

Eventization of listening

*A qualitative study of the importance of events for
users of the streaming service Spotify*

Anne Yordana Lieng Jakobsen



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Department of Media and Communication

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Anne Yordana Lieng Jakobsen

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Abstract

In this thesis the extent of which events influence users of the music-streaming service Spotify and their listening activity is explored. Seven informants have through a period of four weeks shared their streaming practices via an Experience Sampling Method (ESM) approach. These ESM replies, in addition to Last.fm tracking and qualitative interviews have provided the thesis with interesting insight into the various elements that influence listening activity and how it can be tied to current events such as releases, concerts and TV synchronization. Through three chapters of analysis and discussion, findings revealed that the influence of events were usually accompanied by recommendations from one's social network online and offline, management of one's current mood or context, in addition to algorithms and editorial mechanisms within the streaming service. Consequently, I propose an expanded definition of the macro/micro-level concept as my findings indicate that the private and the collective are considerably intertwined in our current media landscape. Additionally, research findings contribute with insight about the role television in contemporary listening practices as well as the way Spotify influence users' music discovery towards the new and popular. Ultimately, results are tied to the overarching phenomenon of "eventization", while suggesting that a broader process in which ritual and unifying characteristics of events contribute to shared listening experiences, despite operating within a liquid streaming culture with fragmented audiences.

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Anne Yordana Lieng Jakobsen
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In contemporary Norway, music-streaming services have supplanted records, CDs, and various other digital music formats to become the mainstream technology for everyday music listening (Hagen, 2015, p 625). Furthermore, streaming is, for the first time, the most important source for new music among young people (NRK, 2018). Being a music enthusiast throughout my life, I have witnessed the various mediums which music has travelled – from listening to cassettes via Walkman, CDs on my Discman, downloading MP3 files via Limewire which were transferred to a MP3-player, later to an iPod and ultimately streaming services WiMP and Spotify on an iPhone. And as a teenager, I would even buy vinyl records, although only in special cases as I considered it relatively expensive. Two such cases were when I attended concerts or festivals where records were sold afterwards along with merchandise and when my favourite bands released new albums. There was something about these events; the anticipation in advance, the feeling of joy that appears at a live event or when giving the album a first listen, and ultimately the memory of it all. Memories of experiences that are personal, but at the same time, shared with thousands or millions.

What ultimately inspired me to decide to research music, and especially events, was “Cloud & Concerts: Trends in Music Culture”, a research project completed at the department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo during the period 2010-2016. I became fascinated by the project’s investigation of the importance of live music performances and the experience of it in contemporary music culture. Specifically of interest to me were, their findings involving how major events – for example, large festivals such as Øya – gave rise to a strong growth in streaming of the festival artists in the weeks around the festival itself, labelled “festival effect”. This and the increase in streaming associated with other major media events led the researchers to refer to an “eventization” of music listening (Maasø, 2016). Thus, despite being in an age where the supply and fragmentation are greater than ever before because of the unlimited access offered by streaming services, findings show that we are flocking to more shared musical experiences than we have in a long time (Maasø, 2016, p 16). As I have become a heavy user of Spotify in the last eight years, music has increasingly

been incorporated into my everyday life as the service enables me to access its endless catalogue anytime and anywhere. At the same time, events have shown themselves to have the potential to influence our streaming activity. Influences such as these made me eager to explore the way various factors may inspire us to stream specific songs at specific moments in time.

1.2 Research question

In this thesis, I aim to explore the influence of events on users' listening activity in the music streaming service Spotify through qualitative research. I have chosen to perform an in-depth investigation into the interaction between events on both the macro and micro level as well as into users' streaming patterns over a period of time. My primary research question is as follows:

RQ: To what extent do events influence users' streaming activity in Spotify?

