyncratic symbols for interaction can bind actors in differentiating exchanges together by creating a group-specific reality, logic, and understanding.

Sennett describes three characteristics of rituals: Repetition, Transformation and Expression (p. 90f.). The first one refers to repeating a practice consciously and unconsciously so often, that it passes the habit stage and becomes deeply ingrained (p. 90f.). Transformation happens along with this ingraining process, as "objects, bodily movements or bland words" accrue meaning and in that way turn "into symbols" (p. 91). Finally, expression points to the "outward-turn" in rituals (p. 92), meaning that it is less about participants fully being themselves, but rather representing or "enacting" a role within the "larger, shared […] domain" (p. 92).

4.2 Cultural Economy

The Cultural Economy framework of Paul du Gay and Michel Pryke (2002) states that culture and economy are inseparably intertwined. It thereby destabilizes economic activities and attributions as neutral or objective 'givens' and argues for viewing them as situated, cultural

practices (du Gay & Pryke 2002, p. 2). Accordingly, the theory suggests examining the discourses and "practical ways in which 'economically relevant activity' is performed and enacted" (p. 14). This means not only observing the contexts of economic activities but questioning how they come into being in the first place, how they are created and re-created in everyday activities (p. 2).

In his interpretation of the theory, O'Dell elaborates on the cultural aspect, characterizing it as constant negotiations and "ever-shifting" (2010, p. 14). Economic attributions are thus to be seen as "contingent assemblage(s)" (du Gay & Pryke, p. 14), always in the making, performed in situations between specific actors. This is reflected in Callon et al.'s contribution to the cultural economy framework and the conceptualization of markets (2002) as "hybrid forums" (p. 195), which a range of actors establish together in discussing their structures and conditions. These markets emerge around each specific product, field or even temporary activities and interests, and are thus not firmly bounded, but rather loosely assembled. In the case of this network membership, I define the market as involving the museum and network representatives, but due to my active involvement in the project also myself, as well as other networks and organizations, which impacted its functioning.

In this thesis, I will examine economic activities at the Swedish open-air museum department, focusing on the "unit" of resources. In cultural economic terms, I will investigate how actors at the museum, but also the European network, performed, created, and altered the network membership as a resource. With the focus on the discursive and performative aspect of economic attributions, I interpret du Gay & Pryke's framework not only as theory, but as also having methodological implications: To culturalize and de-stabilize an economic 'category' such as resource, I will tie the framework to the methodological approaches of Macdonald et al. (2018), Macdonald (2001) and Morgan (2018). The latter attempt to make the minuscule ways visible in which museums as organizations are performed, continuously (re)created and changed on a day-to-day basis.

5. Cooperation in Transnational Networks

After having introduced all the different components of this study, from presenting the institutions to laying out the empirical and theoretical background, the following chapters will constitute the thesis' analytical part. In this chapter, I apply and discuss Sennett's theory of cooperation (2013) in the context of transnational networks, using the different concepts which I explained in Chapter four: In the first and third section, this will comprise the "differentiating exchange"; as well as the different modes of communicating, i.e., "dialogic" vs. "dialectic" style, "subjunctive" vs. "declarative" mode, and the two forms of "edges": "borders" and "boundaries". In the second section, I will work with "rituals" and their "three building blocks".

Section 5.1 will be focused on answering the first research question, namely describing what opportunities transnational networks hold in the cultural sector for stimulating societal cooperation. It will thus be applying Sennett's theory of cooperation to transnational networks. In the following section, I will analyze the European network and show its use of rituals to cooperate. This section will accordingly address the second research question of how the network applied tools and practices. However, while 5.2 presents a more structural account of the network, of how it was conceived and set up, the third section then demonstrates how it played out at the specific member; the Swedish open-air museum. Section 5.3 thus considers the effects of those measures, how they were perceived by the museum and what difficulties arose.

5.1 Transnational Networks as Opportunity

Although, in this thesis I treat transnational networks, the term and model of 'network' I suggest may be understood more broadly as any project or initiative that works across national borders, grouped around a specific theme, problem or goal. Alternatively, the Cambridge Dictionary defines networks as "A group of people or organizations in different places who work together and share information" (Cambridge 2022). This process already points to one of the characteristics of networks in general, but transnational networks specifically: they involve heterogenous groups that bring together people from different geographical and cultural regions. In this chapter, I intend to analyze more deeply, how exactly this can be seen as opportunities for stimulating societal cooperation.

In Sennett's framework, confronting differences is one of the crucial preconditions for fostering cooperation. This suggestion might not sound remarkable with globalization long on the way and societies increasingly combining diverse backgrounds. But, according to Sennett, however diverse and progressive a society might consider itself, we are still very much organized into tribes (2013, p. 3). While this once helped us fight for survival and might also be the more convenient option, it no longer serves us well in our complex social realities today (p. 4). Tribalism leads to what Sennett observes as a "de-skilling" in society when it comes to cooperation (p. 7). In view of this claim, it becomes vital and intriguing to study transnational networks. With their setup and objective of incorporating differences, they already represent a counterpoint to the societal trend Sennett describes, of undermining individual capacities for cooperation.

The European network in this case study thus provides an interesting example for applying Sennett's theory. On a member's level, it brought together areas from across Europe, and a few located outside, in South America, Africa and Asia (Field Notes 07.09.2020). The member institutions thus not only varied dramatically in their geographic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, but also to the degree that they were institutionalized and what kind of focus they represented. Among them, there were substantial tourist destinations such as pilgrimage trails, next to communities representing secluded vineyards on an island, or professionally run cultural organizations such as the Swedish open-air museum.

Beyond this, the network's objective revolved around collaborating across differences. Created under the Horizon 2020 programme and funded by the EU, it intended to assemble various stakeholders in rural areas around the common goal of developing the region. The network members were encouraged to unite with local businesses, schools, farmers, priests, politicians etc. (Field Notes 05.09.2020). Fusing the network's rationale of integrating diversity with Sennett's theory of cooperation, allows for an examination of his theory on the one side and to interrogate the network objectives and practical functioning on the other. For this, it is worth stepping more deeply into Sennett's theory and considering the different forms of exchanges he suggests.

