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**BARRIERS FOR INCLUSION IN SWEDISH JAZZ  
CULTURE**

*Subcultural Restraints and Possibilities in a Male Dominated Environment*

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Master's thesis CCRM20, Cultural Criminology, 30 credits

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# Abstract

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Cultural values and beliefs within the jazz community have intrigued social scientists for a long time. Being one of the oldest recognised subcultures, jazz has been celebrated for its socio-political ambitions as well as the complexity and aesthetics of the music itself. Being recognised as an outlet for fighting social injustices throughout history, the notable exclusion of female jazz musicians in the industry puzzled me. This marginalisation of women in jazz culture became the fundamental inspiration for this essay. The aim of this study is to investigate how Swedish jazz culture is experienced and performed mainly from the perspective of female jazz musicians. The data consists of seven in-depth interviews with female jazz musicians in Sweden, and field notes from twenty-four occasions of participant observations at various jazz venues in Sweden. The material is later analysed drawing upon subcultural theory reinforced by the concept of authenticity, and feminist theory reinforced by the concept of hegemonic masculinity. The findings showed that although there is a general view of jazz being free and inclusive, there are a lot of structural barriers that individuals must overcome in order to be accepted as an authentic jazz musician. The increased competition drives young musicians trying to follow an imaginary manual for success by attending certain schools, socialising in certain contexts, and adapting to the perceived ideal sound. Complementary findings show how the Swedish jazz community acts under incorrect assumptions of this culture being equally welcoming to women as well as men. The settings, valued characteristics, and musical expectations are structurally ingrained to fit male ideals and patriarchal gender divisions.

**Key words:** Jazz Culture, Subculture, Subcultural Identity, Gender marginalisation, Jam Culture, Hegemonic Masculinity.

## Popular science summary

Jazz music has a long history of not only being a unique and aesthetic genre, but also of having underlying forces against social inequality. The jazz community has fascinated social researchers for a long time as it is believed that there are unwritten social regulations within the community that dictate who can truly be part of the jazz society and who ends up outside the context. To what extent individuals are able to follow and exceed these social regulations is also believed to determine an internal hierarchy within the jazz community.

In this thesis, I initially explore how these social regulations are experienced and performed by jazz performers within a Swedish context, through the lens of subcultural theory and the concept of authenticity. As a complement to the initial analysis, I then go on to also include a gender perspective. For this part I investigate whether the social regulations within the Swedish jazz community are equally adapted for women as well as men. For this second part, the subcultural theory is reinforced by feminist theory and the concept of hegemonic masculinity.

Through interviews with female jazz performers, and participant observations, we gain insight in how jazz is understood and played out in Sweden. This essay contributes to an understanding of how musicians understand and navigate through the demands and expectations placed on Swedish jazz musicians today. Also, why women are underrepresented in the genre and how the female jazz musicians who exist in Sweden understand and manage their existence in a socially unequal environment.

Ultimately, this research sheds light on the complex social world of jazz, shedding light on how the Swedish jazz community consider their own culture and what possible or impossible requirements they are expected to live up to in order to succeed socially and, by extension, musically.

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# 1. Introduction

Jazz culture has been studied as a social phenomenon around the world for a very long time, often being referred to as somewhat a subculture that has existed for over a century. Jazz is celebrated for its aesthetic qualities and its socio-political ambition, closely tied to improvisation and the urgent need for racial justice and inclusion. For some, the political and cultural significance of jazz overshadows the music itself, making jazz appear pertinent to a branch of social theory (Early & Monsoon, 2019). Jazz music travelled to Sweden early on and was shortly after its invention part of the Swedish music culture. The sound was initially heavily dependent on American models and ideals up until the development of post-World War II jazz when influential Swedish musicians fused Swedish folk music with the Cool Jazz aesthetic during the 1950s. This was the beginning of a distinct and new Swedish sound, and a new set of cultural values within the Swedish jazz community (Tenenholtz, 2007).

These ideals and social structures of which Swedish jazz culture consists of today is what spiked my interest and furthermore resulted in the development of this study. The genre is heavily rooted in African American opposition toward social injustices as well as musical freedom and improvisation. At the same time, Swedish jazz today is a result of a lengthened development and adaptation to Swedish folk music and inevitably also by values and beliefs present in the Swedish society. Another aspect of jazz culture that intrigued me going into this study was the historical exclusion of female jazz musicians. According to Tucker (2002), women have played every instrument and embraced every style throughout the history of jazz but was persistently marginalised in prestigious areas within the industry. Aside from singers and a few pianists, women have not been made visible in recordings, major performance venues, or even jazz history books. Gender norms within jazz culture prevented women from playing highly valued jazz instruments and styles, or even from being considered a competition to men. Despite these obstacles, women have remained within the jazz world, found work opportunities and relative acceptance of the situation, maintaining a persistent part of jazz despite being historically overlooked.

That jazz is generally perceived as an expression for freedom, opposition to social injustice, and a space for musical improvisation and artistry, but also has a history of marginalisation and exclusion when it comes to female musicians, is what spiked my interest. The question of

what it is about jazz that includes some people but excludes others, became the foundation of this study. The operationalisation of this rather big question is what we unravel in the following chapter.

## 1.1 The issue, Aim and Research Questions

In order to unravel the question of what it is about jazz that includes or excludes people, the first step was to identify what it was I actually wanted to investigate. The way this was first performed was through narrowing the focus to the rules and structures of a Swedish jazz context. The initial purpose of this paper is therefore to deep dive into the Swedish jazz community and investigate how the jazz context is being experienced and performed. This led me to dividing the issue into a few categories that helped formulate a new set of questions: What is and what is not jazz? What is the social dynamic amongst jazz musicians, and between musicians and non-musician? How does the social scene play out? What and who is considered authentic? To explore the nuances in the questions posted, I decided to employ a deductive approach (Kuckartz, 2014). Building on previous research on jazz culture, I used subcultural theory as the foundation for formulating the first research question, which is as follows.

- 1) How do Swedish jazz musicians understand and perform what constitutes jazz as a subcultural phenomenon within their national context?

After deciding to explore the field of jazz through a subcultural lens, another perspective emerged over time based on field discoveries. The question arose of whether the jazz community represented an explicit or implicit hegemonic masculine space. This question was prompted by male dominance at jazz venues, particularly during jam sessions. Consequently, this inquiry inductively evolved into the study's second research question (Kuckartz, 2014), which was formulated as follows.

- 2) How is jazz experienced and performed by female performers?

Through these two research questions, the aim of this study is to investigate the social structures that govern the Swedish jazz community and to determine whether these structures contribute to gender marginalisation. Before we dive into some previous research on this subject, I think it is important to first go through some historical background. In order to understand the



progeny that is Swedish jazz culture, I would argue it necessary to mention the origin and purpose for jazz having political and cultural significance (Early & Monsoon, 2019).

## 1.2 Historical Background

Jazz music has shown to be a significant product of African American culture. The birth of jazz can be traced back to the late 19th century and some of the most intense years of segregation in the south. In the northern cities in the 1920s jazz became a reflection of the African American struggle for economic and social equality during the Great Depression and World War II. Later, the civil rights campaigns and post-colonial African independence movements laid the foundation for the various stylistic trends of jazz that would emerge such as Bebop, Hard Bop, Free Jazz and avant-garde (Shipton, 2007:1-4). There have been various definitions of what meanings constitutes jazz as a concept. Claiming there to be one true definition of what jazz means would be ignorant of me. The iconic jazz musician Wynton Marsalis argues for the jazz ensemble being democracy in action through participation, inclusiveness, challenge, competitiveness, and sense of collectiveness (Early & Monsoon, 2019). In the mid 40s and 50s jazz improvisation was considered by the interracial scene as the ultimate integrated music that crossed racial lines and social categorisation. For some people, jazz became an outlet for idealised and progressive communities for African American musicians, which inspired the development of progressive black social movements (Early & Monsoon, 2019).

Historically, jazz music was associated with and primarily performed by African Americans where social injustices were constantly reflected in the music and culture of jazz. Meanwhile, there is the problematic aspect of jazz music simultaneously being entirely interpreted by whites (Kofsky, 1971). Even the term “jazz” was initially viewed by many African American musicians as an industry label created by whites that demeaned, stereotyped, and limited them artistically (Early & Monsoon, 2019). Jazz terminology is something that is deeply rooted within jazz culture and something that Gold (1957) argued necessary for a social scientist to have knowledge about when studying jazz culture. One expression that is heavily referred to throughout this thesis is the term “cat” which according to Gold is a term of endearment when referring to a skilled jazz musician. The term implies respect and is perceived as a badge of honour that signifies acceptance within the community. Vocabulary is only one way for

members of the community to distinguish themselves from others, according to McClendon (2015), jazz performers also discovered the power of fashion aesthetics as a visual tool used to defy mainstream societal constructs which were subjected to segregation and racial inequality.

As jazz gained more popularity in the eyes of the public, the desire to meet as musicians in a secluded place to play together increased. Historically, jam sessions became a place of border crossings between musicians of various ethnic backgrounds, where musical proficiency was crucial in the process for participation and acceptance amongst other musicians. Various social boundaries and unwritten rules dictate the sessions and are carefully policed by the participants, and only proficient instrumental skills or “chops” as it is called within the community, could allow anyone to cross these social boundaries (Gazit, 2024). Jam sessions project an aura of open participation by allowing musicians to "sit in" and by generally relaxing formal performance constraints. The historical context of jam sessions, back in the 1930s and 1940s, show that they were also influenced by an ethics of exclusion. Professional jazz musicians valued jam sessions as events where they could escape the demands of the public and play "for musicians only." The freedom and spontaneous interaction that defined jam sessions attracted club owners who wanted to stage them for paying audiences. However, most efforts to stage jam sessions provoked defensive responses from professional musicians, as if the image of open participation is set against the desire to protect the performance from public intrusion (Gooley, 2011).

It is unclear when jazz first arrived in Sweden, some argue that Jazz did not arrive in Sweden until 1910 but was by then mainly displayed through ragtime and dance music with little improvisational elements (Starrin, 2013:30). In the 1920s, attitudes toward jazz polarised in Sweden more dramatically than in any other European country. There was a backlash against what was described by a group of leading cultural personalities that started a petition for the government to stop the importation of jazz music to Sweden (Shipton, 2007:285). It was not until after the second World War, when American culture fused with Swedish culture, that jazz music truly entered the Swedish music scene (Boman, 1998:40). This was the time when Swedish music icons fused the traditional jazz sound with traditional Swedish folk music that enabled a national touch on jazz music (Tenenholtz, 2007).

## 2. Previous Research

### 2.1 Jazz as a Subculture, Stage and Social Movement

Perhaps the most famous researcher investigating the culture of jazz is Howard S. Becker. In his book *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of deviance* (1973), Becker explores various forms of deviance and introduces the concept of “moral entrepreneurs” that plays a big part in defining and popularising societal norms and deviant categories (1973:125). Becker argues jazz musicians might be labelled as deviant or outside of the mainstream. For example, he argues that there is an internal conflict within jazz musicians to either stay true to the freedom that the music gives you or to commercialise yourself and “sell out” in order to make a living on their music (1973:79). Besides this book, another book on this subject that Becker wrote was *Art Worlds* (1982) that further digs into the subject of jazz culture and argues the importance of collaboration of various individuals in order to produce art. The social networks and interactions are according to Becker necessary to shape and produce artistic creations and he investigates how jazz musicians navigate through the social and professional aspects of this world. He highlights the role of collaboration, mentorship and informal learning in development of musical skills, and also in this book further discusses the concept of artistic freedom versus the economic and social realities of the music industry.

The role of jazz music as an African American founded genre during the Civil Right Movement in the United States cannot be diminished. Inserting lyrical statements into beloved melodies became popular. Murchison (2002) delves into how Mary Lou Williams hymn “Black Christ of the Andes” reflects the intersections of religion, social justice and artistic expression during a transformative period in American history. Murchison discusses the symbolism and thematic resonance of the composition in relation to racial solidarity, liberation of theology and spiritual empowerment, and how it challenges conventional notions of jazz as secular entertainment but also a sacred expression and cultural resistance.

Royer (2022) analyses how David Baker, a black man and esteemed jazz musician, composer and professor created and developed a Jazz studies program at Indiana University (IU) in 1966. Baker’s aspirations with this program was to promote diversity, inclusion, and social justice through jazz education. The goal for Baker was to take the subculture and political movement founded by outcasts into the broader society and make its content visible to others. This can be

put in relation to Eyerman's (2002) argument that the use of music in newer social movements, such as environmental activism and anti-globalisation protests, utilises music to create inclusive spaces for diverse participants, foster a sense of belonging, and communicate complex messages to broader audiences. He also includes another layer where the rather closed social movements transform into a public movement. The jazz culture may have started as an obvious underground culture during segregated times in the United States, but it has through this transition into Universities and the public developed and changed while still in many ways staying true to the original musical traditions.