Maasø suggests that events, algorithms and social mechanisms within streaming media work together to transform micro-events into macro-events (Maasø, 2016, p 16). Thus, to investigate the phenomenon of eventization of listening further, I will incorporate how mechanisms within the streaming service Spotify – specifically trend-based algorithms and weekly updated playlists – influence its users. Additionally, I wish to integrate the everyday aspect of streaming on the micro-level tied to mood management accompanied by how one's social network become an important factor for music discovery. In other words, my research applies a more qualitative approach towards the macro/micro level concept proposed by Maasø in order to explore how it can be identified in the user's qualitative actions.

1.3 Previous research and my contribution

As mentioned, the project "Clouds and Concerts" sparked my interest in research on music streaming and it was the article "Eventization of listening" by Arnt Maasø, which specifically influenced me to set the focus on the connection between media events and listening activity (Maasø, 2016). The article is – thus – an important fundamental base for this thesis with regard to the phenomenon of eventization and its link to the music sector. Unfortunately,

there exists little research using this concept – especially in English, as it is of German origin – and even less in the context of listening. The article by Paul Cooke concerning the eventization of German history has been helpful – although it focuses primarily on television – with its description of the process from the traditional ceremonial media event to self-conscious construction of events (Cooke, 2013). Consequently, research focusing on the development of Dayan and Katz’ concept of *Media Events* and how it may be adjusted to the digital age (Sonnevend, 2018); (Frosh and Pinchevski, 2018); (Scannel, 2018) (Scannel 1995); (Couldry and Hepp, 2018); (Dayan, 2010) have been necessary in order to understand the effects of events in offering a shared experience and sense of cultural community.

Regarding the social aspects of streaming, Hagen and Lüders have researched the social features embedded in streaming services have been beneficial in offering insight into how users share music as a negotiation of music as personal and social (Hagen and Lüders, 2016). Their research additionally influenced my methodological choices involving the triangulation of Experience Sampling Method (ESM), Last.fm and qualitative interviews (Hagen, 2015). Using the same methodological approach, Kristensen’s master thesis studies how users of Spotify and WiMP actively uses playlists, which carry with them social, communicative and liquid features (Kristensen, 2014). This combination of music listening on an individual level and a more collective level (Maasø and Toldnes, 2014); (Hesmondhalgh, 2013); (Frith, 2004), (DeNora, 2000) is crucial for the understanding of interaction between micro-level and macro-level events. Besides previous user-oriented research on streaming, Gillespie (2016) contributes an interesting discussion of how algorithms have changed the dynamics of culture, which is essential to my analysis of the user’s streaming activity tied to trending algorithms and mechanisms within Spotify. Further, research on music exploration via streaming services in Norway provided by Kjus (2016) is fruitful in this context, as he questions whether Spotify’s focus on algorithms is realizing its goal of music discovery. My research builds on this question by incorporating the informant’s use of weekly updated playlists such as New Music Friday, Discover Weekly and Release Radar. Additionally, Gillespie’s notion of the rapid exchange which characterize popular culture in the West is relevant in this context, initiating a discussion of the liquid aspects of streaming (Bauman, 2013); (Leijonhufvud, 2018); Kristensen, 2014).

Maasø’s suggestion for issues in need of further research involves the long-term consequences of music culture. More specifically, whether the phenomenon of eventization

indicates a move toward collective listening practices and musical homophily, and if accompanied with social mechanisms and algorithms, superstars will receive cumulative advantages leading to further concentration (Maasø, 2016, p 17). My data will not be able to conclude anything about the long-term consequences of eventization on music culture, but will contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay of events at the macro and micro level, accompanied by algorithms and social network effects within this context. Frith calls for research involving ethnography which attempts to map in detail people's timetable of engagement, the reasons why particular music gets particular attention at particular moments, and how these moments are in turn, imbricated in people's social networks (Frith, 2002, p 46). Although I have not applied ethnography to my research, I believe my findings can shed some light on specifically why particular music gets particular attention at particular moments because of outer macro-level events, but also in the way, we manage music to fit our mood, contexts and memories on a micro-level. Additionally, by adopting the ritual aspects associated with the traditional media event, I offer an expanded definition of events, which aims to create a bridge between the macro and micro-level, while demonstrating the importance of events for streaming users.