Transnational networks bear more aspects which in Sennett's terms are considered favorable for cooperation, since they share core characteristics with his "Differentiating Exchange". Sennett distinguishes this exchange form for balancing the two natural impulses of cooperation and competition especially well (2013, p. 65). Such exchanges

encompass situations when different people meet, often unfamiliar to one another, and negotiate to "share space" (Sennett 2013, p. 79). It does not matter, how long these exchanges last or relationships are sustained. It is more about the "illumination" that is generated in the exchange (p. 81). This resembles one of the key advantages of the exchange form and also applies to the European network. Interactions and negotiations with people who differ initiate a self-reflexive process and thus generate new knowledge and insight. This process involves establishing territories and determining their borders and boundaries - not just in a literal, geographical sense, but intellectually. Although there might be an element of competition and defending own interests, these exchanges are fruitful, because they lead parties to engage with one another, who might otherwise not have. The network enabled members from different European countries to interact, debating their experiences, values, and visions. The same effect applied to meeting the stakeholder groups around their respective regions; it was testing different views and understandings of their areas, heritage, and potential future scenarios.

The coordinators in both institutions, the network and the museum, repeatedly stressed the gains they saw in such exchanges. On the side of the network, one coordinator phrased it as follows:

> The whole point of [this network] in that sense is that you… is to create an exchange of rural areas all over Europe 'and beyond' [chuckles here, when quoting the 'official' network slogan] "that [the network] is aiming for rural areas to have someone else to ask: hey, how did you solve this?' (Network coordinator 17.09.2020)

It is noteworthy, that she even uses the term "exchange" and highlights how this dialogue between different members can impart knowledge from one institution to another. In a similar way, the coordinator of the Swedish open-air museum mentioned that the aspect of knowledge exchange and insight from others was one of the main attractions for them towards the network (31.08.2020): To hear from other areas' experiences and that way possibly find solutions to own problems they were struggling with. Through the exchange, members are challenged to decide to which degrees they are willing to absorb different, new views or insights and where they instead reaffirm and highlight their core values. Sennett considers both effects necessary, especially the latter reflexive dimension, since it leads to better self-knowledge (2013, p. 80). This interest of knowledge exchange and learning from one another, which both coordinators formulated, points to an explorative or, in Sennett terms, dialogic and subjunctive attitude. Furthermore, the exchange on such an open and fluid level qualifies the network interactions

as "border encounters". In Sennett's theory these represent the more active edges, where different territories and actors meet and generate active and fruitful exchanges. Together, these criteria combine to a context very favorable of cooperation.

What Sennett considers important in these contexts is, that difference is not evaluated comparatively or competitively, but rather acknowledged in what ways members diverge individually, and can together increase their productivity and quality as a group (2013, p. 82). On the one side, we witnessed such a cooperative mindset in the network coordinator's statement and the museum's interests. The museum's coordinator stated beyond their interest of acquiring knowledge, an equal eagerness to offer support to others drawing on their own expertise (Museum's coordinator 31.08.2020). An element of competition, according to Sennett is never eliminated but always there, just in differentiating exchanges balanced effectively. As we will see in the following chapters, apart from their open attitudes, both parties were not always able to acknowledge and accept differences as readily as it first seemed. In effect, competitive impulses did impede cooperation in the museum's membership. Nevertheless, the network's general design and objective counts towards one of the opportunities for stimulating cooperation.

Returning to the initial research question, how transnational networks can stimulate societal cooperation, allows to derive several conclusions from the preceding discussion. For one thing, in this case, the network invited the "difficult kind of cooperation" (Sennett 2013, p. 6) by having integrated differences in its setup and objective. Consequently, it can be seen as countering tribalism by enabling, if not challenging its members to practice the skill of cooperation. This challenge is a very enriching process for the members involved and ultimately, also pleasurable, as Sennett stresses (p. 5). In this form of differentiating exchange, network members can procure new knowledge and insights by reflecting their differences.

Sennett further extends his theory by explaining how exactly these cooperative exchanges take place and introduces rituals as one crucial pillar. To understand their role for cooperation in transnational networks, and to give some concrete examples, the following section will examine what specific ritualistic measures were taken in the European network.

5.2 Tools and Practices for Stimulating Cooperation

As we have established above, transnational networks display characteristics that qualify them as a differentiating exchange in Sennett's sense. Consequently, they bear a huge chance for cooperation, but Sennett also emphasizes, that the process is very complex and the balance "fragile" (2013, p. 86). For such exchanges to ultimately be fruitful, it is not only a matter of skillful and sensitive negotiating, but also additional external factors and processes to be considered: When fundamental differences clash, as with the network members from across Europe, or their heterogenous group of stakeholders, there needs to be some form of stability to hold it all together. This is where Sennett introduces rituals. To understand what role rituals may play in cooperation in transnational networks, we will now turn to the third research question of what tools and practices were applied in the case of this network.

In the differentiating exchange, rituals play a unique role (Sennett 2013, p. 94), because they involve people who do not know each other and differ from one another. It is important for the group or network community, in their difference, to be united around certain common characteristics. Rituals can here act as "tools" for forging "powerful social bonds" between the different parties and strengthening cooperative over aggressive impulses (p. 86). They do so, by establishing a shared symbolic infrastructure and language within the group (p. 86). Sennett names café- and pub-goers across Europe in the 18th century, who were all passionate about theatre (p. 79f.), as one example of such a group. They were able to interact across differences because, on the one side, they had a shared interest or value as basis: not only with theatre but also with the Enlightenment movement (p. 80). On the other side, this provided them with a common language or "verbal code" (p. 80).

In the network, as I want to argue, similar phenomena are at work. Not only do members assemble around a shared objective or interest, namely a particular cultural or natural heritage of their region, which they all intended to protect and develop. The network furthermore offered a specific rationale for the work within, being organized in procedures and routines, and offering its own, idiosyncratic vocabulary. These ritualistic structures were indeed one of the characteristics that significantly shaped the network experience for the museum. It is reflected in the fact that the museum's coordinator in an early interview referred, when discussing the museum's different network memberships, to the European network, as "the system" (31.08.2020). To explore this perception and its origin more thoroughly, we will consider each component individually.

Beyond the network's shared objective, the network coordinators had created a new social infrastructure for the network by sorting and re-grouping the members into different categories according to similarities and specific characteristics of their heritage. On top of this, and as mentioned in Chapter two, members were accepted into the network with a specific role. Each had subsequent names - indicating that they were either a "Positive Example"[4], offering knowledge and experience for the others to learn from, or a "Duplicator", who adopted some of the knowledge, experience and strategies offered by the former.

This shows that the network's social logic simultaneously also installed a specific language or terminology. Nevertheless, it was not only the member groups and the individual member roles with their terms that introduced a symbolic infrastructure for the interactions within the network. The names of certain activities, objects and places also referenced the network's objective of developing rural areas fusing their cultural and natural heritage. There was for example the "Local Heritage Lab"; a place which each member was to establish in their region, where the local community could regularly come together and forge heritage-led development plans. Many of those key terms consisted of three words and often complex ones too; they instead circulated in abbreviated forms, like acronyms, in the network, e.g. "LHL" for the "Local Heritage Lab".