But the socio-political intentions of jazz changes over time and nations. The author Zelinsky (2022) argued that one must understand a cultural phenomenon within their specific historical and political context. Jazz has had a complex role in the Stalinist Czechoslovakia due to the music's historical attachment to the western culture. Zelinsky concludes that jazz occupied an ambiguous position within the cultural landscape due to both being suppressed and subversively cherished. Jazz started to function as an "impure sacred", which means cultural symbols that embody resistance and complex identity negotiations within oppressive regimes. The author argues that jazz's cultural significance was deeply intertwined with the era's broader social and political dynamics. The music symbolised both defiance and aspiration for a different kind of modernity, serving as a site of ideological contestation and personal identity formation.

Before the 1950s, jazz was not always considered an artform in Sweden according to Van Kan (2022). A number of actors on the Swedish jazz scene introduced during the 1950s and 1960s modern art into their record covers which affected the way jazz was perceived from the outside, but also within the culture itself - as a display of art performed by artists. Stevenson (2016) explores the current state and potential of jazz as a cultural and musical form. He believes that contemporary jazz often looks backwards and emphasises nostalgia and tradition over innovation. This trend has led to a conservative approach that preserves jazz as a static tradition rather than allowing new developments. By digitising past recordings, today's jazz musicians can take advantage of the old sound which Stevenson believes can result in jazz being marginalised in popular music, targeting more niche markets or commercial "smooth" jazz rather than appealing to the wider community. While acknowledging jazz's current struggles with commercialisation and conservatism, Stevenson argues for its ongoing relevance as a platform for artistic experimentation, cultural critique, and the exploration of cosmopolitan identities. Woermann (2012) contributes to the subject of subcultural evolution by including

social media and its role in subcultural values and practices. He argues that essential subcultural practices, such as self-observation, learning, and developing a sense of style, are deeply rooted in habitual visual practices. But these offline practices are transforming as the production and consumption of visual social media become more prevalent. Woermann further suggests that social media facilitate the global coordination of individual aesthetic practices, encompassing hedonism, reflection, and knowledge.

## 2.2 Authenticity in a Subcultural Context

The amount of research conducted in relation to authenticity within a subcultural context is extensive. Peterson (2005) concludes that authenticity is a social construction rather than an attribute an individual automatically possesses. He argues that it would be possible to adapt an authentic status simply through adapting to the social expectations within a certain social context. But the requirements for being considered authentic can change depending on the evolution of society and changed values within the culture. This is especially studied through research on punk culture. William Ryan Force (2009) argues for subcultures often being defined by their divergence from broader cultural norms and that authenticity occurs through displaying opposition to external values. But through his ethnographic study he also argues that authenticity in punk culture is being constructed through internal comparisons between participants and how they display subcultural values through style and self-presentation.

Subcultural research on punk culture demonstrates how subcultural authenticity can be a complex phenomenon that should not be woven down to one simple definition. Moore (2004) concluded that punk subcultures on one hand as being a response to “the condition of postmodernity”, displaying nihilism, ironic cynicism, and experienced purposelessness. But on the other hand, this study argues for punk having a culture of authenticity that seeks to establish an underground network as an expression of artistic sincerity and independence from the alleged corrupted influences of larger societal capitalistic values. Similar studies of other subcultures show similar necessities for portraying authentic community membership. A study by authors Beverland, Farrelly and Quester (2010), that is based on extensive interviews with surfers, skaters, and snowboarders, concluded that authenticity can be achieved through individual or collective acts of authentication. This is, according to the authors, best possibly achieved through a thorough understanding of what benefits their subcultural identity and thereby engaging in various brand-related cues when seeking authentic credibility within their

community. What the research by Peterson (2005), Force (2009), and Beverly, Farrelly and Quester (2009), all have in common is arriving to definition of subcultural authenticity as a social construction where the individual subcultures develops their own requirements for becoming authentic that is beyond the 'mainstream' values for being considered authentic.

Although there is fairly extensive research done on the concept of authenticity in relation to subcultures, my quest for finding relevant existing research related to authenticity in jazz culture proved to be somewhat difficult. With that said, I did find a few articles discussing the subject that I will now try to summarise. Baade (2012) studied how jam sessions in the late 1930s were a secluded place that enabled an outlet for authenticity and creativity amongst jazz musicians. When organisers then wanted to invite an audience to take part in the subcultural ritual of a jam session, the musicians were outraged. The concept of staging a jam session in order to please an audience did not, according to the musicians, represent the authentic values of jazz culture.

Another study by Stebbins (1968) argues for the jazz community consisting of informal groups or "cliques" that are formed outside of the formal institutions like jazz jobs and jam sessions. These cliques are built on common status aspirations and mutual job referral obligations. They often share characteristics such as similar musical skills, ethnicity, gender, style, or hierarchical job positions. Jazz musicians prefer playing with those of equal or higher skill levels, excluding less skilled players, referred to as "drags." This dynamic continually reinforces a hierarchy within the jazz community. An example related to ethnicity can be found in a study by Kofsky (1971), who argues that authenticity in jazz music historically were automatically appointed black musicians, arguing for authenticity being an attachment of inheritance rather than a socially transmittable phenomenon. An earlier study by Stebbins (1966) also found a significant relationship between holding an authentic status within the jazz community and being from the middle-class. Stebbins concludes that although jazz musicians often are being associated with narcotics, murky slum-area bars, and loose morals, the reality actually resembles a middle-class lifestyle where most musicians are highly educated, and also teach at music schools besides having gigs.

## 2.3 Gender Research on Jazz and Subcultures

Cultural criminology as a subject has received criticism for its shallow connection to feminist theory. The authors Naegler and Salman (2016) reviews a range of cultural criminological scholars who have done studies of subcultures, incorporating aspects of masculinities and femininities, sexual attraction, sexualities and intersectionality, arguing for how cultural criminology as a subject would be strengthened if and be able to provide advanced explanatory power of resulting analyses. Meanwhile, research about jazz culture asks the question “What would jazz sound like in a culture without patriarchy?”, at least this was the fundamental question asked by Koppes (2024) in the article “*The Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender.*” Koppes investigates how jazz giants throughout history shaped the sound of jazz music while women were being scuffed away and marginalised.

A systematic enlightened review by Canham (2022) summarises and analyses existing research on the gendered nature of jazz and improvised music. These authors concluded that the majority of existing research had a qualitative methodological focus with autoethnographies, case studies, ethnography and narrative inquiry, rarely including gender concepts to the theoretical framework. The qualitative studies that focused on gendered accounts of work in the jazz and improvisation sector provided deeply personal narrative artistic research, as illustrations of how larger institutional and societal factors shape the individual's experience. Given this personal focus, explicit reference to theoretical frameworks was reduced in the reviewed articles. The authors thereby pleaded to future social scientists to add a broader theoretical framework of social structures while studying jazz community in Sweden in order to better navigate through the role gender played in it (Canham, et.al, 2022).

Although there is a need for more research on Swedish jazz culture from a gendered perspective, there are a few. Authors Cecilia Björck and Åsa Bergman (2018) did a comparison between Sweden and the US about how resistance to the concept of "women in jazz" varies between national contexts and generations. In Sweden, the emphasis is on equality and inclusiveness within a strong welfare state framework, while in the US, the focus is more on individual achievements and diversity. Generational differences also played a role; older generations may adhere more to traditional gender roles, whereas younger generations push for more progressive, inclusive approaches. These variations influence how initiatives promoting gender equality in jazz were perceived and implemented.

Wahl & Ellingson (2018) argues that professional jazz has been organised around two contradictory cultures for a long time. The first culture builds upon norms based on equality and inclusion beyond boundaries of race and class. But in contrast to this there is also a culture of exclusion built upon gender essentialism that severely limits female practitioners. By interviewing professional female jazz musicians, the authors would concur that female jazz musicians today still face strong barriers toward full equality in the jazz world despite consistently demonstrating that they possess equal musical skills to male musicians. According to the norms of meritocracy that guides professional jazz, women remain on the margins of the jazz art world. This disadvantage for women and non-binary people has, according to Mortenson-spokes (2023) been upheld and maintained through historical and cultural biases within the jazz education system. This marginalisation of women and non-binary musicians within curriculums and teaching practices creates a barrier to their participation and recognition.

As mentioned previously in the section “*Authenticity, a subcultural phenomenon*”, the jazz community tends to form cliques based on shared characteristics that reinforces hierarchy (Stebbins, 1968). Studies have shown how women can form a kind of clique within a subculture that is mainly dominated by men, that when women or non-binary people are marginalised within a subculture, there are various strategies to adapt, for instance Lumsden (2010) researched how women within the car racing industry consciously adapt a more masculine expression in order to fit into the culture. Research about women as subordinate to men within subcultures or closed communities is fairly extensive. Alkemade (2014) describes the gender dynamics within the organised crime underworld in Japan, also known as the Yakuza underworld, as highly patriarchal, with women in subordinate positions. These women face marginalisation and are often relegated to roles that support the male-dominated structure. Despite their marginal status, women in the Yakuza navigate these constraints and exert influence in subtle ways, such as handling the finances which gives them significant behind-the-scenes power. The study highlights the tension between traditional gender expectations and women's efforts to assert their presence and agency within this insular and male-centric subculture.



## 3. Theoretical Framework

The analysis will be grounded in the key concepts of culture, subculture, authenticity, and gender. Given the complexity and fluidity of these terms, a thorough examination is required to establish clear definitions that will serve as the foundation for the subsequent analysis.

### 3.1 Definitions of Culture

A term that is being continuously used throughout this study is “jazz culture”. Before moving onto definitions and subcultural theory, the first thing we should unravel is the vague concept of culture. What is culture in the sense of writing from a cultural criminological point of view?

According to the author Martin O’Brian (2005) there is no clarity in how the cultural criminological researchers distinguish the specifically cultural from the psychological, the social economical, the political or from the geographic forces when it comes to 1. the experience of committing a crime, or 2. the dispersion of crime across times, places and population. In other words, according to O’Brian no concrete line can be drawn between what is cultural and what is ethnographic. He means that there is a theoretical confusion within the cultural criminology where there are a lot of contradictions within the definition of culture. Human culture cannot, according to O’Brian, be both finite and also infinite, fundamentally free and also constrained, programmed and also willed. And maybe trying to work out one clear definition of what culture means could be problematic in this thesis, but not impossible. The reasoning behind O’Brian’s arguments is based on the assumption that not all cultures could be classified with the exact same ingredients. Which he has a point in making. But for this study, the importance lies in defining the culture of jazz in the modern Swedish society, which I would argue narrows the concepts of culture down. The reason for mentioning O’Brian is to point out that there is not necessarily one single definition of culture that could be used in every research situation. Nevertheless, in order to find a definition that could be fruitful for the purpose of this study, we must consider some of the definitions by cultural criminologists.

The diffusely defined culture as the one you can find within the jazz community can therefore be described accordingly with the authors Smith and Riley (2009:2) as a way to designate the entire way of life by seeing culture in a variety of activities, beliefs, and customs of people, in

groups and in society as a whole. Swidler (1986) on the other hand, describes culture as a “repertoire” or a “toolbox” of habits, skills and styles. Swidler believes that every person has different skills and experiences that they can pull out depending on what social situation the individual is faced with. But there are some critiques on Swidler's definition of culture, Grundetjern (2015) means that the “toolbox” does not necessarily explain the factors influencing people's use of, or access to one specific set of tools over others. She means that culture should not be seen as a supermarket where someone can pick and choose. What Grundetjern is trying to explain that we somehow do things we are not even aware of and therefore argues for the possibility of culture being unconscious as well.

The culture of jazz is in this thesis defined as a set of various activities, beliefs, and customs of people. And as a context that requires and provides specific skills, habits and styles to the participants. But at the same time as an environment that nurtures people to the extent that cultural actions do not always happen consciously but as a consequence of lived experiences within this context.

## 3.2 Definitions of Subculture

To narrow an already difficult concept such as culture down to an even more specific subcategory such as subculture is not an easy task to take on. The subcultural theory was first defined in the mid 1940s when Gordon (1947) delves into the notion of subcultures within societies and how distinct social groups within larger cultural contexts possess their own values, beliefs and behaviours. Gordon refers to subculture as a subdivision within national culture that is formed by various social factors such as class, status, ethnic background, regional or rural/urban residence, and religious affiliation. These factors, according to Gordon, combine to create a cohesive unit that significantly influences the individuals involved (1947:40). Cohen (1955) later elaborated on the subcultural theory by defining subcultures as a forum where delinquents who are societal outcasts come together and find solidarity and moral support within a group of like-minded individuals that fails to adjust to societal norms and expectations (1955:59). Cohen describes subcultures as a sympathetic moral climate within a new set of standards and morals based on collective innovations to problems encountered by groups (1955:65). Cohen's work draws upon the work of Merton (1938) that explores how some social structures contribute to a high level of stress in some individuals who do not feel that they can

live up to society's expectations of them. This, according to Merton, creates deviant individuals that adopt an anomic approach to social structures (1938:672-673).