1.4 The structure of the thesis

Throughout chapters 4-6, I have chosen to interweave previous research, my findings and a discussion between the two continuously, rather than having clear-cut, individual chapters for the three. This was primarily due to wanting to achieve a considerate flow and conjunction between all aspects of the research, as I have experienced that splitting them up can easily lead to a sense of inconsistency between theoretical contributions included and my own research findings.

Chapter 2 addresses theoretical frameworks, underlying terms and theories, which are necessary for the understanding of eventization and the rest of the chapters.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological approaches used, how recruitment and selection of informants were done, the general procedure. The chapter additionally include discussions of ethical considerations and research limitations.

Chapter 4 deals with the phenomenon eventization of listening and theoretical contributions tied to media events, before proposing an expanded definition of the macro/micro level

concept. Further, within this context, findings involving the influence of macro-level events as releases, concerts and television synchronization are discussed.

Chapter 5 examines the way music is incorporated in user's everyday life and discuss findings tied micro-level such as the music management of moods, memories and contexts. The chapter additionally undertakes the role of one's social network in music discovery online and offline, while incorporating sharing practices tied to taste and impression management in this context.

Chapter 6 focus on the liquid qualities of music streaming and the trending algorithms present in various mechanisms and playlists within Spotify. Further, the ways Spotify influence the informants' listening activity and how its recommendations are experienced by users is discussed.

Chapter 7 sums up the research that has been conducted, highlights prominent findings and suggests future research within the field. At last, the phenomenon of eventization is discussed as a broader process that can contribute to shared experiences despite the liquid contemporary culture promoted by streaming.

2 Terms and theoretical framework

In order to research eventization in the context of streaming trends, I believe it is essential to first discuss the development of today's music industry and the relatively new characteristics it exhibits. This chapter will present some aspects that identify the current music industry with focus on digitalization leading to endless choice and the consequences that follow in terms of niche vs hit culture.

2.1 The New Music Industry

The phenomenon of “eventization of listening” can be considered specific to our current “new” music economy due to the wide range of music available. Wikström characterizes the new music economy as one with high connectivity and little control where music is provided as a service rather than a good, and an increased amateur creativity (Wikström, 2013, p 5). These characteristics are all driven by the development of digital media (ibid), as the rise of digital technology reduces the cost of doing business when it comes to both selling and buying goods (Elberse, 2013, p 154). Although the decreasing transaction and search costs affect almost all industries in one way or another, the growing ubiquity of digital technology can be said to have especially transformed the entertainment sector (Elberse, 2013, p 155). The development of the Cloud made it significantly more difficult to convert music into a rival good (Wikström, 2013, p 90), and with the ability to fully digitize recorded music, it is possible to create an endless number of inexpensive reproductions and distribute them cheaply via digital channels (Elberse, 2013, p 155).

Anderson highlights the main result of the high connectivity as unlimited and unfiltered access to culture and content of all sorts; from the mainstream to the underground (Anderson, 2009, p 5). Aspiring musicians can now record songs using just a laptop and a microphone and still achieve the quality that was formerly attainable only in professional recording studios (Elberse, 2013, p 155). Furthermore, they can do it at a fraction of the cost (ibid). As a result, the cultural landscape can be regarded as a seamless continuum from high to low, with commercial and amateur content competing equally for the attention (Anderson, 2009, p 5). This landscape is, according to Anderson, characterized by an economic shift from a relatively small number of hits (mainstream products and markets) at the head of the demand