Similarly, the members shared a typical timeframe, a trajectory of development that they were in their respective sub-groups all going to go through together throughout the project. It consisted of different stages or "Milestones" to pass, leading to establishing their own "LHL" and concrete plan for development with the local community. Apart from these bigger project stages, there were also many more minor ritualistic activities, such as regular "Duplicator Forums", where members were encouraged to exchange more directly and talk about their specific territories. Another example was online seminars, so-called "webinars", where the network coordinators and their partners introduced the objective, procedure, and "methodology". Together, these different ritualistic practices created a body of codes and vocabulary that could only be understood and applied comprehensively within the network community. They resembled a unifying element over other differences, which members brought in from the outside world.

Apart from the social, linguistic, and temporal infrastructure, the network also tried to establish another, spatial layer, namely a digital meeting place. In the network's manner, it was called the "Digital Local Heritage Lab" and resembled an internal networking

platform. The implications of introducing digital technologies for diverse actors, bring many challenges, which could be discussed in an entirely whole other thesis. An example of this perspective is the ethnographic study by the scholars Green, Harvey and Knox (2005) on EU-funded initiatives in the UK. They researched the causes of problems and tensions within these projects and found they were often tied to networks implementing technological tools they readily expected their members to adopt - what Green et al. term an "imperative to connect" (2005, p. 805). In our case, these challenges will be addressed later, in the following section. For now, we will view the digital networking platform as one ritualistic tool that the network installed, and what value and function it served: All members, network partner organizations, and the local communities in the member region were invited to join to discuss the project developments and strategies. There existed concrete communication norms and codes for this, ranging from how to set up a profile to begin with, to how to mention other people or engage in discussions using the network's significant themes and terminology.
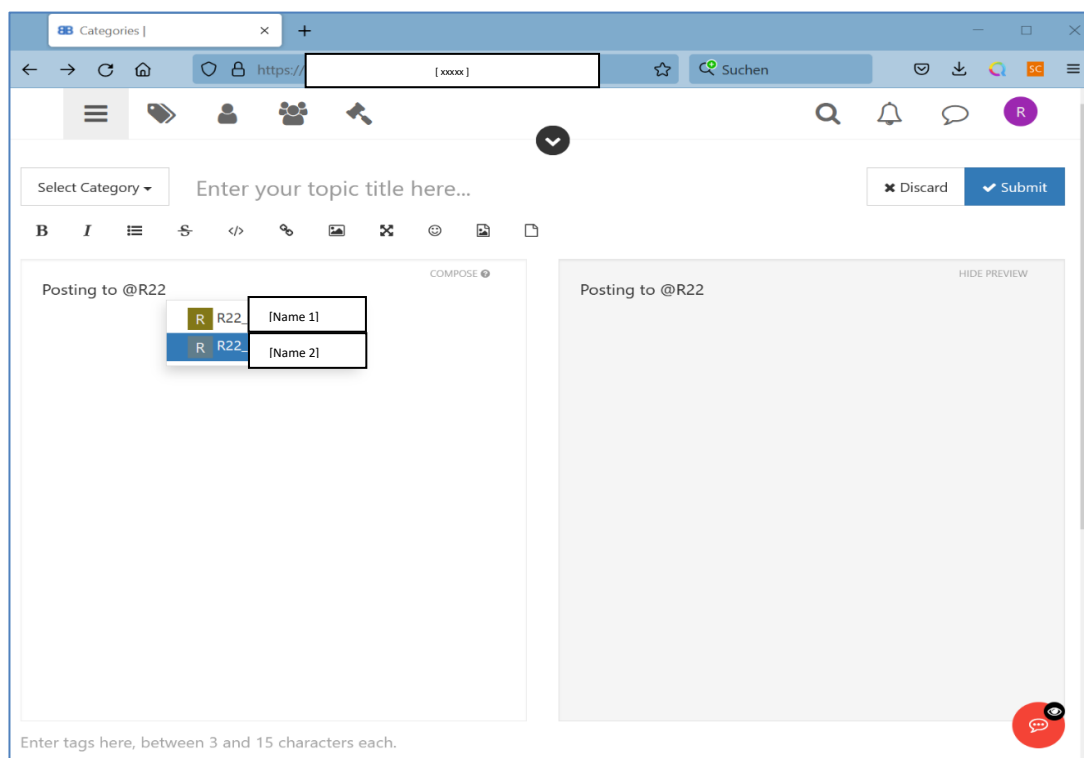
Posting on the network's internal digital platform, the "Digital Local Heritage Lab"

Photo (Screenshot); Anabelle Gensel

In light of Sennett's framework, all these practices and tools of introducing standard codes for communication can be interpreted as a cooperative act, employing rituals to unify, balance or enable to stand with difference. However, they comprise a vast inventory of

symbols for member organizations to learn and adapt to. This not only becomes apparent in the sheer amount of them, as accumulated and analyzed over the past pages, but will become especially clear in the following section where we open up to one concrete member perspective and discuss their experience. Through my fieldwork, I understood, that the network coordinators seemed to have realized this challenge of acquiring all the ritualistic practices. One occasion from my fieldnotes showcases this:

> I was having a conversation with the network coordinator in Italy via zoom. She sat in a sunny room opening onto an ancient courtyard and street noises were coming in through the window. The network coordinator seemed generally very relaxed and open, but also quite principled about the network and her job. I intended to learn more about its structures and relations and asked a question about the digital networking platform, when stumbling over the term "Digital Local Heritage Lab", struggling for a moment to recall and pronounce it. It was her reaction that really struck me as memorable, since she smiled knowingly and sympathetically, as if this had not happened for the first time, and she could relate to it. Had she maybe once been similarly struggling with some of the counterintuitive vocabulary, when for example coming up with it, or did she just witness it with many other members? While she was speaking very affectionately about the network, she seemed to be aware, that, with its various norms and procedures, it did present challenges for outsiders to adapt to. (Fieldnotes on interview 17.09.2020)

That the network coordinator silently acknowledged my struggle with the term showed that there seemed to be an awareness on their part that there were challenges connected to their network tools and rituals. They had addressed this by incorporating corresponding structures and practices, which can be understood with Sennett's "three building blocks of rituals" (2013, p. 89). These firstly comprise rituals to be repeated so their symbolic tools for communication become deeply engrained. Secondly, along with this process, goes a transformation where ordinary "objects", "gestures" or "words" (p. 91) attain a special meaning to the practitioners. Furthermore, there is the expressive part in rituals, where individuals perform a specific role rather than themselves and by enacting this part they contribute to the bigger social context (p. 91f.).