The concept of subcultural theory changed in the 1960s and the 1970s, when the approach developed amongst sociologists in the UK and the University of Birmingham. Scholars at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham (CCCS) developed the concept of subculture as emerged from a post-World War II society, choosing to develop subcultural theories based on a neo-Marxian approach that emphasised social class and ideology instead of the previous American theories based on ethnography and deviance (Williams, 2011:26). The phenomena of subcultural theory developed from being a mutual way of thinking and acting amongst outsiders, to also include varied types of people coming together simply through choice rather than societal exclusion. Subcultures can also be a powerful tool in order for like-minded-people to come together and question societal norms and political governance. Ron Eyerman (2002) thought that especially the role of music in both historical and contemporary social movements serves as a tool for political expression and mobilisation. It is necessary here to distinguish the differences between social movements and subcultures. Although they are both social phenomena that can sometimes overlap there are some key differences to keep the two apart. Social movements are organised, collective efforts by a large group of people to achieve or resist change in society (Tilly, 2020), while subcultures can be briefly described as groups of people within a larger culture that differentiate themselves through styles, behaviours, beliefs or interests. Members of subcultures do not necessarily want to achieve social change but rather create a sense of identity and community with other like-minded people (Hebdige, 2002). Despite these differences Eyerman (2002) argues that music plays a significant role in shaping collective identities, fostering solidarity, and articulating the values and aspirations of social movements, drawing on examples from historical events such as the Civil Right movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

Jazz music has throughout history proven to not only be a platform that brings people together and shapes identities, but also a tool for social change, as earlier described in the previous research section. Finding one "true" definition of culture as well as subculture can be problematic due to several different opinions of what the fundamental reasons for belonging to or entering culture is. But in order to provide cultural analysis on the jazz community, it is important to understand the basic knowledge within this field and how it can be understood from this perspective. Drawing upon the earlier definitions of cultural theory and subcultural

theory described above, the foundation for the subcultural analysis in this study will investigate if the Swedish jazz scene today contains the elements of a subculture through factors described by Williams (2011) and the key concepts within subcultural theory. Williams defines a subculture as a defined group of people within a larger culture that differentiates itself through a distinct set of beliefs, values, styles and behaviours, that in this case would shape individuals within the jazz community. According to Williams, subcultures often seem to form some sort of resistance toward dominant societal norms and values and thereby challenge the mainstream culture and engage in deviant behaviour as a form of expression. Style and symbolism through music, language, or other symbols is important for the subcultural individual and are often used in order to convey messages of resistance or belonging. The subculture, according to Williams, can provide a sense of identity and community for their members, a place where individuals can find acceptance and solidarity, often having felt difficulties adapting to mainstream society.

Drawing upon the earlier definition of culture in comparison to the definitions of subculture, the intention is to investigate whether there is a sort of “repertoire” or “toolbox” of behaviours or skills necessary in order to be part of the Swedish jazz culture, and these skills or behaviours are something one can possess without consciously. Besides analysing the Swedish jazz culture today from a subcultural perspective, I also intend compare today's jazz culture to the jazz culture described by famous researcher Howard S. Becker (1973; 1982) and his definitions of jazz culture as a deviant group based on the dependent and the independent, the struggles between staying true to the art form and gaining an audience, the importance of informal learning and musical skills in order to fit in with the crowd.

### 3.3 Definitions of Authenticity

In order to understand the subcultural context, one must understand what characteristics or actions that enable status and recognition within the culture. The struggles of a jazz musician to stay authentic within the culture, and true to their individual artistry can be related to the work written by Jeffrey C. Alexander. Alexander explores the concepts of iconic experience in both art and life, using Alberto Giacometti's sculpture “Standing Woman” as a starting point, delving into the interplay between surface and depth in artistic representation. Alexander argues that the experience of encountering iconic artwork evokes a profound and multi-dimensional response from viewers due to underlying symbols and personal experiences related to the artwork, beyond the surface and features visualised in the moment (2008). In relation to jazz,

one could have grown up listening to the songs from the American songbook, or maybe experiencing a live performance from one of the iconic characters within the genre which can shape an individual's choices later on, or affecting how same songs or similar sound can have on someone at other times. Art, culture and society, according to Alexander, interconnects and shapes individual identity as well as collective consciousness (2004a, 2008).

This individual and collective development based on iconic experiences can create a sort of community, or otherwise considered a subculture, that helps navigate social performance through imploding ritualistic and strategic behaviours. Alexander argues that these cultural pragmatics can offer an understanding of how actors negotiate and meaning and identity within social contexts (2004a, 2008). Alexander's view of how symbols play an important role in navigating through and creating meaning within social interactions and conveying authenticity within the culture, is something that will be recurring throughout this thesis. Jazz culture, as well as any subculture or social group, contains cultural dimensions of authenticity through for example: verbal language, musical language, iconic figures and instruments, sexuality, ethnicity, gender and performance of masculinity (Cotterell, 2022). The view of what is considered authentic within jazz culture, and what obstacles that may mean for those who are unable to fit in is something that this paper tries to further investigate in relation to cultural and subcultural interpretations of what underlying structures govern the Swedish jazz society as a whole. The concept of authenticity is later added to the analysis as a tool through which I try to understand what specific characteristics and actions are considered most desired within the subculture of jazz. Who are considered authentic? Or as it is referred to in this study, what does one have to do or be in order to be considered a "cat"?

## 3.4 Theoretical framework for gender analysis

### Feminist Theory

Studying the culture of jazz partly from a perspective of female musicians opens up for an opportunity to dig into gendered aspects of this environment. By researching various theoretical frameworks, the final decision for the main theory ended up being Feminist theory. One of the earliest and most central theoreticians within feminist theory is writer and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir explores the historical and social construction of women as the "other" gender as opposed to the "main" gender of men in her publication 'The Second Sex' in 1949.

Beauvoir focuses on the myth of femininity, women's oppression, existential freedom, and the social structures that perpetuate gender inequality, arguing that one is not born a woman but rather shaped into one by the standards of societal structures (Beauvoir, 2011). These ideas were later developed by Kate Millett (1971) that would argue that there are power dynamics between men and women, both in interpersonal and institutional relationships, that are being maintained by cultural and societal norms of patriarchy.

Millett defined patriarchy as a social system in which men hold primary power, dominating in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property. The societal benefits for the male sex do, according to Millett, result in ideological conditioning, where societal norms and cultural narratives shape individuals' beliefs and behaviours to accept gender inequality. This is further enhanced by the media, literature, and other public representations that reinforce the patriarchy through for example sexual objectification of women (Millett, 1971). The ideas of Beauvoir and Millett, though inspirational for future feminist researchers, were later criticised for not being inclusive enough. Bell Hooks added to the feminist theory in the 1980's including the concept of intersectionality, and the fact that including the aspects of ethnicity, class, and sexuality into the equation provides more layers of societal and cultural hierarchies (Hooks, 2015). Hooks argues that the feminist theory described by Beauvoir, Millett, but also Betty Freidan (1963), are referring to what they describe as women in society, but Hooks argues that they are actually only referring to a limited selection of white, middle-class, college-educated housewives - not taking into account that poor or non-white women exist (Hooks, 1984:13). A further addition to the feminist theory was made by Judith Butler when they contributed with the idea that gender is something that one does rather than something that one is. Butler argues that gender is a repetition of performed acts and behaviours that gives an illusion of a steady gender, and that these gender performances are regulated by societal norms and expectations. These norms dictate what is considered appropriate for different genders and thus guide individuals' performances (Butler, 1988; 1990).

The aspiration is to investigate how gender norms and expectations shape jazz culture and to advocate for greater gender equality. The reasoning behind this selection was its inclusion of concepts such as gender as a social construct, intersectionality, performativity, and critique of traditional gender roles. These concepts combined allows for a broader understanding of gendered differences and opportunities within the jazz culture than using, for example, the concept of intersectionality on its own for the analysis. Besides feminist theory, the concept of

hegemonic masculinity is used in order to provide an additional foundation for analysing gender structures within the jazz culture, and thereby try and understand if there are different opportunities of entering and sustaining the Swedish jazz scene.

## Hegemonic Masculinity

To equate subcultures and feminism in a direct way would be a mistake since studies have shown how girls and women participating in a subculture often do so under pressure to conform to hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. These terms primarily refer to everyday practices of doing gender through ways of dressing, talking, behaving, and other ways gender is constructed and reproduced (Connell, 1987). The concept of hegemony refers to when a group claims and sustains a leading position within a cultural social life. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the shape of gender practice that embodies patriarchy's legitimacy, which is perceived to guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordinate position of women in society (Connell, 2005:77). In subcultures originally created by and for male participants with its majority of participants being overwhelmingly male, those who want to be regarded positively by other members, a situation emerges where they must conform to masculine codes or be marginalised (Williams, 2011:58-59). According to Connell (2005:79) the ones that are not actively disputing the masculine codes but at the same time avoid being exposed to its marginalisation are categorised within the concept of complicit masculinity. There are also different types of masculinity where the superior type oppresses the subordinate masculinity for not living up to the set standards for masculinity within a certain context (2005:78). Using the concept of hegemonic masculinity in this thesis will help to explore how dominant forms of masculinity in the jazz world marginalises women and other gender expressions.

## 4. Methodology

This chapter aims to delve into the methodology for creating this thesis. As previously mentioned, the purpose of this study is to explore lived experiences of entering and maintaining credibility in the Swedish jazz community today with the use of subcultural theory and feminist theory. For this reason, I conduct thematic analysis on data mainly based on 7 semi-structured interviews with female jazz performers, 24 occasions of ethnographic observations and additional data consisting of autoethnographic elements where my own personal experiences contribute to the interpretation of certain cultural aspects. This chapter outlines the methodological steps taken in choosing participants, locations for field work and data analysis, combined with reflections on my personal relationship with the field and ethical considerations along the way.

### 4.1 Entering the Field

Before going into further detail about the methodology of this thesis it is crucial to describe my personal relationship with jazz culture. My father is a jazz musician and early on in life I accompanied him to various traditional jazz festivals and concerts, experiencing the atmosphere first-hand. By the age of 8 I experienced my first stage performance, singing one of the traditional jazz tunes on stage in front of an audience. At this point I was generally considered the sweet little girl that people enjoyed entering the stage with her father. As time went on and I graduated high school, my level of participation in the community deepened as I studied jazz vocals at a community college of jazz. Going deeper into the culture in my early adult years spiked my interest in unspoken norms and rules centred around the music, which ultimately resulted in me writing this thesis.

The structures of Swedish jazz culture shaped me. Over time I started questioning the expected way of acting and behaving whilst being in the jazz world. Les Back (2023) found that sociology and music can have a fruitful influence on each other. Through sociologists' engagement in music, we can learn to understand society both directly and tacitly. Music offers an interpretative device to cultural history, a training in the unspoken and yet structured aspects of culture, and an attentiveness to improvised and interactive aspects of social interaction. Maybe my history of being both a sociologist, cultural criminologist, as well as a jazz performer



provided me with the tools to distinguish the behavioural distinctions within this culture.

The reason why it is necessary to understand this relationship is because it might have an impact on the trust I was able to gain from my informants, but also because my previous experiences could have clouded my vision when entering the field. This is something that some researchers considered a weakness, but I would argue is a strength. Profound knowledge of the field might be argued as a weakness (Gastil, 1971), and one of my main fears going into this field was my fear of being too subjective and therefore missing out on important findings and/or situations. It became apparent from the beginning that my role as a researcher required an analytical standpoint based on reflexivity and an ability to constantly reflect on my own experiences and emotions in relation to the data. Therefore, the choice of adding the method of autoethnography to my methodological framework on the field enabled my subjective self to be used as an asset rather than a liability.

Tarisayi (2023) argues that the method of autoethnography utilises the researcher's own experiences, emotions, and critical reflections as data for inquiry into cultural beliefs and practices. I can therefore leverage inside knowledge of a cultural context, then deliberately apply analytical distance and theoretical frameworks to gain new critical insights into taken-for-granted aspects of the jazz culture. The practical way I conducted this was through always carrying a field diary where I could write down my personal feelings as well as my impressions of the surrounding during an observation. Autoethnography was also used during interviews where my personal experiences became an asset in establishing a level of trust through mutual understanding of the jazz community, as well as it being a tool for constructing relevant follow up questions. The idea was to adapt the approach of autoethnography (Tarisayi 2023), while maintaining reflexivity in the shape of a self-conscious reflection on my own role as a researcher in the field with previous knowledge about the field that might reflect the outcome of the study (Nazaruk 2011:73-75). Also having the knowledge of my personal position as being a white woman in this field allowed constant self-reflection as my personal beliefs and convictions were challenged and at times contradicted. Creating this thesis was a journey where my field diary consisting of thoughts and expressed emotions throughout the process became a lifeline in maintaining as objective as possible, especially in structuring the analysis chapter.