curve to a huge number of niches in the tail (Anderson, 2009, p 52). This is an effect of the true shape of demand only being revealed when consumers have infinite choice (ibid). This is tied to the reason why digitalization has a stronger impact in the entertainment industry – people choose creative goods based on taste more than on a measure of objective quality (Elberse, 2013, p 155). As a result, unlimited selection is revealing truths about what consumers want and how they want to get it (Anderson, 2009, p 16), and they are increasingly favouring the market with the most choice (Anderson, 2009, p 5). While the development of streaming services has improved audiences’ access to music, there are reasons to question whether streaming services realize the promotional trope of discovery (Kjus, 2016, p 128). As Kjus points out, little is actually known about how streaming-related long tail discovery really takes place and whether leads to artists finding new supporters and listeners new exploratory experiences (ibid).

2.1.1 The Long Tail – the era of niche culture

As mentioned above, digital developments in the music industry have led to a shift Chris Anderson calls The Long Tail. From being a culture obsessed with top-seller lists and hits – consuming them, making them, choosing them and following their rises and falls – Anderson claims that they no longer are the economic force they once were (Anderson, 2009, p 1). Before digitalization, we’ve been suffering under “the tyranny of the lowest-common denominator fare” due to the dramatic limitations tied to our entertainment media existing in the physical world (Anderson, 2009, p 16). For example, when it comes to geography, an audience spread too thinly is the same as no audience at all (ibid). Other limitations include a radio spectrum carrying only so many radio stations and cable so many TV channels (Anderson, 2009, p 16-17). The solution to these constraints for the past century were therefore to focus on releasing hits which filled theatres and kept listeners from touching their dials (ibid). In other words, hit-driven economics are, according to Anderson, simply a creation in an age in which there wasn’t enough room to carry everything for everybody; not enough shelf space for all the CDs produced, not enough radio waves to play all the music created, and nowhere enough hours in the day to squeeze everything through any of these slots (Anderson, 2009, p 18).

While the Record Store Tail was characterized by having a huge appeal for the top tracks, tailing off quickly for the less popular ones (ibid), which was typical for our “previous” hit-

driven culture focusing on the left side of the curve attempting to guess what would make it there (Anderson, 2009, p 20). However, now that we are entering a world of musical abundance rather than scarcity, Anderson describes consumers as “scattered to the winds as markets fragments into countless niches” (Anderson, 2009, p 2). The Long Tail focuses on the right side of tail because there are so many of these non-hits which while individually small, quickly add up (Anderson, 2009, p 20). This is a result of consumers being able to become mini-connoisseurs and flex our taste with thousands of little choices that sets us apart from others (Anderson, 2009, p 11). As we are going deep into the catalogue; down the long list of older albums, live tracks, B-sides, remixes, and covers; the more we find, the more we like (ibid). As we wander farther from the beaten path, Anderson claim, we will discover that our taste is not as mainstream as we thought – or as we were led to believe by marketing, a hit-centric culture, and a simple lack of alternatives (Anderson, 2009, p 6). To conclude, these infinite-shelf-space businesses, as Anderson calls them, exemplified by, for example, Spotify, Netflix and Amazon, enables, for the first time in history, hits and niches to be on equal economic footing (Anderson, 2009, p 24). Both exist as entries in a database called up on demand, and both are equally worthy of being carried (ibid). “Suddenly, popularity no longer has a monopoly on profitability” (ibid).

2.1.2 Attention economy

With the advent of streaming services in which you can carry “almost all of recorded music in your pocket”, the question of what to play next has grown increasingly complex (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 90). With a service that contains everything you could ever want to listen to, suddenly the prospect of listening to anything becomes overwhelming (ibid). How would one distinguish between ten million songs you’re never going to like, either because they’re terrible or because they’re something that has no context for you, and one of the ten million songs that might be your favourite thing, if you only knew it existed? (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 91).

“(…) it can almost become a bit exhausting as well because you have to deal with it all or I can become stressed by the thought of missing new music that I might enjoy. You become a bit of a nerd after a while by feeling like you always have to keep up.”