In the network's case, the coordinators had initiated a series of webinars for a so-called "knowledge-transfer" (Observation Webinar 2). There, network coordinators and partners organizations defined and explained the network's terms and roles and outlined the

timeframe for the different project stages (Observation Webinar 1). This part serves the repetitive and transformative element, which Sennett formulated; by elaborating on those various network components, which had already been introduced in guiding documents and mentioned in emails or on the network's website, they set a conscious engraining process in motion. Simultaneously, the various network components were to become familiar and meaningful for members to be used effectively in the network's context, i.e., members knew what acronyms like "LHL" referred to and could also link them to their territories.

A more active version of engraining and the third, expressive component, were at play when, in the Duplicator Forums mentioned above, the member organizations were supposed to present themselves in terms of the network; this meant discussing specific network-related criteria, using the three-letter acronyms from the vocabulary above and enacting their designated role within the network. Similarly, there also existed training webinars for the digital networking platform, which included actual exercises for practicing the technological and behavioral codes of the platform, such as digitally mentioning or engaging someone in a discussion or making a post (Observation Webinar 3).

We have seen rituals as unifying elements in a network built on differences were at play. According to Sennett, these together would make up a fertile breeding ground for cooperation - in its demanding, but genuine and rewarding form. The network incorporated many elements that Sennett suggests for fruitful, and diverse exchanges, such as in his differentiating exchange: The coordinators tried to establish a symbolic repertory for interactions within the network for members who were different and unfamiliar with one another. This comprised initially introducing a shared objective, followed by new social roles, internal terminology, standard practices, and regular activities in a shared timeframe. Finally, it incorporated a digital infrastructure. The network coordinators established these codes with members following a ritualistic, formal process, as found in Sennett's theory, consisting of repetition, transformation, and expression.

As I argued above, the network fulfilled many of the criteria Sennett formulates for fostering cooperation. At the same time, the story of successfully effectuating it does not end here. Because although the conditions existed on a structural network level, the membership I encountered as an in-house consultant at the Swedish open-air museum was much more complicated. This aspect will be examined in the following section, which takes on more of a member's perspective on the structures we have encountered.

5.3 Limitations of Cooperation

After having laid out what opportunities transnational networks present for stimulating cooperation in Sennett's sense and exploring, what tools and practices, in the form of rituals, were employed in this network, we will now turn to the third research question: How did these affect the two institutions involved? More specifically, how were these practices and tools adopted or realized?

Examining the network from Sennett's theoretical standpoint, it appeared to offer all the right components for fostering cooperation, by bringing different actors together and linking them through a diverse repertoire of rituals. However, when I entered the project with the museum, to help with their membership, it was at a relatively passive stage (Museum's Coordinator 29.07.2020). The museum staff, specifically the museum's coordinator, stated that he did not really understand the network, nor have time for it (29.07.2020). I quickly understood that the museum struggled to get a clear view or ahold of it under all the structures, practices, and tools. The museum's coordinator voiced this ambiguity as follows:

> It is…perhaps it's…perhaps it's not complex, but at the same time I got the information that I couldn't really reach the core idea of [the network] completely. […]

> But it's a very interesting network actually. Just because it's hard to get a grip of it, I think. So, I do not know if it's actually down at the bottom or up in the sky, but... [We both laugh] That's actually interesting - where is it? And where is it heading? (Museum's Coordinator, 29.07.2020)

Although we were both laughing and talking lightly about the network in this conversation, we knew that the museum's membership was in quite a problematic and complicated state. Accordingly, it is worth unpacking the different underlying concerns in this statement. The difficulty of locating the network, "up in the sky or down at the bottom", indicates the ambiguity mentioned above. They did not know what to make of it, especially in hierarchical terms: Why was the network membership not working for them? On the one side, they seemed slightly overwhelmed or intimidated by all the structures and complexity. Nevertheless, they were also skeptical about it, doubting whether the network in general was functioning. The effect the rituals had on them, was thus, that they created distance, obstructing the museum from engaging more closely or approaching it at all. As a result, they replied with passivity and withdrew from the network into their local activities.

In Sennett's framework this would be understood as a situation that does not foster cooperation. It instead displays characteristics of a "dialectic" style, when two opposing sides clash (Sennett 2013, p. 18) or the "declarative mood", which ends conversations and drives towards closure (p. 23). The museum's coordinator in one interview reflected on their different options for how to continue the membership, since he too considered the current attitude not to be very constructive:

> I will not defend [the network] completely, if we don't find…if you don't see any benefits from being part of [it] there is always the possibility that we should discuss if we should not be an active part… I think continue to be a completely passive part is perhaps not the best way to do it. Because then it will be annoying for the people in the head office of [the network], that try to expand and involve all the members. (Museum's Coordinator, 31.08.2020)

Although he discusses leaving the network here as one option, and sees the current state as somewhat problematic, the quote also shows subjunctive elements, of being tentative and considerate (Sennett 2013, p. 22). In this complicated situation, the whole statement is phrased still remarkably indirect and open.

There was another important concern, which was voiced repeatedly by the museum staff and relates to the perceived complexity and lack of understanding, namely that the network might not categorize the museum adequately in their member sub-group. One employee from the parent museum phrased it as a fear of "bending out of shape" and being absorbed into the network's structures, not being able to maintain the open-air museum's own internal concept (Museum Employee at Parent Museum, 08.09.2020). In this case, Sennett's advantage of a differentiating exchange that causes both parties to reflect and be enriched, did not really unfold. This is also linked to Sennett's two different forms of edges in such exchanges, which are interactions for negotiating territories. While in 5.1 we encountered it as an opportunity of networks that they offer a space and tools for these negotiations, here it becomes apparent, that they were wrapped up in fears. The museum was in a defensive mode about their individual territory and chose to withdraw from any negotiations. In that sense, the interactions here would be rather characterized as a boundary, the more passive and segregated version of edges, which display little exchange compared to the more active and flourishing counterpart of borders.

These dynamics point to the crucial role that exchange plays here, in this example of cooperation. For one part, there needs to exist an exchange, to begin with, and it is worth problematizing how it is qualified: what kind of exchange is possible? The museum employees had mostly encountered the network in communication via emails and a few webinars. Emails were phrased in the network language and signed by different people and their respective network partner organizations. When I first entered the project and got access to the emails, I found this very opaque and confusing, noting of a "formalized procedure, not really an exchange" in my field diary (04.09.2020). This kind of communication gave me, on the side of the museum, a feeling of one-sidedness and a dialectical attitude. What eventually made a significant difference in my perception and experience of the network, moving interactions from inactive boundary to border, was when I had scheduled an interview with the network coordinator and thus spoke to a human representative of the network.