## 4.2 Sampling and Conducting Interviews

The initial determined criteria for the interview participants were basically that they should show a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and practices of the Swedish jazz culture through lived experiences as a performer. As the beginning of my data collection process started with observations at jam sessions there was one discovery that spiked my interest more than anything, and that was the lack of participating female jazz musicians at these occasions. This discovery resulted in a further narrowing of participants and adding a gender aspect onto the subcultural aspects of lives experiences in jazz culture. Therefore, the criteria for being an interview participant narrowed even further into also adding the highly important aspect of the participant not being a man. These pillars for participant selection ultimately resulted in seven semi-structured interviews with women representing different subgenres of jazz, instruments, locations in the country, and ages. In order to provide a nuanced and diverse understanding of the jazz culture and its practices from a female perspective, this variation was necessary (Hannerz & Tutenges, 2022:6-8).

Due to my previous knowledge of the field I could get in contact with a number of musicians directly and from there receive contact information to other musicians the interlocutors recommended, using the so-called snowball sampling. I attempted to find interlocutors through a Facebook group for female jazz musicians in the country but was unable to establish any contact there. When requesting an interview, the interlocutors had the choice between meeting up at a coffee shop or through a digital platform. Six out of the seven interlocutors wanted to meet at a coffee shop, one at the digital platform Teams. For all interviews I used an interview guide (see attachment 1). The interviews were conducted in Swedish and later translated to English for the analysis. The interview guide was preliminary and mostly a tool to ensure that the themes necessary were interwoven in the conversation. Using the method of semi-structured interview enabled the conversation to initially evolve around the key concepts of ‘what’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ jazz culture is experienced, perceived, and played-out, but to later develop into a conversation that encouraged the interlocutors to further reflect on their lived experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:145). The main goal for every interview was to start a flowing conversation where the interlocutor could feel comfortable enough to speak freely on the subject. This resulted in long interviews that all lasted within a time span of 1-3 hours. All interlocutors were ensured to maintain anonymity based on the scientific council’s ethical principles (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002).

One aspect of the interviews that I think is important to mention is that the interview guide was structured in a way that these questions would be applicable to anyone connected to the culture, no matter their gender, in order to provide a genuine response of how they perceive this subject as an individual rather than as a woman. With that said, it proved to be inevitable to discuss their position within the culture based on their gender as it reflected their perspectives and experiences to various degrees.

### 4.3 Participating Observations

The method of doing field work through observations was initially my primary source of data collection. Going into this study I attended jam sessions in both Stockholm and Malmö with my field diary thinking that this would be my main source of information throughout this process. This perception developed into something else where the findings during the observations rather intertwined with the later formulated questions for the interviews. Nevertheless, my time on the field was crucial in deepening my understanding of the culture though both involving myself in interactions with others while observing what they were doing (Fangen, 2005:30). Participant observation and interviews both play a central role as qualitative research methods within ethnography (O'Reilly, 2005:10-12), and combining the two allows me to deepen my understanding of the jazz community through both observing the field and having in-depth discussions with active participants in the field. Throughout the entire process of collecting data, the autoethnographic approach of self-observation and reflexive journaling was crucial, and performed through writing down emotions, thoughts on my positioning as a white woman in the field, and memories, in the field diary along the way (Tarisayi, 2023). This was done both while being in the field and being at home, simply writing down as many thoughts as possible in order to constantly remind myself of the fragility of maintaining reflexivity while diving into a field I was already personally connected to.

The observations took place at eleven different venues in three different cities in Sweden. All of the observations took place during jam sessions or jazz concerts over a time period of 15 weeks, between the dates of 13th of January until the 29th of March 2024. Some of the observations involved me entering the stage during a jam session to sing, which enabled me to initiate conversations with the present individuals as well as expand my understanding and further respect the dynamics and psychological aspects of participating in a jam session. Doing field work in this way enabled me to participate in the events simultaneously as the question of

‘what is going on’ went through my head constantly (Goffman, 1986:85). At every occasion of observation, field notes were taken. Writing down the social processes, behaviours, and expressions enabled me to compare the occasions and distinguish cliques and elements of inclusion and behavioural differences (Charmaz, 2006:20). The strategy for taking notes depended on whether or not I had company or if I could blend in taking notes in public. Sometimes the notes were written directly in a field diary, sometimes first in my phone and transferred to the diary afterwards. A large number of the conducted observations took place at jam sessions of some sort, either an event advertised as a jam session or a concert where it is common for audience members to “sit in” to play a song or two. Other observations took place during more traditional concert occasions where I as well as everyone else in the audience was there as sole members of the audience and not considered potential participating musicians. My goal was to visit jazz clubs and jam sessions at various places with various “cred status” and different cliques of jazz musicians, in different parts of the country. The sampling of these venues was strategically chosen through digital research, asking jazz musicians, and previous knowledge, that was later compiled and carefully selected in order to get variation of locations and ‘status level’.

#### 4.4 Coding and analysing the data

The choice of strategy to use for analysing the data was not initially obvious. I therefore went through a process of eliminating methods one by one in order to find which method is the most suitable for this study. The first approach eliminated was content analysis, this systematic and objective approach to analysing the content of the data, often through open coding often is best used when diving into the material without a predetermined theoretical framework (Neuendorf, 2017). Since I had already decided on using subcultural theory and the concept of authenticity already before the coding process, the content analysis approach was eliminated. Another approach I deliberated upon was grounded theory due to its systematic approach to data collection and analysis. While some aspects of grounded theory was applied during the data collection process of how to use my field diary, the ultimate goal of using this approach in analysis by generating a theory that is grounded in the data and can be further refined in future research (Charmaz, 2006), did not seem suitable for the purpose of this study and was therefore also eliminated. Eventually, the decision was between Narrative analysis and Thematic analysis. If this study were to be solely based on interviews, interpreting their stories and

uncovering how their narratives shape and reflect cultural, ideological, and personal identities, narrative analysis would have been perfect (Herman, 2019). But since this study is based on both lived experiences as well as participating observations there was mainly one approach left that could handle both, thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis involves systematic identification and analysis of themes and patterns in the data in an exploratory or descriptive way, without focusing on quantifying the data (Kuckartz, 2014). The goal was to identify and develop themes that were relevant for the research question and could help provide insight into jazz culture. Thematic analysis is used to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within data. It involves the systematic identification of patterns in the data, categorisation of those patterns into themes, and interpretation of those themes within the larger context of the research question. The initial step was, in accordance with Kuckartz (2014), to do a rough coding based on my research questions - how jazz is experienced and performed amongst jazz performers in Sweden and how these aspects were experienced and performed by female jazz musicians. Eventually this process resulted in 12 themes divided into 3 categories (See attachment 2). These 12 categories were for a long time the working structure for building the analysis until I realised the massive amount of data these 12 categories consisted of. Limiting the data to a rather small number of categories meant including several details within one category. By doing this I might have missed out on specific interesting variances within the answers that are not included in the analysis (Babbie, 2004:133). But the amount of data became extensive, so in order to get an overview, I decided to categorise the material in this way.

For the next step the entire data set was once again coded and analysed based on the categories, and then prepared for the research report. I compared and contrasted the sub-groups of interest in order to get the category-based analysis that gains sophistication, complexity, and explanatory power. In other words, thematic analysis involves identifying patterns in the data that are relevant to the research question and that provide insight into the phenomenon being studied (Kuckartz, 2014). Lastly, the 12 categories were worked down to 8 that became the sections for the analysis. All of the quotes and field extractions were translated to English as they were eventually selected for the analysis.

## 4.5 Ethical considerations

As previously mentioned, reflections on my personal relationship with the field was constantly present throughout the entire process of conducting this thesis. So far, I have merely discussed the aspect of my previous knowledge potentially clouding my ability to notice details while being on the field. But the part that proved to be most challenging was the interviews. Conducting in-depth interviews required me to share something of myself in order to encourage openness and enable the interlocutors to feel free and safe to discuss private matters intended for public dissemination (Kvale, 2007:2-10). My personal relationship with the field and fundamental knowledge of structural aspects of jazz culture often resulted in the interlocutors being very open and honest during the interviews, which exhibited a sense of the interviews at times resembling a friendly conversation rather than an interview. Although the subject of jazz culture is not necessarily considered a sensitive subject, the aspect of maintaining ethical respect for the interlocutors' integrity became very much of importance. Therefore, the anonymity and confidentiality of the interlocutors was a big priority while constructing the analysis. The anonymity of the interlocutors is being portrayed through referring to numbers instead of their names. The numbers represent the orders in which the interviews were conducted. My dedication to keeping the identities of my informants anonymous is extended to the point that no character traits, dates or even places mentioned in the analysis chapter reflect reality. An example of this is displayed on page 45 where the characteristics such as age, year or place have been changed. I do not consider it necessary to mention individual things that can be used to locate the informants. Especially not when the purpose of this study is to examine a wider culture and social patterns, and not the single individual. And on that note, let us move on to the results and analysis.

## 5. Result & Analysis

This chapter of results and analysis is divided into two parts. The first part is based on the first research question of this study: *How do Swedish musicians understand and perform what constitutes jazz as a subcultural phenomenon within their national context?* This part is divided into subcategories investigating various aspects of the jazz community and its values and beliefs, drawing mainly upon subcultural theory and concepts of authenticity. The second part of this chapter is based on the second research question of this study: *How is jazz experienced and performed by female performers?* This section seeks to further dive into the lived experiences of female jazz performers within a male dominated culture, drawing upon feminist theory and hegemonic masculinity in relation to the subcultural analysis above.

### 5.1 Understanding and Performing Jazz

This first part of the analysis focuses on the cultural aspects of the Swedish jazz community using mainly the framework of subcultural theory combined with the concept of authenticity. This section is divided into four subsections. The section: *What is 'jazz'?* investigates how jazz music and culture is defined by the interlocutors. The section: *The jazz musician*, investigates values and characteristics attached to the jazz musician, further analysing the subcultural identity of a Swedish jazz musician. This section contains a second piece called *'Authenticity, Cats and the Real deal'* in order to form an analytical distinction between the average jazz musician and those in the top shift within the community. The section: *The sound ideal of Swedish jazz* analyses how cultural values shaped the musical education and opportunities in jazz, and what consequences this might lead to. And lastly, the section: *The culture of jam sessions* digs into the ritual of jam sessions, investigating what rules and expectations these hold.

#### 5.1.1 What is 'Jazz'?

To try and understand the social aspects of jazz culture requires me to first try and formulate a definition of jazz. One of the first questions asked to all of the interlocutors was: what is jazz to you? What intrigued me was the mutual reactions of not having the instant answer or definition

of what jazz actually is. Commonly used phrases were freedom of expression, communication and improvisation, but further explanations varied. One interlocutor argued that “besides communication jazz is all about the way you play, the way the drums play and how the harmony is built up” (1), another argues that “how you approach the music through choice of band constellations or improvisational elements could point toward the music being jazz, and that jazz shouldn't be entirely written on beforehand but allow for creativity in the moment” (4).

Jazz is a long tradition that's been developed along the way and is now an umbrella concept for a large number of sounds. Jazz is not just one thing; it would be very conservative of me to claim jazz to be this or that because it's not. Jazz can be a lot of different things. (6)

Though difficult to pinpoint one single definition of what jazz is, it seems that the importance of freedom of expression and creativity and creating an environment where spontaneity and inspiration is the focus, might be the core of the music. Drawing upon the earlier definitions of subcultural theory, Merton (1938), Gordon (1947), and Cohen (1955), states the subcultural phenomenon is a sympathetic moral climate where participating individuals deviate from the social structures and pressures from the bigger society in order to create a space where deviance from the norm is allowed. In a society where not only social rules but also commercial music is often predetermined, repetitive and carefully controlled, jazz music is considered an outlet for interpretation, creativity and freedom of expression. As one of the interlocutors described it, “It's about creating something in the moment without being controlled by predetermined frames (5)”. Jazz is also considered to be a kind of expression of resistance from the commercialised mainstream music.

Jazz compared to, for example, pop music is not commercialised. Well, of course there is jazz with a commercial purpose also, but I don't think the main idea with jazz is to be commercial. (2)

From this citation above, we can sense active deviation of the entire jazz context from the mainstream and commercialisation in society. Recurring in interviews and informal conversations was an expression of conscious deviation from popular culture and mainstream music. Jazz was at several occasions during interviews referred to as the opposite of the Swedish version of Eurovision Song Contest (Melodifestivalen), explaining that the extended control and limitation this genre of music contains goes against the values of jazz. When asked



what is not jazz, one interlocutor answered: “Melodifestivalen, that is pretty far from jazz actually” (3). Another interlocutor elaborated on why Melodifestivalen is the opposite by saying it is because of: “Everything is super produced; it has to be the same every time and sound exactly the same” (4).

Stebbins (1966) argues for jazz musicians holding a low rank to commercial musicians in wider society, but within the jazz community jazz musicians hold a higher rank than commercial musicians. The element of improvisation and artistic freedom is highly valuable to jazz musicians in a way that is not in commercial music, such as Melodifestivalen. The fundamental value within jazz as being free from the limitations of commercial music allows the jazz community to establish their own sets of values, rules and structures beyond the wider society. This barrier toward the mainstream can also be put in relation to Williams (2011) concepts of subculture, that jazz music and the values behind the music acts as resistant and deviant from dominant societal norms and values. This barrier toward the mainstream creates a further frustration and feelings of not being understood for their choice of music.