(IDA, 24)

The statement above made by my informants Ida, reflects the growing music catalogue in streaming services and can be considered to encapsulate what Herbert Simon in 1971 termed “attention economy”. The American economist argued that attention is a new kind of commodity in our information-rich world and usually as one may expect, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else – attention, which information consumes from its recipients (Simon, 1971, p 6-7) (Kassabian, 2013, p 65-66). In other words, a wealth of information creates a scarcity of attention, and further a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it (ibid). In music, we face a dilemma: more songs than anyone can listen to in a lifetime. While the early promise of the digital music revolution involved freedom to choose, we suddenly need freedom from choice as hard drives overflow and the Cloud began to bust with music (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 103-104). Simon proceeded to build a compelling argument about not only what processing systems should do (through withholding information by filtering out the unnecessary or overly detailed) and what we need to know (not facts but how to access them) (Kassabian, 2013, p 66). These filters are similar to what we now can see in streaming services through features, algorithms, editorial mechanisms and playlists which help us pave the way through the music jungle.

The conventional view is that more choice is better because it acknowledges that people are different and allows them to find what is right for their taste (Anderson, 2009, p 170). However, The Long Tail is nothing more than infinite choice; abundant, and unlimited variety (Anderson, 2009, p 180-181), and since time and resources spent by the audience on music have not increased to the same extent, audience fragmentation has accelerated (Wikström, 2013, p 89). Put more simply, infinite choice equals ultimate fragmentation (Anderson, 2009, p 180-181) which in practice means that fewer people are tuned to the same outlet, and an appearance on a specific outlet consequently reaches a smaller section of the total audience (Wikström, 2013, p 91). Audience fragmentation is closely linked to the reasoning behind “increased product variety”, which has the music business placing its artists in more outlets than previously in order to uphold the level of media presence and keep the audience reach on a constant level (ibid). Simultaneously, as music fans capability to create and upload content to the Cloud has improved; more audience actions will contribute to the overall exposure of the artist and add to their aggregated media presence (Wikström, 2013, p 93). Consequently, music firms have to rely more on their fans to create good buzz (ibid). In other words, advanced promotion and blockbuster strategies are growing in importance in

order to release a product that will somehow “break through the clutter” and immediately capture the attention of as large an audience as possible (Elberse, 2013, p 64); indicating that we still need hits.

2.1.3 We still need hits

Anderson’s theory has received its share of criticism, some of it for arguing that the record stores’ limited shelf space leading to only a certain amount of stock available, is a problem fixed by digitalization, as with online stores have no such physical constraints. Mulligan argues that while digital catalogues do not have a problem with expanse, they come with only a small amount of visual display space (Mulligan, 2014, p 12). A digital store or service has a home page that often has to squeeze onto a few square inches of a smartphone screen, while a high street store in contrast, has dozens of square feet of window space and then hundreds of square feet of front-of-store display through the doors (ibid). As a result, there is only a few products in the form of songs, artists, genres and playlists that can be highlighted once you open a digital service. Anderson suggests that although niches have always existed, they are much easier to fit into now, as the cost of reaching them has fallen so that consumers can easily find different niches (Anderson, 2009, p 6). Thus, due to the economics of digital distribution, the world of amateurs and garage bands are all suddenly able to find an audience (ibid).

However, according to Elberse, data on how markets are evolving tell a much different story. In a world without limits, infinite shelf space and innumerable options, the industry is somehow still betting on a selected group of blockbusters and superstars (Elberse, 2013, p 157). The sales distribution is not getting fatter in the tail, on the contrary, as time goes on and consumers buy more goods online, the tail is getting longer but decidedly thinner (ibid). Further, the importance of individual bestsellers is not diminishing over time; instead, it is growing (Elberse, 2013, p 159). Similarly, Mulligan concludes that while the concept of the long tail seemed like a useful way of understanding how consumers interact with content in an exciting era of digital content – the marketplace has shown us that humans are just as much wandering sheep in need of herding online as they are offline (Mulligan, 2014, p 16). However, in an industry in which audience demand is fickle and the failure rate is so high, why would film, television and label executives choose such a method? It is a method, after

all, where they put themselves in a position where their company's overall performance – or even survival – rests on a few big product launches every year and let spending on those products reach levels that make recovering costs appear almost impossible. (Elberse, 2013, p 3).