That morning, in my field diary, I had noted feeling "quite hopeless", when after the interview I resumed having "again a completely different impression than so far (distant, hierarchical): supportive, close, want to help" (17.09.2020). This actual interpersonal interaction resembled a dialogue, more open-ended in in Sennett's sense – at least as far as this was possible in the context of the network where they pursued a concrete objective and had their specific network terms. It let me procure another understanding of the network and its coordinators. The conversation made me realize that on their side there also existed a subjunctive and dialogic mindset, of being open for discussion, as I noted in my field note above.

At the same time, it became apparent during the interview, that due to the museum's inactivity, the network coordinators similarly had perceived the museum's attitude as dialectic. As a result, both sides were slightly frustrated, and yet, they shared very similar ideas, when illustrating scenarios of what the open-air museum could be and do. For me this was an important realization during the project process. Consequently, I arranged with the network coordinator, and later the museum's coordinator, for us to actively participate in the next Duplicator Forum and present our member case. I was highly hopeful, that this would also lift the network interaction and mutual understanding to a different level. It thus came to me as a surprise when the museum's coordinator stated a few days after we had indeed participated in the forum, that the network remained unintelligible to him. He still had the same questions about the museum's eligibility (Museum's coordinator, 01.10.2020).

This misconception lays open a vital aspect about what kind of exchange might have been needed here. As both parties, each in their field and organization possessed an enormous amount of specialized knowledge, it would have taken a more prolonged exchange, than was possible during the Forum. A group of 16 participants and three Duplicators presented their territory, with a short time slot for discussion with the network coordinators afterward. An extended bilateral discussion would have been necessary to really address and explore the existing questions and misunderstandings in a dialogic way.

Recapitulating the findings of the past Chapter, we have seen that transnational networks display chances for practicing the rare and complicated act of cooperation by fostering exchanges between people who are different and whose views and experiences can enrich one another. Especially, Section 5.2 outlined what tools and practices were explicitly used in the European network to provide a structure of rituals for a group of diverse members. They included a shared objective and timeframe, network-specific language, activities, and a digital networking platform as spatial infrastructure. To engrain, understand and practice this extensive repertory of communication codes, the network coordinators furthermore installed digital training events. According to Sennett's theory, these measures together would have created a fertile breeding ground for practicing cooperation. However, this case highlights, that rituals alone do not suffice. The interactions observed between the Swedish open-air museum and the network coordinator team did not present a positive example of successfully integrated cooperation. Instead, competitive and defensive impulses were displayed.

These findings furthermore stress the crucial role of interpersonal exchange and problematizes what quality it displays. The exchange in this case rather resembled a boundary, the inactive edge of exchange in Sennett's framework, with little activity and interaction. This meant, that the measures intended to stimulate cooperation could not take root, but rather created additional distance from one party, the network who installed them, to another, namely the museum. Chapter six, the second analytical chapter, will investigate why this exchange was limited and stuck in its more inactive form. For this, it will discuss how attitudes and (in)activity were interwoven with issues of economic preconditions, resources, and prioritizations.

6. Cultural Economy in Transnational Networks

In the past chapter, we have examined the network and the museum's membership from a cooperative perspective - what opportunities, tools, and practices, as well as limitations existed. Sennett's theory helped to analyze and understand what cooperative dynamics and practices were at play, but also trace down where, they did not prevail. This leaves us now to examine the reasons why cooperation was obstructed in this case, although the favorable conditions appeared to be present. Accordingly, this chapter aims to reveal what other factors than the ones outlined by Sennett, were at play, thus extending his theory of cooperation. For this, I will pursue the research questions of how economic preconditions impacted cooperation in the network membership. Beyond that, how were these entangled within the organizations involved? The theory to pursue this second question will be du Gay and Pryke's Cultural Economy from 2002, as introduced in Chapter four.

As the following analysis will show, cooperation in this network membership could only partially be realized, because of economic constraints that both institutions were under. It thus represents an example of how much the cultural sector is intertwined with and shaped by economic considerations. Equally, this case illustrates, that economic parameters such as resources are no objective or neutral criteria, but rather entangled, interpreted and performed by different actors in a specific context. The following sections will investigate both aspects, starting in 6.1 with how resource shortages impacted the membership. Section 6.2 then discusses what different assumptions and perceptions existed at the museum about the network membership as a resource. How these perceptions changed over time will highlight their elusiveness and contingencies, as suggested in du Gay and Pryke's framework. Furthermore, the section explains what factors the resource perceptions depended on. Finally, 6.3 demonstrates what consequences these assumptions had for how the network membership played out as a resource.

6.1 An Economized Network Membership

So far, in Sennett's terms, we have focused on different styles of communication and interaction among the network members and coordinators. One answer to the question why cooperation was still impeded in this case, can be found in turning to the economic context. Scholars in business economy and ethnology have increasingly addressed the financial

constraints and pressures which cultural institutions face today. In "Museums and Marketization" (Ekström 2020) scholars from several disciplines come together to devote a whole volume to discussing the financial implications of the neoliberal era for the cultural sector and the museum landscape specifically. Multiple case studies drawn from different parts of the world exemplify how museums are trying to reconcile contemporary financial and public demands. Among them are Lizette Gradén and Tom O'Dell (2017, 2018, 2020; Gradén et al. 2021), who over the past years have contributed several cases from the Nordic and Anglo-Saxon region, illustrating different financing schemes and their impact on curatorial choices. One of their central arguments is that these questions simply cannot be treated separately. As I want to argue, the same applies to museum's cooperation initiatives with external organizations. Although in this network membership, there arguably existed cultural and structural inhibitors, I aim to outline, how these interacted with financial factors.

Right from my first encounter with the open-air museum, in a consulting project in Spring 2020, it became apparent that resources were an issue: economic constraints seemed to determine their every step and hinder many possible endeavors or ideas for development. Various employees stated that there was just not enough staff, time, and financial resources in the museum organization. These impediments were voiced in interviews with staff members from departments, such as events (08.09.2020), communications (21.09.2020), as well as by the director of the parent museum (24.09.2020). Also, the farmworker caring for the animals, articulated lack of such resources (20.04.2020). However, most poignantly and frequently did the museum coordinator raise this issue, for whom it was a constant pressing concern. It was the reason why the windmill was lacking its wings, since having fallen off during a storm and why they so far had not been able to install exhibitions in the visitor hall near the entrance. It was also brought up whenever they discussed how to attract and engage more visitors. Regardless of what the actual brief for our fieldwork and various projects was, the museum's economic situation would come up amongst visitors as well staff.