There are always people that ask me why I play jazz. Not infrequently I am told that I should be in Melodifestivalen (ESC), X-Factor or apply to Idol. There is no prestige in me singing jazz at all. For them it's only TV and the commercial that are cool things to do.” (5)

Although not necessarily representative for every single jazz musician in Sweden, the citation above reflects similar conversations I have encountered throughout the process of conducting this research. There is undeniably a sense of prestige connected to jazz music that the musician's value highly. Comparing this to earlier studies of jazz culture by Becker, one of the most fundamental dilemmas for a jazz musician in order to maintain respect from other jazz musicians, and consequently self-respect, was to avoid commercialising yourself at all costs. This would mean compromising your artistic expression through playing commercial music or in other ways yield to commercial means (1973:79). Though this mindset still exists in the Swedish jazz community to some extent, referring to the most famous TV music programs above. Another interlocutor argues for a shift in the general attitude toward accepting gigs within other genres in order to survive economically.

When you attend a school of jazz people usually think that they're only going to play jazz later on. But when you're out there and have to make a living, you realise that that's probably impossible. I think it's more common to look down on people who play certain kinds of jazz, rather than those who play other genres. But that's very individual. Some people hate free jazz, some hate more straight-ahead jazz and look down on those who perform it. But you never hear anyone being called a sell-out for having a gig with a pop artist. There are very few that can play only jazz and survive economically. (7)

The increased competition in getting the gigs and surviving economically was generally explained, by jazz musicians I talked to on the field, as the result of there being a large number of music schools, and by the rather recent extended opportunity to study jazz for many years. The result of this extended music education has resulted in a significantly larger number of skilled musicians fighting for a limited number of gig opportunities. Therefore, as the interlocutor above explained, accepting gig opportunities in order to stay in the game as a musician is not generally looked down upon in Swedish jazz culture today. On the other hand, there are elements of conflict between certain subgenres within the bigger jazz concept.

In a way it's easy to restrict yourself based on how the music you play resonates with how you see yourself as a person. I think that jazz today is very much about image as well, that it can really be something that you identify with. I can really recognise that in playing jazz myself. I don't play only jazz, but jazz is the genre I identify myself with the most. (2)

It seems as if your subcultural identity as a jazz musician is secured and both the musician themselves and other musicians regard you as a jazz musician first (Williams, 2011:139-140), there is an opportunity to compromise on your artistic expression to a certain extent. This raises the question of what has changed to make the crossing between jazz music and commercial music more acceptable. One interlocutor argues that the technical evolution has influenced the opportunities of success within the culture.

The world of musicians depends on social media today because that's how you reach out to people. The more organic way is you go around to a lot of jam sessions, people love what you do, and you become busy. That's the old school way that someone hears you and wants to sign you. But it doesn't work that

way today. Record companies don't pick up wild cards anymore. You have to get your own platform. (6)

The evolution of jazz culture as dependent on social media resonates with the findings of Woermann (2012) who claims there to be a shift in certain subcultures where social media is used in a way to gain a wider audience as well as reinforce the perceived subcultural identity that the individual prefers. Using Facebook, especially for promoting gigs is not only normalised today but also as a young jazz musician in Stockholm told me in January: "It's just standard procedure". Marketing for planned gigs and posting promotion videos on social media is standardised in the Swedish jazz community to the extent that it has become part of the subcultural set of beliefs and values (Williams, 2011). With that said, there are boundaries one has to be careful not to cross in order to be perceived as authentic by the jazz community as a whole. Another example of when a jazz musician can lose credibility in the community's eyes was described by one of the interlocutors as the so-called music influencers.

I think it can clash so much now that it's really important to make yourself a brand and be active on social media, it can sometimes clash with the music. If I have a sick Tik-Tok image and then I kind of play standards, it can get so weird. For example, music influencers, it's also a completely new thing. It can clash a bit sometimes with the music. (2)

The statement above indicates that although marketing yourself on social media is normalised in jazz culture today, there is a line that if you cross it, you can be regarded as someone who has abandoned the shared values and beliefs of the subculture (Williams, 2011:143). The interpretation one can make based on what has been discussed above is that: the line for crossing over to the commercial as described by Becker (1973:79-80) is not gone or the same as it was then. But the line has been pushed a bit in a way that not only allows, but somewhat also encourages jazz musicians, to interact with the commercial to a certain extent. Interacting with the commercial, both in genres of music and through social media, allows for a jazz musician to continue the work of creating and playing jazz and still survive economically. The lifestyle of a musician and the need to hunt for jazz gigs can, according to some of the musicians, kill creativity and drain someone personally. One interlocutor explained how a popular solution for avoiding getting stuck in this circle is having a teaching job also.

Almost everyone I know who a jazz musician is also teaching in order to provide a kind of security instead of compromising with their artistry so to speak. Then you don't need to have many gigs, you can manage anyway. But it's not only in Sweden, it's for all jazz musicians. (3)

The concept of jazz symbolises something that the musicians identify with and is something that musicians do not always feel understood for by those who don't understand this prestige. This feeling of identity through what jazz symbolises to those who perform it, can be interpreted through the lens of what Williams (2011) distinguishes as one of the key ingredients of a subculture, a sense of identity and community with likeminded people that differentiates itself from the mainstream values. Through this interpretation, even the word "jazz" comes with a somewhat predetermined essence of being extraordinary, providing the jazz performers a source of identity through its attached values. With that said, a musical theoretical unified definition of what elements jazz music must contain in order to be considered jazz is difficult to interpret, although several attempts to this have been made.

According to Wynton Marsalis, jazz should contain swing, triple-feel, some elements of blues, some improvisational elements and other stuff, and that if the music lacks these elements it's not jazz. But if we then take Meshuggah and their polyrhythm with improvisational elements, or Refused, who did kind of a free jazz album even though it's hardcore/trash metal. Is that jazz? No, it's hardcore. But it contains the same ingredients that according to Wynton Marsalis is jazz." (6)

Though it is evident that jazz according to some people is the exact opposite of pop music, in some ways traditional views of what ingredients are needed in order to be allowed to be called jazz no longer apply to today's standards of jazz. The lines that differentiate where jazz starts, and ends is fuzzier in today's sound ideals than it used to be. Jazz was according to Royer (2022) brought to the bigger society through universities back in the mid 1900s in order to not only spread the music, but to also provide a platform for educating people on social injustices. During that time, as one of the interlocutors put it "it was all about the traditional jazz, swing and bebop" (2), the voices of African American jazz musicians were unified through a specific sound. As society and other social injustices change, as do according Eyerman (2002) the use of music in order to create inclusive spaces for diverse participants, foster a sense of belonging,

and communicate complex messages to broader audiences. One of the interlocutors said: “there are newer forms of jazz that reflect social injustices that we see in society today, and this type of jazz is more underground and pulls a completely different audience from the traditional jazz” (7). According to Williams (2011), the subcultural identity becomes more complex when intersecting with other social categories such as race, gender, class, and sexuality. The sound of jazz as well as the sense of identity and community around jazz, develops as long as society develops. There is however a general thought of jazz music as free for interpretation and as a tool for freedom of expression seems to maintain the core of the music itself and thereby the foundation for the community around the music.

It's varied throughout my life what I consider to be jazz. Nowadays jazz is about having the opportunity for those who're playing together to interpret the music in their personal way while still sounding good together. If those elements exist, it doesn't matter if it's swing or beat or simple harmonies.” (3)

The quote above represents the fluidity in defining jazz. For the sake of this thesis, the closest thing to a conclusion of what jazz music is today seems to be that jazz music is more of an essence, a feeling, and a collection of values. Jazz seems to be considered an outlet for interpretation, improvisation and communication with other like-minded people in the moment without predetermined frames. This is the definition of what jazz performers interpret the music and the community to be all about. But as we can see, the actuality of the concept ‘jazz’ contains a lot more built-in and predetermined values and frameworks that will be further investigated throughout this thesis.

### 5.1.2 The Jazz Musician

Within and around the jazz community there are all kinds of people participating in various forms. Through ethnographic methods it became evident that people of all ages, genders, races, sexualities, and skill levels could participate in jazz events, either as performers or observers. The purpose of this section is to analyse the subcultural identities of those who are considered either by themselves or by others as jazz musicians. The subcultural identity is according to Williams (2011:129-130) a social identity constructed through labels that individuals put themselves or others in, that in this case would be jazz musicians. For the insiders within the classification of jazz musicians there is a set of shared affinities, interests, beliefs, values, and

behaviours, that can positively affect how these individuals feel about themselves. The subcultural identities of jazz musicians set themselves apart from the others through displaying themselves as different.

If you attend a party where there are basically only jazz musicians, an outsider would sometimes have difficulties keeping up with the conversation. [...] It's expressions like bag, cooking, cat, and so on. And it doesn't help that jazz musicians are a little... different. It can be a very nerdy atmosphere and it's amazing." (7)

What the interlocutor describes in the quote above is something that I encountered several times during my field trips. At one occasion I found myself at a table with three jazz drummers and could not contribute to the conversation whatsoever. Occasionally, I felt rather stupid due to my inability to keep up with the topics, or even understand the language they were using to discuss other drummers and jazz musicians from all corners of the world.

I don't not know what to look at or what to do with my arms. I've been sitting here now for 30 minutes and I have no idea how to add to this conversation. One of them tried at one point to include me in the conversation, but the conversation immediately lost its flow when I joined. I feel a little embarrassed, they must think I'm really stupid now. (21th of February 2024, Malmö, Field diary)

According to Williams (2011:130-131), subcultural elements of in this case language, creates barriers between themselves and so-called outsiders. In many cases, I do not believe that it is a conscious choice to shut the outsiders out of the conversation, but it is rather a consequence of adapting to the identity of a jazz musician through socialising with other jazz musicians continuously. Using jazz slang could also in accordance with Cotterell (2022) be a symbol of cultural authenticity that further strengthens the relationship with other musicians but also further excludes the outsider. This socialisation through jazz is natural for these individuals as several of the interlocutors described during interviews that being a jazz musician in many ways is a lifestyle rather than a profession. One interlocutor reasoned her being a part of the jazz community as follows.

Previously I've always felt a little like an outsider, as if I stood out due to my personality as creative, a little absent-minded, and forgetful. There I can sometimes feel like the only ones that understand are the ones who are like me. And I often feel like my colleagues are the same. (5)

Categorising yourself as different or deviant from the mainstream is according to Williams (2011), as well as earlier subcultural theorists like Merton (1938), Cohen (1955), and Gordon (1947), a keystone to why subcultures are initially formed and maintained. The jazz community provides an environment where these people can come together and through the music form relationships and shape identities. The identity of a jazz musician can come with various symbols that sets the person apart from the other non-jazz-people, or as previously mentioned "muggles", as they were jokingly referred to during some of my field trips. One of these symbols can be the actual instrument that the musician specialises in.

When I go outside and don't have my instrument with me, I am suddenly a nobody. It is such an identity snuff blanket, because it is very much connected to who I am and who I have chosen to be. I am so tied to this thing. When I don't have my instrument, I am all of a sudden one in the mass, and I don't like that. I am my instrument and my musical expression. (6)

The statement above, though perhaps not representative of all jazz musicians in Sweden today, shows a strong correlation between the jazz persona and how they view themselves. This could be related to how Becker (1973:85) argued for jazz musicians identifying themselves as fundamentally different because of a possession of a mysterious artistic gift that sets them apart from others, separating themselves from the "squares" who do not possess this artistic or musical gift or expression. According to Becker there is a collective sense amongst jazz musicians that the "squares" were a fundamentally different type of person from the jazz musicians. The goal with mentioning Becker's study of jazz culture back in the 1960s is not to form an argument of Swedish jazz musicians today looking down on non-jazz-folks. But to argue that the subcultural identity of a jazz musician deeply affects the way this individual view themselves, and how trying to stand out from the great mass though visually presenting their jazz persona to others reinforces the subcultural identity and thereby their self-confidence. Referring to the others as 'nobody's' or 'the great mass' indicating that they represent something completely different and undesirable would in accordance with Williams (2011:131) be considered an identity-forming strategy by subculturalists. This fear of being mistaken for

one of the others might originate from the previously described sense of not being able to fit into these societal structures.

### Authenticity, Cats and the Real Deal

Having briefly mentioned the identity boundaries between insiders and outsiders of jazz culture it is now time to further dig into the main purpose of this thesis: how jazz culture is perceived and experienced from an insider perspective. According to Williams (2011:133) even the simplest social groups have forms of status differentiations. Jazz culture does not evade these social hierarchies. As earlier stated in the sections above, jazz is not necessarily one single thing and therefore the jazz community cannot be considered one single thing with a unified set of values and beliefs no matter if you are a young modern female jazz musician, or you are an older traditional male jazz musician. Therefore, the purpose of this section is not to determine a set hierarchies within the umbrella concept that is jazz, but to rather try and find those commonly referred to desirable characteristics described while talking about the jazz musician in Sweden today. When asked about who and why someone would be considered authentic, or in jazz terms “a cat” (Gold, 1957), one interlocutor answered.