The Windmill: once an iconic feature of the open-air museum, now lacking its wings, can be seen as emblematic of the museum's resource shortages and pending development projects

Photo; Panu Heiskanen

Maintaining and renovating the buildings in a historically accurate and sustainable way was another considerable cost and time factor for the museum, as here installing a clay floor in the farmhouse, together with a digital heating system to control its temperature and moisturizing level.

Photo; Anabelle Gensel

The open-air museum's reclusive location made it difficult to access not only for visitors, but also for bringing staff there from the parent museum, a 40-minutes car-ride away.

Photo; Anabelle Gensel

Scholars of culture and museums have discussed how crucial "forging alliances and new partnerships" is to museums today (Morse & Munro 2018, p. 359; Jackson 2019). In their case studies of two British museums, Morse and Munro furthermore demonstrate, how vulnerable such outreach practices are to financial constraints. Similarly, in the Swedish open-air museum's context, resources had been a vital consideration when applying to the network. The coordinator and the employee from the parent museum, responsible for acquiring resources through research channels had worked on the application together. The coordinator motivated their decision to me with gaining access to resource channels on a European level (Museum's Coordinator, 31.08.2020). On the one hand, they had hoped to learn about more opportunities for funding. On the other, the knowledge exchange mentioned in the previous chapter represented a resource by providing personal experience and solutions from other network members.

This is where du Gay and Pryke's theoretical framework comes in as a helpful tool for gaining a deeper understanding of resource as concept; or as they phrase it: "how those activities, objects and persons we categorize as 'economic' are built up" (du Gay & Pryke 2002,

p. 14). Their approach suggests focusing on how such economic objects are enacted in specific contexts through discourses and practices. In the context of the museum, this refers to how the staff perceived and consequently 'activated' the network membership as a resource. At the point, when the museum applied to the network, it represented a potential resource to the staff, which they anticipated would eventually bring more gains than it currently cost. In consequence, they actively engaged in it. This is remarkable, since the museum coordinator frequently reported, in accordance with their general resource scarcities, being short on time. Nonetheless, they decided to devote the time and effort necessary to apply and join the network. The relevance of their attitudes and conceptions of the network will become more prominent in the next sections which illuminate how they changed over time and what alterations this brought for possible resource trajectories.

6.2 Resource Perceptions and Elusiveness

The ethnologists Lizette Gradén and Tom O'Dell instigated the analytical approach of tying du Gay & Pryke's cultural economy to the museum landscape, which led them to problematize "how the museums' own perceptions of their operating circumstances affect their strategies, in ways that both limit and enable their ability to move these institutions forward" (2017, p. 49). In the following sections I intend to apply this understanding to the museum's membership in the European network. In this section I will first outline which different stages and perceptions the membership underwent as a resource and what factors they depended on; 6.3 then demonstrates how these conversely opened or closed scopes of action.

By the time I joined the museum, the initial picture of the network as vehicle into European social and financial spheres, as described in the previous section, had changed drastically. In fact, it would not even have been a focus of this research project and thesis at all, had it not been for the employee from the parent museum initially involved in the application process, and my own advocation of the network. While she mentioned it to me, suggesting it could use some external support (Museum Employee at Parent Museum, 15.05.2020), the museum coordinator would have preferred for my work to go into a more practical direction, delivering hands-on results on the grounds of the museum. When I eventually started the project, the network membership was described as something the staff had no time for and no understanding of (Museum's Coordinator 29.07.2020). Due to its perceived complexity and high workload, it now not only seemed to offer little return. Two out

of the three staff members initially involved with the network also considered it to be an additional strain on existing resources (Museum's Coordinator 31.08.2020; Director of the Parent Museum 24.09.2020). This presents a stark contrast to their original ambition during the application process. The network was no longer considered worth attributing resources to - it had turned from resource to obligation.

This development might appear a logical consequence of all the technical, social, and logistic components it required, as outlined in Chapter five. However, du Gay and Pryke's theoretical framework, in combination with Gradén & O'Dell's previous empirical examples and the findings to come of this study suggest there exist alternative trajectories how this network membership could have played out as a resource. How the museum staff interpreted the network membership as a resource, impacted whether it could function as such. Its resource character was no neutral or objective category, but an elusive and arbitrary attribution, culturally entangled within the organization ascribing and performing it. To explore this aspect in more detail, it is worth getting a better understanding of the concrete assumptions of what constituted a resource in the eyes of the museum and network coordinators respectively. Moreover, what factors did these attributions depend on?

Callon et al. (2002) describe markets, i.e., the environments for any economic activity, as "hybrid forums" (p. 195) composed of economic and non-economic actors. In this case, it involved in addition to the network and museum team, also to a considerable degree other network memberships or projects. In this respect, the network membership as a resource was not measured independently, but in relative terms. As became clear early on in interviews with the museum's coordinator and other staff members, the museum was balancing various network memberships simultaneously, most of them on a regional or national level (Museum Coordinator 31.08.2020; Employee from Communications Department 21.09.2020; Head of Parent Museum 24.09.2020). Accordingly, efficiency and prioritization were important factors that determined their participation and involvement in each network, depending on how useful they deemed the membership.

Ekström (2020) describes such considerations of efficiency as key features of cultural institutions having to act more market oriented, adapting to the neoliberal era (p. 2). This aspect was explicitly raised in an interview with the director of the parent museum when discussing their general access to resources. "We have a resource which is, I think, not that bad. And it could be used even more efficiently since we now have that document." (Director

of Parent Museum, 24.09.2020). This quote also confirms the relative measurement of resourcefulness by addressing a highly prioritized project for the museum at the time. "The document" mentioned here, refers to the official agreement and terms for the museum to acquire the status of "cultural reserve", which was in its final stages of negotiations with the county administration board.

This topic almost always inevitably came up when discussing the European network, the museum's resources, and development, since acquiring this status represented a huge milestone to them. They anticipated it not only to provide financial benefits, but also more attention and prestige, as well as access to the community of other cultural reserve areas (Museum Coordinator, 31.08.2020). The museum coordinator described this as an efficient resource engagement, since the cultural reserve conditions for how to run the museum in the future already aligned with how the museum was currently operating, i.e., farming the land or managing the buildings (24.09.2020). The costs and effort for this resource were accordingly relatively low. At the same time, for the museum coordinator, it brought them closer to realizing their vision of the outdoor museum, advancing its development and "potential" – a term which was a recurring theme for the museum, in interviews with employees and visitors alike.

For the European network, this meant, that it entered a tension of considerable resource shortages, as outlined already in section 6.1 on the one hand, and visions for the museum's development, on the other. Consequently, it was competing with other memberships and projects, such as the cultural reserve status, for how high the museum staff perceived its likeliness to improve their resource situation and advance the museum's development. In accordance with this estimation, the museum decided where to best devote their existing, scant resources, staff- and timewise.

And yet, the cultural reserve process highlighted additional factors that impacted how the museum staff evaluated the relation of resource input and output. The cultural reserve negotiations for example had been stretching over years and demanded many hours of work and negotiating. However, after having been involved over several weeks inside the museum myself it became apparent, that this project was, compared to the European network, more aligned with the prevalent working mode at the museum: In my field diary, I noted experiencing their organizational culture as vibrant, high-paced, and flexible, involving many spontaneous meetings and discussions, held at one of the employee's desks or on the phone. To me, the employees I interacted with seemed always busy and engaging many different actors inside

and outside the museum. Although the European network membership had been framed as a time problem, the museum coordinator never declined a meeting whenever I suggested one, even agreeing to weekly status report sessions about my research. Accordingly, it did not primarily appear to be a time issue per se, but more about accessibility and spontaneity. These predispositions, however, ran contrary to the network's prevalent working mode of communicating and interacting via more formalized procedures, structures, and digital platforms.

This finding leads to one of the museum's key interests in the network membership, i.e., the exchange with other members as a resource for experiences and knowledge. While the museum was usually easily able to actualize them in their immediate environment, they could hardly reach the contacts in the European network through the opaque structures and networking platform. The idiosyncratic rules and tools obscured the actual interpersonal exchange and made it less viable to pursue them in view of the options locally available to them. As a result, other more pragmatic endeavors seemed much faster achievable and thus worth pursuing to the museum. In this respect, the potential contacts and exchange at the European network represented quite the opposite and the steps to reach them exceeded the benefits. This once more reveals the comparative and competitive element in how resources appeared and were practiced at the museum. The staff interpreted and engaged activities and projects differently, weighing them against one another, what in economics is known as calculating opportunity costs. This however, had direct consequences for how much such projects as the European network membership could unfold and actually function as a resource in the organization.

To return to the question, of where the museum staff's own perception hindered them from activating or practicing the network membership as a resource: Of the three museum employees initially involved in the network membership, the network coordinator and the director of the parent museum pursued a more pragmatic and comparative approach to resources, as elaborated above. The employee who was explicitly responsible for forging strategies for acquiring additional resources through research channels diverged from this track. She estimated the project more independently in its individual quality and potential developments. Accordingly, she also called for pursuing these network memberships more strategically and focused, which led her to still promote it and support my research project, when her colleagues had already written it off. The varying strategies thus represent individual

interpretations and conceptions of one economic instrument. That these did make a vital difference, however, became apparent when I got involved and took up the project.

6.3 Resource Contingencies

The previous section illustrated the elusive resource character of the network membership, which underwent different stages and phases as different staff members of the museum interpreted and performed it. Their perceptions depended on comparative and prioritization practices and a discourse focused on efficiency. In this section, I intend to demonstrate what consequences the varying approaches had and thereby showcase why it matters to examine a resource not as something fixed, but through du Gay and Pryke's cultural economic lens as situated, embodied and contingent.

One key moment in my fieldwork happened when I conducted my interview with the network coordinator and the network as a resource took yet another shape regarding one of the museum's initial motivations. Due to the museum's limited resources, one crucial interest upon applying to the network had been access to funding. When the museum got accepted but did not receive financial support, the financial resource evaporated. Equally, the secondary hope of learning about more funding channels on a European level through other members seemed no longer probable or viable in view of the efforts it would take to reach them. In my conversation with the network coordinator, however, I learned that the financial prospects still existed, since members were reassessed on a running basis (Network coordinator, 17.09.2020). According to their engagement in the network activities they might either directly be re-grouped within the current network or receive later referrals to other European projects.

These opportunities only appeared with my involvement, because two individuals at the museum evaluated the network as potentially resourceful; or as the employee from the parent museum phrased it: "I believe it can be an asset" (08.09.2020). This resource perception and performance through active engagement with it determined whether financial possibilities emerged. It opened or closed trajectories of how the network membership and its resourcefulness for the museum could develop.

This finding thus underlines both previous arguments. Not only does it confirm du Gay and Pryke's perspective of viewing economic measures as cultural, situated, and subjective practices rather than fixed entities or values. It also emphasizes the importance of

an interpersonal exchange, as Sennett proposes it. As I learned in the same interview, this was in fact incorporated in the network's original setup, which envisioned network members and coordinators to have regular bilateral discussions about each individual case (Network Coordinator, 17.09.2020). However, the network coordinators only had a limited amount of funding through their financial partners available which they had to negotiate about, how they attributed it to different members. This emblematizes, to which degree the network's functioning was economized as well. After all, they engaged in prioritization schemes, comparing members to one another as well. This ultimately reveals that this case study does not only treat one cultural institution under financial constraints, but in fact both organizations were affected significantly by resource precariousness.

7. Conclusion

To conclude this thesis' discussion, what did the findings of this case study reveal and how do they relate to the initial objective of this thesis? Over the past chapters, I have considered the case of a specific network membership in the light of cooperation, investigating its chances and its challenges. Following Sennett's theorization of cooperation, it became clear, that transnational networks bear huge opportunities to bring people together who engage and create a challenging yet enriching dialogue that generates new knowledge. The network specifically provided many of the elements Sennett lists for facilitating cooperation: The coordinators incorporated various ritualistic practices and tools, such as network-specific terminology and roles, a shared timeline, routines, and a digital networking platform as infrastructure for network interactions. Further in line with Sennett, they tried to establish these measures through a ritualistic process of ingraining, making them acquire meaning for the members and ultimately being expressed and practiced. In that regard, the network provides a practical example of how cooperation can be pursued according to Sennett's theory.

However, a friction with his theory became apparent. Although the network set up a process that matches Sennett's framework for facilitating cooperation, the membership of this case study does not resemble a positive example of succeeding in it. On the contrary, both parties, the museum and the network coordinators struggled and perceived the membership as problematic. As I illustrated by applying a cultural economic lens to the case, financial constraints and resource shortages considerably hampered cooperation in this network membership. Notably, this second theoretical approach highlighted, that it does not suffice to view the two parties, i.e., museum and network coordinators, as impotent victims of their economic situation. Rather, the thesis argues for understanding them as active interpreters and performers of their economic conditions. To attribute their scant resources as efficiently as possible, both sides engaged in comparative and prioritizing schemes. Each felt de-prioritized by the other, which lead them into a cycle of mutual withdrawing and focusing on other projects. On the side of the museum this meant, that how they viewed and accordingly enacted the network membership as a resource, impacted to what degree it could unfold as such. How they (dis)engaged with it had consequences for what possibilities and scopes of action emerged, as became clear through the contrasting approaches to the network membership which different staff members displayed at different stages.