It's not really about how often you play or with whom. To me it's about the personal expression, the sound you have on your instrument. It can be about how you compose your own music, if it shows personality. To me the real deal is all about when I can hear after one note who's playing. In a good way. (3)

This statement above indicates that there is a perceived view of who is normally considered authentic - that it depends on how often you play, and with whom. But argues for this as a misleading set of standards. Another interlocutor confirmed and elaborated on this idea of who would be considered a ‘cat’.

I suppose it's about whether you've been part of certain contexts, been hired by certain musicians that possess a certain type of ‘cred’. It's about hanging out in these kinds of social contexts with this type of people that regards you with trust and confirmation. If you're there, then you are a cat. (4)

Within a subcultural context people are being held in higher or lesser regard as a result of where they come from, past deeds or current behaviours, who they know, resources they have access



to, and so on. But there is a difference between claiming to be the real thing and actually living up to the expectations of being the real thing (Williams, 2011:133). It was often clarified throughout the interviews and informal conversations in the field that it is very important to be really good at your instrument, fluent in the musical language, and well acquainted with the musical repertoire, in order to be considered a jazz musician. Although, this was basically considered to be the first step. The next and just as important step was considered to be social skills and active networking. Socialising and adapting to the inter-social rules within the community shapes the individual as previously stated through the concept of subcultural identity according to Williams (2011). But in order to actually be considered authentic within the jazz community, the socialisation through certain contexts with certain people shapes and navigates the meaning of a jazz musician's identity, providing an understanding of ritualistic and strategic behaviours. By successfully adapting the social skills and status that are considered valuable within the community it is more likely to be considered authentic or a 'cat' (Alexander, 2004a; 2008). But as described in the quotes from the interviews above, there is a general idea that the social aspects are most important in order to be considered a cat, but that in actuality it is about providing individuality to the music. According to another interlocutor there is a believed formula for becoming a cat in Sweden today that often forgets the importance of showing individuality and personality.

There is no formula that fits everyone, but the young aspiring jazz musicians today believe that there is. It's interesting because when I talked to people who attended Fridhem they thought that there was a way to become 'cats' and that was through first attending one of the two most prestigious community colleges of jazz music, 'Skurup' or 'Fridhem'. After that you should attend the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm. After that you should travel abroad for a while, preferably to New York, Berkley or Manhattan School of Music. Then after that you should come home and then get all of the gigs here in Sweden. But I don't really think that it works this way because you also have to stand out. You have to be better than everybody else. (6)

The distinction between how young aspiring jazz musicians express their subcultural values, calculating how to successfully get into the jazz community and be considered authentic, compared to the expressed values of those who have already successfully joined the community is very different. According to Williams (2011:139) all human beings constantly identify

themselves based on their categorical membership, their in-group roles and status, and their sense of commitment to what they do. When you apply this to a subcultural context and the different stages of joining and participating in the subculture, the values and beliefs vary. For the ones not already within the social and prestigious core of the jazz community, the values are defined by practical and strategic methods needed that they consider the recipe for a successful entrance in the community. But what is evident from the ones already in, is that these sets values and beliefs somewhat shift to something else, individuality and personal expression in the music. According to Williams (2011), this shift in methods for becoming a “cat” reflects a deeper level of security in one’s subcultural identity, when the subcultural expression reflects their personal identity (p.143). When being recognised as part of the jazz community is no longer the primary concern, individuals move beyond seeking approval from others and instead embrace their personal and individualistic subcultural identity, re-evaluating the actual values and beliefs that jazz culture is all about. This change in beliefs, would in accordance with Alexander (2008) happen in a moment when the individual is ‘forced’ to face the reality of the subcultural structures though an ‘iconic experience’ as he phrases it. Something that I heard many times during this process of interviewing and talking to people on the field was that the main challenge for a jazz musician in Sweden today is the reality of there being a very large number of really good musicians fighting for the same gig opportunities. When realising that the competition is fierce, the importance of standing out musically, networking, and marketing yourself, becomes evident.

### 5.1.3 The Sound Ideal of Swedish Jazz

Although it seems as if the jazz musician already ‘in’ the community re-evaluates the sets of beliefs and values into focusing more on individuality and personality rather than being perceived as authentic by others, the importance of getting the ‘right’ jazz education should not be diminished. Jazz being generally defined by the interlocutors as free for expression and creativity, being able to regard yourself or others as jazz musicians comes with a certain set of unwritten rules. One interlocutor describes her struggling with calling herself a jazz musician due to her lack of a certain musical education.

I told you that I am not a "pure" jazz musician because then I made a big choice. Either I wanted to go to New York and go for jazz completely or go more in the Afro-jazz-direction. Because I liked improvisational music. So, I

did that, I went to another country and became a member of a group. For years we toured, we played with Miles Davis... (1)

There are tendencies of an unwritten manual for becoming a jazz musician, and that one has to go through in order to be respected as a jazz musician by others within the community. The interlocutor from the quote above describes her having a basic education in “pure” jazz, but later chose to focus on improvisational music with influences from other genres, that eventually led up playing with one of the most iconic jazz musicians of all time. If we go back to the first section of this thesis called ‘What is jazz?’, the general definition of what jazz is was “improvisation, communication and freedom”. If we were to accept that definition without digging any further, the individual in question would without any doubt be a self-evident part of the jazz community.

But in jazz you have to have reached this or that level. It is my impression that it comes with some kind of manual to be called a jazz singer or jazz musician. But it could also be in my head, or it could be in this jazz society that you find yourself in with colleagues and such. Because if you were to ask an audience that doesn't have that insight into jazz but comes because they like the music, and you said you're a jazz singer, they'd say yes, of course you are. (5)

This quote indicates that although the perception of jazz as a free form of creating and playing music in the moment, without having a strict musical manual for being accepted as jazz - there is actually testimonies of subcultural rules and structures one must follow in order to be perceived as a jazz musician within the community (Williams, 2011). Several times both interlocutors and people I met in the field referred to an abstract ‘school’ of harmonies, scales and musical traditions that one has to master and respect in order to earn the title of a jazz musician. One of the interlocutors complained about the elitism within the community, and the perception that you have to work professionally in order to be allowed to call yourself a musician. This interlocutor argued for how this mindset has shaped the community into not providing venues for those in between professional and amateur.

You should be allowed to play on a hobby level as well, and I think it's so sad that these scenes for smaller bands have disappeared. So now you're either at a really high level or you're playing in your mom's basement. There is no middle ground. (6)

The result of there being very few opportunities for individuals and bands who want to perform jazz at a level that is not professional results in an even larger selection of music schools. Through this selection anyone can study jazz on various levels from a very young age and later onward to high schools of music, community colleges of music and also onward university studies. The impact jazz studies at universities have had on the general opinion and view of jazz music is tremendous and have shown to be important in order to move the genre from the underground scene to the sophisticated venues, advocating for social justice and inclusion (Royer 2022). But the result of jazz being considered a more sophisticated and desirable genre of music results in a greater demand from young musicians to access the education, especially since the supply of gigs and subcultural acceptance of the mediocre is minimal (Becker, 1973; Williams, 2011). A further consequence of this development is that the majority of the Swedish jazz musicians active today have attended the same schools. This, according to some of the people I have talked to throughout this process, is a common musical expression, or sound - which is particularly distinctive for young Swedish jazz today.

Young Swedish jazz music today, if you come out of the music college, you have a certain stamp, I think. I think it's very interesting, but there is something that you can say is Swedish jazz in some way. (1)

Another interlocutor described this phenomenon in a similar way, emphasising on how the traditional roots are maintained but also developed into a new sound that regenerates on the schools that the majority of young aspiring jazz musicians attend.

But you can also hear that often, like people who have perhaps attended the Royal Academy of Music, that there is a particular sound which may have its roots in the traditional sound but which has developed into a new ideal image, a new sound, like those who start folk colleges and music schools today are taught in. (5)

The interlocutor above continues on formulating an argument for this sound ideal originating from the frameworks of jazz of the mentors and teachers at these schools, and how this idealistic sound of jazz is then reinforced through continuing to hire teachers with similar frameworks. The teachers in this situation can be interpreted as the ones possessing the power to influence the young aspiring jazz musicians' perception of what ingredients a jazz musician must possess

in order to make a successful entrance into the community (Williams, 2011:90-91). The musical expression the student adapts through the expressed values and beliefs of their mentor, influences the sound of an entire generation if the sound ideal is set by a certain group of powerful leaders. This generated sound ideal, combined with the increasing pressure to become more and more technically trained in one's instrument have, according to some of the interlocutors, resulted in a new sound of jazz that lacks emotion and individuality.

The thing that jazz lacks today is emotion. We all have different emotions and that is what differentiates us from each other as well as makes us unique musicians, even though we might have gone to the same schools. You have no desire to hide behind fantastic musical skills, but you may not express anything anyway because of the vulnerable situation of expressing emotions on stage.

(3)

Another interlocutor talks about the frustration about this development. The normalisation of hiding behind instrumental technique and knowledge of the jazz language is, according to this interlocutor, not enough in order to fully blossom as a jazz musician.

Sometimes you just want to say something like "play from the gut, say something". It's just like giving a lecture. If I just stand there and blah blah blah... say something! It's not just about finding the technique and the language. It is that you have to say something too. It's just like writing a book, anything. It doesn't help to just write a lot of pages; you have to say something.

(1)

To clarify, these findings of the ideal young jazz sound as generally lacking in showing emotion is something that was described and discussed throughout the process of writing this thesis but is not necessarily reflecting the general view of the young jazz sound today. There are young Swedish jazz musicians to whom the emotional expressions in the music is highly present and important also. With that said, the findings from this section of the analysis implies that the right education is important in the Swedish jazz community today in order to acquire the right cultural status. A combination of a selection of prestigious schools, and an increased level of competition amongst Swedish jazz musicians today, results in an ideal sound where musical skills are valued more highly than personal expression. It also seems like there are few opportunities for mediocrity in Swedish jazz today. Drawing upon previous findings in this

paper, there are extensive expectations on individuals to have reached a certain musical level in order to be considered a jazz musician. Adding the layer of limited opportunities for jazz music to be performed and these spots are normally taken by the top shift of musicians, the pressure to perform at a certain level increase. Maybe this is the reason behind the testimonies of jazz today lacking emotion. The extensive education and profound skill level or “chops” (Gazit, 2024), maybe reduces the spontaneity of emotional expression, and reduces the risk for mistakes. As the fragile and emotional are not necessarily valued highly in young Swedish jazz today, it becomes easier to lean towards the technically advanced in order to stand out.

#### 5.1.4 The Culture of Jam Sessions

One of the most important rituals of the jazz community are the so-called jam sessions. The jam sessions have been part of the jazz community for as long as the genre has existed (Gooley, 2011), and is still known as fundamental for jazz education today. This was further described by a number of informants during both interviews and informal conversations on the field.

But it's a way of learning and being allowed to play with experienced musicians, so it's a kind of education and it was in the old days before there were jazz educations, so that's how people learned to play. So that it has had a huge significance for development. (3)

Before there were jazz educations at schools and universities, the jam sessions were the available form of education for iconic performers throughout history, the iconic performers who still maintains a high status in the community.

Jazz is so very broad, but if you think then e.g. at jam's, which are such a huge part of the culture, there you have to know standards and be able to play swing. And all these great contemporary musicians who now play more modern and innovative styles, they all went through the same school after all. They know the basics of jazz. (5)

Though such a huge part of the jazz culture, there is one significant ‘rule’ described in the statement above, that the participator must have a sufficient knowledge of the musical repertoire described as ‘standards’, or by another interlocutor as ‘the repertoire from the American

Songbook'. This rule is something that every jazz musician is expected to be aware of going into the session. Other rules described during interviews such as 1. not doing too long solos, 2. knowing the usual order of which instrument takes the first/last solo, 3. don't get up on stage without reading the room, maybe there are others in line before you or there is someone in charge deciding who plays and when, and 4. knowing the songs by heart and not (if not necessary) use any musical aid such as books or phone. These are a few of the so-called 'unwritten rules' of a public jam session that are not being displayed in the room but are expected to be known and respected by the participants. According to one interlocutor, these rules were difficult to comprehend initially.

I did not feel comfortable, like I did not belong in this culture initially. There were things that were implied, unwritten rules I was not aware of. The purpose of a jam is to be spontaneous within very strict rules for what to do. [...] There is no one that tells you or gives you a manual for how to do a jam session, so the first time you have to just attend and see how everyone else is doing. [...] Eventually you learn what is acceptable and what is not. (7)

For a jazz musician who has adapted the subcultural identity and its values and beliefs such as these 'unwritten rules', the ritualistic events of a jam session are not considered confusing. Participating successfully in a jam session could be a sign of status amongst musicians that might lead to other musicians recognising the level of authenticity of this participant (Williams, 2011:131,139, Alexander, 2004). When individuals are familiar with these sets of rules and with good confidence can perform within these frames, the jam session becomes an outlet for the subcultural participants to hang out, network and have fun with the music that is the core of the entire culture.