The potential of differentiating exchanges, the exchange form in Sennett's framework that this network resembles most, lies in combining two elements, namely confronting differences and balancing them through rituals. Rituals, while previously considered a key opportunity for fostering cooperation, when viewed from a cultural economic perspective, they represented a main obstacle to participation for the museum: To the staff, they first and foremost conveyed complexity, which prevented them from getting involved and engaging in the interpersonal exchange which both parties had desired initially. Rituals together with resource shortages thus ultimately created distance, burying the key benefit and potential to be gained from this membership. On the one side, engagement in the network did not seem viable to the museum staff relative to other projects in their immediate environment. On the other, the network did not have resources themselves to grant all members extensive bilateral discussions to resolve such individual issues.

This situation reveals the entanglement with economic considerations as main impediment to cooperation in this transnational context. The museum and network alike rationed their cooperative efforts. Consequently, the membership stagnated and reinforced tribalism from both parties instead. At times, it evoked mutual non-dialogic and competitive attitudes, the very impulses that Sennett intends to prevent. According to his framework, such an exchange would have posed an opportunity for practicing the complex skill of cooperation and balancing cooperative and competitive impulses. In the example however, the competitive and comparative elements prevailed. This finding in turn emphasizes another aspect of Sennett's theory, namely the importance of a direct exchange and extended dialogue. As the case study illustrated, these are only possible if all parties involved devote enough resources and are willing to prioritize cooperation in their operations accordingly. If on the other hand, there are insufficient resources, nor sustained efforts to cooperate and engage with one another, such initiatives quickly become negative experiences, stimulating, as seen, the opposite interactions and relations of what transnational endeavors set out to do.

To return to the theoretical objective of the thesis, what can this concrete case contribute to Sennett's theory of cooperation? Firstly, Sennett's framework proved useful for identifying key dynamics, impulses, and tools in cooperative efforts. The case study confirms Sennett's argument of not just how complex cooperation is, but that it is an actual skill that needs honing and actively being practiced. It tested the role of rituals in cooperation and stressed the importance of direct dialogic exchange. However, this case also exemplified that successful cooperation exceeds individual skill and collective rituals. The findings reveal

economic conditions, their interpretations, and activities cannot be ignored when analyzing cooperation, especially between organizations as in this case. The cultural economic theory in that regard adds an important analytical dimension to Sennett's approach. While he developed the cultural aspects for realizing and stimulating cooperation extensively, the cultural economy perspective brings in the economic side of it and how these two are entangled in everyday life. Based on the findings of this case study, where cooperation was effectively economized, I argue for extending Sennett's argument by an economic component, such as du Gay and Pryke's framework provides it.

7.1 Applicability

The findings of this case study are relevant on several levels, in academic and applied contexts alike. As discussed above, they apply on a theoretical level for further use and application of Sennett's theory, where they suggest integrating economic considerations or combining it with theories that already offer such perspectives.

They also have relevance for networks and similar transnational initiatives, in how they are conceived and communicated to their members. One concrete recommendation derived from this case study is to reconsider and if necessary, reduce the total number of network members to ensure that all members can get a full experience and understanding of the network. This specifically involves providing capacities for enough mediators to break down and adapt the network structures and project goals in bilateral consultations with all members. This role was indeed envisaged in the network, but only for full members. As the museum did not count as such, I filled the role as a third, external party.

The thesis revealed that financial constraints significantly hampered the network's functioning for some members, such as the museum. Accordingly, the findings also touch upon larger, more structural levels and address the political and economic decision-makers who set budgets for transnational initiatives in the cultural sector. Considering what opportunities these initiatives hold for facilitating cooperation in today's societies and conversely, how fragile they are to foster negative relations, it is worth re-evaluating what is considered adequate funding.

On another applied level, the thesis offers insights for network members and suggests for them to approach such memberships strategically, from the application process to

actual participation. It reveals how complex memberships in transnational initiatives are, introducing an idiosyncratic logic, procedures, and codes of conduct. For them to generate a fruitful exchange, the member organizations need to be able to allocate enough resources and prioritize the membership accordingly. Otherwise, the case study demonstrated how easily such initiatives can evoke complicated transnational relations and turn into a perceived obligation, representing an additional strain on existing resources.

7.2 Further Research

From the analysis of this thesis, I have identified three areas for further research, concerning issues of financial structures, gender, and power relations. As noted in the introduction, one case study cannot possibly speak for all member experiences in this network. How other members perceived the network may vary greatly and its entanglement with financial parameters still needs to be explored from more angles. One direction for further investigation would thus be to study the experience of a full member of this network, which was part from the very start and fully financed. Another direction would be to conduct a case study on a member organization with a different funding scheme itself. How does it impact a museum's ability for cooperation if they are for example state funded or run as a foundation, as the museum in this case.

Another aspect that is worth to interrogate further is whether there exists a link between gender and different ways of pursuing and motivating cooperation in transnational initiatives. In this study, male informants seemed to have a more pragmatic attitude, whereas female participants took a more strategic stance, possibly pursuing cooperation as a higher goal. These preliminary impressions should be considered in future research, in addition to dimensions such as informants' professional roles.

Finally, hierarchies and power relations within the network represent another aspect to investigate further. Once I interacted within the network, I at times experienced them myself, when for example feeling like I had crossed a boundary of who I, from an Additional Duplicator member organization, could or should contact on the side of the network. Accordingly, power relations were present as one analytical theme early on in my research process. However, I increasingly found the difficulties in this case to be entangled with economic considerations: I learned for example, that Duplicators, as a member group,

originally had a high standing in the network, when it kicked off with its first round of members. It seemed to be more the discrepancies between different Duplicators, such as whether they received funding, which caused problems. Further research could thus focus on how economic factors and power relations are entangled. For this, comparative studies on different network structures could prove useful: How do issues of resources and prioritization, for example impact cooperation in more egalitarian networks, with less distinct roles and hierarchies?

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9 Footnotes

[1] For readers, who wish to learn more about the Horizon 2020 initiative, information can be found here: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/what-horizon-2020

[2] In the following, I will refer to the open-air museum's coordinator only as the 'museum's coordinator' to make for a less convoluted reading experience.

[3] Sennett introduces a third dichotomy, comparing Sympathy to Empathy. This, however, has less of a relevance for the thesis, so I chose not to discuss it here. It can be found in his Introduction on pages 20 to 22.

[4] I replaced the actual terms used in the network with others of a similar meaning. As before, with not disclosing my informants' names, this serves the purpose of maintaining the institutions' anonymity as far as possible.