A big part of that is meeting other musicians, it's a way to socialise, hang out a bit, and then you also have the opportunity to show off. That you can play, that you can play with others. You can listen to others, yes, it is a perfect opportunity for networking and inspiration. At the same time, I have to say that I usually don't get musically inspired at jam's because it's quite limited what you can do musically. (4)

The social and musical education within jazz cultural values and beliefs seems to be a key notion for participating in a jam session according to the findings of this study. The jam session differentiates itself from a concert setting in a sense that the jam session is mainly about musicians coming together on the premise of creating music together in the moment without having to please an audience (Gooley, 2011). No one is excluded from walking into a venue where a jam session is taking place, or even from walking up to the stage and ask to do a song but as one of the interlocutors put it “It's just that if you don't know how to play you don't really have anything to do there” (3). Another interlocutor phrased these limitations in a similar way when asked if anyone can participate in a jam session.

Both yes and no. In theory, yes, everyone can go. There is no doorman who asks you if you have a degree from the Royal Academy of Music. So, in that way, yes anyone can go. But maybe it's the same way as if it's a half-marathon in town. Sure, anyone can sign up for it but maybe not just anyone can run a half marathon. Some have to walk the entire thing. Everyone can but being able to play your instrument is an advantage as well. (4)

This form of self-isolation amongst jazz musicians can be put in relation to how Becker argued for jazz musicians' choice to actively separate themselves from their audience out of contempt for the outsiders (Becker 1973:89). I would like to clarify that the element of contempt toward the audience was not something I stumbled onto during neither interviews nor field work. But there was a visual barrier toward those not within the jazz community during my visits to the field, such as division within the room. Often when non-jazz-folks, or unidentified or unrecognised musicians walked into a jam session they seemed to generally be secluded from the musicians within the venue. There was a visual distinction between those who were part of the community, they often hung out in large groups close by the stage, hugging new arrivals or even carrying their instruments with them. The ones in the room that were not recognised musicians often sat together in a secluded area, only interacting with each other. Even at times when the jam participants and spectators were scattered around the room, it became evident who were part of the community and who were not due to constant rotation and interaction between musicians that the others were not a part of. This barrier could be interpreted through Becker's (1973:89) view of contempt toward the outsiders, but in accordance with the feeling I got while being on the field the more likely reason behind this barrier is the sense of hanging out with other like-minded people who also largely consist of one's circle of friends. Musicians



takes the opportunity to socialise in the way that jazz musicians do - through music. This points toward another shift in the subculture of jazz where the line between the musicians and “the others” have not been removed but rather pushed, not showing a distinct line between the insiders/outsiders, but rather have tendencies of it that is not always actively carried out by the subcultural individuals (Williams, 2011:139). There is however another element of hierarchy and prestige amongst the musicians during a jam session.

The sad thing about jazz is that there is a lot of judgement in it, unfortunately. You only feel comfortable if you have good self-confidence and feel that you have mastered it. That's when you can relax too and then you play better. So, it's very psychological depending on how you feel or what attitude you have or what attitude you come in with. (1)

Since jam sessions are claimed as culturally significant, both by my informants and by previous research (Gooley, 2011; Peterson, 2005; Baade,2012), participating wholeheartedly in such a symbolic ritual can in accordance with Williams (2011:143) show a level of dedication that reflects authenticity within the jazz culture. It is however common knowledge amongst jazz musicians in Sweden that participating in a jam session can be emotionally challenging to some people. This was a frequent discussion with informants during my field trips and a general response to these difficulties was that ‘*no one forces you to participate*’. Although this statement is true in many ways, I often encountered a sense of pressure to participate. This pressure was not necessarily distributed from other musicians, but rather from an indescribable feeling of pressure to participate in order to live up to the subcultural identity of a jazz musician.

I have to feel safe and that there is a good atmosphere in a place for me to go up. I don't like when there is a competition in it, and you notice that there are sharp elbows and people who want to show off. So, I'm a bit silly there because I can't just jump up, or I can now, but it's been a matter of practice and jumping up and not giving a crap about what other people think or what the mood is like. (5)

There is a widespread desire to participate in jam sessions in hopes of evoking desired social responses, and by trying to live up to the cultural expectations of someone that calls themselves a jazz musician. Some individuals do not feel this pressure because of their self-confidence within the culture and the community, they already know their level of status and are pleased

with their position. But for others, their positions are not as clear and therefore feel like an imposter trying to successfully enter the community (Williams, 2001:143). Something relevant to add into this part of the analysis is the phenomenon discussed in the chapter above “The Sound Ideal of Swedish jazz” and how the increased number of talented musicians may add to this kind of pressure to be seen and heard, and to participate in rituals such as jam sessions.

## Summary

To briefly summarise this section, Swedish jazz culture today contains a certain set of values and rules, where the mere essence of ‘jazz’ represents freedom and meanwhile expects a certain level of dedication, musical proficiency, and knowledge of social behaviour patterns, in order to be fully accepted in the community. Adapting the identity of a jazz musician comes with an implied manual for social and musical performance, where the only way to be perceived as authentic in your jazz identity is to regard jazz as a lifestyle. This is understood through the use of symbols such as language, socialising in certain contexts, participation in jam sessions, or even carrying your instrument around, and to do this in a way that reinforces the subcultural identity of a jazz musician. Although being considered ‘free’, jazz leaves no room for mediocrity, which results in the Swedish jazz sound today to represent proficient instrumental skills rather than emotional expressions. This is all further analysed through the specific ritualistic event of a jam session, which also on the surface reflects an environment for freedom of musical expression and networking, but also contains strict rules and expectations where only those deeply rooted in the culture of jazz and in their subcultural identity can flourish, feel comfortable, and be accepted.

## 5.2 Gender Representations in Jazz

This part of the analysis aims to add the perspective of gender differences upon the previous part of the analysis of how jazz culture is experienced and understood. The first out of two sections, titled ‘*The Gendered Jazz Culture*’, investigates how jazz culture as a whole is constructed in a way that treats and expects different things from individuals based on their gender. This part of the analysis is mostly based on lived experiences of female jazz musicians in Sweden, using an additional theoretical perspective of feminist theory and the concept of hegemonic masculinity. The other section titled ‘*Gender representation in jam settings*’, further

elaborates on gendered advantages and disadvantages within the specific settings of jam culture, arguing for how jam sessions were originally designed to best fit male participants.

### 5.2.1 The Gendered Jazz Culture

*“Jazz has been and is dominated by men and will probably continue to be so”* (6). This statement by one of the interlocutors is a reasonable representation of how the topic of male dominance in jazz was described throughout the process of collecting data for this thesis. Connell (2005:77) defines hegemonic masculinity as a shape of gender practice that embodies patriarchy legitimisation. This is according to Connell, what guarantees the dominant position of men and subordinate position of women within a culture. Every single one of the women interviewed for this study showed recognition of feeling subordinate within the field due to their gender, which shows signs of jazz culture being a hegemonic masculine space. This division in power relations was also described by one of the interlocutors from an early stage in her career in London.

My first single came out in 82 and I recorded my first album in 88, and then I kind of felt like I’ll show them because it was quite a rough climate among the men in London. You were seen as kind of whatever, you know. Also, the fact that you... partly that you are white and play black music but also that it is a climate that is only male musicians, except women who sing e.g. So, it was important for me to be able to make my album. (1)

Early on, no matter where you lived, there was an established patriarchal force where the male sex was perceived to be the ideal musicians and where women were not automatically trusted to possess the right “tools” necessary for a musician simply because of their gender (Beauvoir, 2011; Swidler 1986). The feeling the interlocutor describes above of wanting to show the men that she was just as capable fit into this culture shows signs of uneven power dynamics between men and women that were being maintained by cultural and societal norms of patriarchy (Millett, 1971). The quote above not only highlights the subordination of women in jazz culture back in the 1980’s, but also reveals another layer of marginalisation tied to ethnicity. She described how she faced two major challenges in her career: one was that she did not represent the dominant gender in the jazz scene, and the other was the racial dimension, as she was performing music historically associated with African American culture. This suggests that

there was once a prevailing ideal for jazz performers - predominantly male and Black. White women, therefore, experienced marginalisation not only due to gender discrimination but also through the intersection of gender and race, as they lacked two characteristics that were historically perceived as central to the ideal jazz performer (Hooks, 2015; 1984:13). Having mentioned there being several layers for marginalisation in jazz culture, let us get back to focusing on the one element for marginalisation that is the key setting stone for this study; gender. Another interlocutor described how fragments of this rough environment for women in jazz can still present themselves in a Swedish context today.

And it's still quite a tough environment. I've also had male colleagues who are very much in favour of equality and that there should be female musicians as well, who can still sometimes say things like "oh she plays well, she plays like a man". But she is a woman and she play as a woman. Why should we make that distinction? And it's about an ideal that has been created since back in the day (5).

The gender inequality within the society as a whole and within jazz culture have to some extent shaped jazz performers' beliefs to a point where advanced musical skills are equal to a male performer. A woman who is proficient at her instrument is appreciated but at the same time unconsciously equated with a masculine sound (Millett, 1971). This phenomenon was described by Williams (2011) as the inevitable result of participating in a subculture that was fundamentally created by and for men. Williams argues that the hegemonic masculinity that arises in such a culture leaves the outsiders with only the option of adapting to the already established masculine ideals or being ostracised from the context (p.58-59). I cannot answer the question this interlocutor asks of why this distinction between genders is necessary. But one of the possible explanations for the existence of this problem is the problematic aspect of knowledge described by this interlocutor herself. In accordance with Connell, the knowledge of patriarchal oppression amongst these men she described as '*very much in favour of equality and that there should be female musicians as well*' are still complicit to this division between genders as the benefits are still in their favour and are not actively disputing the masculine codes. If someone has never been exposed to the marginalisation of patriarchy it can be difficult to correctly lead with example for change (Connell, 2005:78-79). Another interlocutor described the disadvantages of being a woman in a male dominated field.

The disadvantages are the usual sexist stuff, which is that you can be exposed

to men who pursue you and such because you are on a pedestal, which you appreciate sometimes. But then it also gives me an edge, which is that damn, she's a woman with balls who kicks ass. [...] The problem is also with many girls that you are never allowed to be mediocre at anything, but it also applies to guys that you should not be mediocre. (6)

Being a woman who is living up to the sound ideal that equates with the sound of a male jazz musician, or '*a woman with balls who kicks ass*' as described above, resonates with wider structures of hegemonic masculinity, where in a male-dominated fields the male is the default and female is the exceptional (Connell, 2005). But being considered exceptional can come with consequences. In order to be fully accepted into the community, the femininity in a woman is being emphasised. When discussing how women are portrayed in album covers, one interlocutor said as follows.

On all the men's covers it is a work of art, on all the women's covers it is a picture of them. It's so sick. When women play music, you always have to allude to something else, like you always have to show that you're pretty. It's a shame that you have to become sexualised just because you want to accept a gig that can provide a lot of opportunities in the future. (2)

The normalisation of enhancing femininity of women in such visual examples as album covers could in accordance with Millett (1971) be an expression of patriarchy, where societal norms and cultural narratives shape individuals' beliefs and behaviours to accept gender inequality. This matches with how Williams (2011) declare there being an increased risk for women to be exposed and objectified while being part of a subcultural space where the male gender has a higher status. (2011:58-59).

There are also limited possibilities of being mediocre in jazz today, as mentioned earlier in this thesis. But there is a lot of pressure on women to be exceptional in order to be accepted within the jazz community. If you as a woman achieve success the consequences can be bipartite where you are being put on a pedestal for successfully adapting the 'male sound', but meanwhile expects to accept the reality of your femininity being emphasised. Dealing with these consequences requires, according to another interlocutor, a strong sense of self and a sense of safety, which can be problematic within the environments jazz events usually take place.

It can also be a challenge to be a woman in the way that it is mostly only men who do music and you have to be quite confident in yourself and feel safe. So, it's important and it can be a challenge. Especially when you look at jam's that happen in bar environments all the time. And bar environments are more dangerous for women, that's also a thing. Alcohol and late nights. But of course, that it can also be fun, I can also think it's fun to have a beer and hang out and stuff like that. But I don't know, maybe it would be good for jazz culture to kind of chill with alcohol in general. I think so. It's just like it should be these late nights and a bit of this mannish feeling. You can also ask yourself; does it have to be? (4)

The environmental settings for jazz gatherings such as jam sessions are as described in the quote above in bar environments, late evenings with a normalised alcohol consumption one could argue that this is a setting originally designed by masculine codes that forces non-male-participants conform to these settings. According to Millet (1971) patriarchy results in the men sustaining control of property and social privilege, which in this context could be a means for interpreting why this particular setting is normalised within the jazz community. These settings combined with the fact that women are generally underrepresented at these occasions creates difficulties for reaching a feeling of safety that is necessary for a woman in order to cope with the consequences of representing the subordinate gender in jazz. The element of alcohol, which was present at every single occasion during my time on the field, can be interpreted as a symbol of the culture itself (Williams, 2011:130-131). Especially beer was something I noticed to be a big part of the culture in a sense that the venues often provided the musicians with free or discounted beer. The phrase 'now I have deserved a beer' after playing a tune seemed to be a regular feature during these occasions. The beer in some ways symbolises the masculine codes of the culture and could be interpreted as a tool for generating an authentic status within the community (Cotterell, 2022, Alexander, 2004).

In summary, Swedish jazz culture today is heavily overrepresented by men, and has been throughout history, the ideal and defaulted characteristics are assigned to the male. Being a woman who possesses equivalent or superior skills to a man, are more likely to be regarded as exceptional due to their ability to master the 'male sound'. Women in jazz also suffers biggest risks for being objectified and sexualised, which is something that the jazz community as well as society as a whole have normalised though reinforcing patriarchal structures (Millett, 1971; Beauvoir 2011). Even cultural rituals such as jam sessions are structured in a way that

ultimately excludes those who do not fit the masculine identity. These findings resonate with the conclusions by Wahl and Ellingson (2018), that professional female jazz musicians are still to this day facing strong barriers toward full equality in the jazz world despite consistently demonstrating that they possess equal musical skills to male musicians. The sound, settings, and characteristics that are most valued in order to successfully enter and sustain within jazz culture is designed to fit the male ideals, and to exclude or at least pay attention to and point out the marginalised female characteristics.

### 5.2.2 Gender Representation in Jam Settings

The time is now around 11 pm, there are only men/boys on stage, they look young. More and more people are dropping in and the room is filling up but so far there is only one woman I know to be a musician. This must be the 10th jam session I have attended for research purposes and this obvious lack of women does not surprise me anymore. At this moment I would rather be surprised if there was a majority of female musicians present at one of these occasions [...] Just left the venue, the time is now almost 1 am and still no women played on stage all night. (*12th of March 2024, Stockholm, Field diary*)

This extraction from the field diary visualises a general sense of the absence of women at jam sessions, whether the events took place in Stockholm, Malmö or any other part of the country. This spiked my interest for why female jazz musicians avoid this space. Often during interviews, the interlocutors described the jam sessions as dominated by men despite efforts within the community to attract more women to jazz.

It's very rare that women actually come to jam sessions. And now there must be even more (female) jazz musicians in Malmö as the music college has invested in bringing in more girls. (1)

Although there are more women being accepted into the jazz schools, especially the music collage in Malmö as described above, it was common knowledge amongst the interlocutors to only see one of two female musicians present at any jam session. Amongst the seven interlocutors, six showed hesitancy for participating in jam sessions despite successfully adapting the authenticity label as a jazz musician within the community (Williams 2011; Alexander 2004). This leads this part of the analysis to further dig into the perceived reasons for the lack of women in this environment.

One thing that was found while interviewing women in jazz was that “there can be a bit of a macho atmosphere that you almost have to elbow your way forward onto the stage” (4). Another interlocutor described this phenomenon as being the most obvious at one time when there was a “legit physical wall of dudes waiting to come up and play” (6). These statements point toward there being signs of hegemonic masculinity within the jazz culture that allows men to sustain a masculine atmosphere where women have to conform or be excluded (Connell, 2005; Millett, 1987). The fact that jam sessions overall serve a certain purpose for the culture and how participation contributes greatly in networking and establishing status, this leaves women little choice if their subcultural identity is ingrained enough (Williams, 2011). Still, arguing for the level of competition as a sole reason for the absence of women at jam sessions would not give a nuanced or rightful analysis. Especially since I encountered many strong and extremely skilled female musicians during observations at concerts and other social gatherings. Another interlocutor introduced another possible contributing factor.

I think it partly depends on the fact that, first of all, we are used to seeing a girl sing and as soon as a girl playing drums or guitar comes up, all the focus is on that person and it also means that you listen more to that person and judge that person more, actually, because you can't help but do it. And you and I probably do too, it kind of breaks both visually and it breaks from what you're used to seeing. It breaks from a lot of stuff and then all the focus is put on this person, and it's not so much fun to be that person. (3)

The same phenomenon was discussed with another interlocutor where another layer of consequences was presented.

But it's a bit like that it stands out a bit more, all bands that have a female instrumentalist are referred to as "that band with the girl". So, then you have eyes on you a little because you stand out as a single girl and then you listen a little extra. If you then bomb, then you bomb that much harder. (6)

What can be interpreted from the statements above is basically that jazz culture as a subculture has a set of shared values and beliefs that is reinforced through participators in order to find a sense of subcultural identity and community within these frames (Williams, 2011). These values and beliefs are set in a way that provides male advantages since the ideal subcultural identity is perceived to be male, and all others must conform to these standards though



displaying ‘masculine’ characteristics or be excluded (Connell, 2005). These masculine characteristics symbolises the key ingredients one must possess in order to be perceived authentic within the community. The masculine characteristics are therefore a tool through which the participants navigate social performance using ritualistic and strategic behaviours. For example, describing the band as ‘the band with a girl’ or listening more intensely at the single woman on stage as she stands out from the expected jazz musician (Alexander 2004, 2008). This ultimately excludes women for having a natural role within the community, often leaving them to seek alternatives for participating in jam sessions.

I've really reflected on this myself as well. And it's a lot of the same people who organise and play in these places. [...] Guys choose guys and they choose their mates. I've learned that if you want to do something, you have to do it yourself, to be crass. (2)

The view of women as different, visually and musically differing from the average jazz musician is in accordance with Butler (1988; 1990) a way of constructing gender and thereby gender inequality. By constantly positioning female attributes as subordinate to the male attributes, a female jazz musician is perceived within the context of their gender rather than their musical expression in a way that male do not have to experience. This inevitably shifts the audience's focus onto this individual simply because of their gender. A woman therefore suffers bigger consequences if the ‘masculine’ characteristics such as musical skills does not meet the expectations, in a way that someone who already possesses the superior gender does not. The question I ask myself while writing this paper is; how it is possible that the Swedish jazz culture today that according to researchers Björck and Bergman (2018) put emphasis on equality and inclusiveness, is still encompassed by such strong male ideals that leave little room for women to be a musician first? The reason for this is, according to Mortenson-spokes (2023), through an upheld and maintained historical and cultural biases within the jazz education system. That this marginalisation of women and non-binary musicians within curriculums and teaching practices is what creates a barrier to their participation and recognition. There are attempts being made to change this, as for example by one of the interlocutors who told me that: “We make a portrait of the hidden and forgotten women in jazz” (5). But the reality as we can see from the findings of this this paper is that there are still deeply established structures in jazz culture, that are especially visible in a jam setting, which exist for a male advantage.

## 6. Conclusions

In an attempt to summarise and conclude the findings of this paper I will divide and answer the research questions separately, starting with: *1) How do Swedish jazz musicians understand and perform what constitutes jazz as a subcultural phenomenon within their national context?*

Jazz is perceived by musicians as an outlet for interpretation, improvisation and communication, without having to act within strict frames. But that jazz in actuality contains a lot of built-in and predetermined values and frameworks that individuals must understand, respect, and adapt to their jazz identity, in order to be accepted by the jazz community. Even the title of ‘jazz musician’, comes with certain demands where it is not only necessary to be proficient in your instrument, you also have to respect the musical tradition. It was also expressed that you should consider jazz a lifestyle, rather than a hobby or a career. To be considered by others as a jazz musician one should: socialise in the ‘right’ contexts, have knowledge of jazz terminology, and be familiar with the unwritten rules of jazz rituals such as jam sessions. Through reinforcing these structures and behaviours, the jazz community ultimately creates their own culture in which certain musical and behavioural characteristics are valued higher than of what the ‘mainstream’ is composed of. This is expressed through actively deviating the jazz music and culture from the commercial. Although previous research by Becker (1973) claims jazz musicians to completely abhor and preferably abstain from anything commercial, this does not entirely reflect the findings of this study. Swedish jazz culture today has pushed the line for where the commercial is still acceptable in relation to a jazz context. For example, doing pop music gigs, or marketing yourself on social media is not only regarded as acceptable, but is also encouraged. However, there seems to be some sort of line that an authentic jazz musician should not cross, such as: participating in the most commercial TV productions and becoming a music influencer on social media.

The development in which fierce competition amongst musicians is standard in today, jazz performers are now getting extensive education, often from the same prestigious schools. The consequences of this seems to be a new set of values when it comes to the Swedish jazz sound that focuses more on instrumental and skills, rather than musical individuality and emotional expression. This becomes particularly prominent in a jam setting where there can be a competitive and judgemental tone in which many feel uncomfortable. But simply choosing to

miss out on the culturally crucial element of participating in jam sessions is not easy as jam sessions are considered one of the most important schools of jazz, as well as an opportunity to network and get noticed.

As for the second research question: *2) How is jazz experienced and performed by female performers?* I found that the already rather strict built-in and predetermined values and frameworks of jazz are primarily designed to fit the male ideal. Jazz is and has historically been male dominated in which the male characteristics are ingrained to be perceived as normal. When being a proficient and successful woman in jazz, you are often diminished into either being regarded as exceptional, as playing like ‘a man’, or suffers greater risks at being heavily scrutinised. Another consequence of success is that you are being reduced to your gender and forced to accept that your femininity is being enhanced and displayed. In addition, the settings for which jazz related events take place are often set in environments where women are more vulnerable, such as bar settings with a heavy flow of alcohol. When the reality of jam sessions in Sweden today is that there are overall men and maybe a few women present, we cannot take for granted that a woman who is percentage-wise outnumbered should feel safe and comfortable. Especially not when she also risks being scrutinised, objectified, and noticed more than desired. Lastly, I would just want to put in a disclaimer. These findings do not in any way insinuate that female jazz musicians cannot stand up and handle this environment in an excellent way. Obviously, there are countless examples of that. All this result shows is an underlying structure within jazz culture that is not originally designed to be welcoming or accommodating to anyone other than a man.

## 6.1 Suggestions for Future Research

It would be interesting to further dig into the education process of jazz, how behaviours, jazz history, and social navigation is learned and reproduced in a school setting. It is my belief that this would make a good foundation to further understanding the Swedish jazz culture as it is acted out today. Another interesting subject to dig deeper into would be the evolution of jazz culture in Sweden and how the values, beliefs, sound ideals, attitudes toward gender and ethnicity have changed over time. One way to do this could be by expanding the data to also consist of participating observations in a school setting or expanding the selection of interlocutors.

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## 7.1 Attachments

### Attachment 1

#### Interview Guide

\*\* Introduce myself, ask for permission to record.

#### Background

- Tell me about yourself and your background in jazz. (Education?)
- How does a week normally look like for you as a jazz performer?

#### Jazz

- If I say jazz, what is the first thing you think about?
- What is not jazz in your opinion? (where is the line drawn)

#### Jam

- What is a jam session? How does it work?
- Is there anything you should not do at a jam?
- Is there anything you are expected to do at a jam?
- Do you attend jam sessions? (Why/why not)
- Can anyone attend a jam session?
- What is the population of jam sessions normally like? (Gender, age etc.)

#### The jazz scene

- What would you say constitutes a jazz musician?
- What is the difference between a professional and a hobbyist?
- How does someone successfully become a “cat”?
- What tools are necessary in order to maintain a career in jazz?
- Tell me about a really good concert - Tell me about a bad concert. Why was it good/bad?
- How important is the relationship between musicians and their audience?
  - What does this relationship with the audience normally look like?
  - What kind of clientele is usually attending your concerts?

#### General questions

- How do people who are not themselves part of the jazz world react to the fact that you are?

- Are there any prejudices about your field of work?
- Do you play anything other than jazz?
  - Does that environment in any way separate from the jazz environment?
  - How?
- In your experience as a musician, do you ever feel like your artistic freedom is compromised in any way?
  - How/why?
- What challenges do you face as a jazz musician?
- How do you normally choose what people to play with?
  - professionalism/gender/age...?
- Jazz is often referred to as having made a journey from being considered something ugly, to now hold a more prestigious status - what do you think about that?
- What do you have in store for the future?
  - What are your musical dreams?
- In your opinion, what could jazz be that it isn't today?

Closing question

- Is there anything you would like to add?
- Is there anything you suggest I ask the next person I talk to?
- Do you have any tips for others I could talk to?

THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!

Attachment 2 - Themes for analysis

Chapter 1	Definitions of jazz	(Performed/perceived)
	The jazz musician	Identity/community/authenticity
	Sound ideals	Schools, teachings, musical values
	Jam session	Structure/rules/culture
	The outstanding	Authenticity/cats/real deal
	In or out	Who/why are (not) accepted

Chapter 2	Gender representation	What does it look like
	Male advantage	Why/how are men eminent
	Gendered jams	How jams are experienced and performed by nonmale participants
	Visual representations	history/album covers/clothing
Chapter 3	Evolution of jazz culture	descriptions
	Survival of jazz	Individual/communal strategies