2.1.4 The Superstar economy

Although Anderson claims that the era of blockbuster hits may have peaked, he does admit that its effect on our assumptions about media has not, and the existing media and entertainment industries are still oriented around finding, funding and creating blockbusters (Anderson, 2009, p 38-39). One would perhaps think that it would make more sense in the long run to forgo these kinds of investments and instead place a larger number of smaller bets, closely guard costs, and “manage for margins” (ibid). However, like venture capitalists, rather than dividing their resources evenly across the products in its portfolio, they allocate a disproportionately large share of their production and marketing dollars to small subsets of products in the hope that they will bring in the lion's share of revenues and profits (Elberse, 2013, p 18). Thus, many entertainment businesses have found out – often the hard way – that a “blockbuster strategy” works.

The reason why the leading music labels and producers thrive on making huge investments to acquire, develop, and market concepts with strong hit potential is due to its sales being able to make up for middling performance of their content (Elberse, 2013, p 3). In other words, in a market where it is as hard as ever to predict what will strike a chord with consumers – expecting that at best most of the projects will break even, and a few will flat-out fail, the few hits must compensate for the drag of the others (Anderson, 2009, p 38-39). This is tied to the fact that people like winners, and we prefer to consume entertainment products that are also chosen by others (Elberse, 2013, p 66). Thus, for media products, initial success breeds further success, while failure to achieve success early on frequently means having no chance to succeed at all (ibid). In that sense, these businesses absolutely need hits – and not just profitable products (Elberse, 2013, p 66), as the high cost of production and uncertainties of success put pressure on its winners (Anderson, 2009, p 39) – they need not just to win, but also to win big in the form of huge, megahits.

Blockbuster strategies, however, are not free from risk, and even the biggest productions supported by the highest advertising budgets can – and sometimes will – fail (Elberse, 2013, p 4). Therefore, our response to a hit culture is to reinforce it – forced to choose, each link in the entertainment industry naturally enough chooses the most popular products, giving them privileged placement (Anderson, 2009, p 40). In other words, since these highest-performing entertainment businesses take chances on a small group of titles by investing heavily in their development, they have to support them with a high level of promotion spending well in advance of their release into the marketplace and to distribute them as widely as possible (Elberse, 2013, p 4). Thus, by putting commercial weight behind the big winners, they actually amplify the gap between them and everything else (Anderson, 2009, p 40), leading to a concentration of the majority of recorded music revenue around a small share of musical works (Mulligan, 2014, p 3). This is what characterizes the “superstar economy”, indicating that the promise of the Long Tail proved to be illusory as the resulting picture is one of contrasting fortunes of the super successful and the rest (ibid).

Although claiming that hits may not dominate society as much as they did over the past century, Anderson recognizes that they still have unmatched impact. It is, thus, hard to overstate the importance of those few blockbusters in the head of the curve, and trends suggest that hits are gaining relevance (Elberse, 2013, p 160). An important part of hits’ advantage is their ability to offer a source of common culture around which more narrow markets can form (Anderson, 2009, p 148). In other words, successful Long Tails need to have both hits and niches and span the full range of variety from the broadest appeal to the narrowest (ibid).

2.2 The streaming service Spotify

Since the 2000s, music-streaming services such as Spotify and Wimp (now TIDAL) have become the dominant form of music distribution in the Nordic countries, offering access to endless archives of recordings for everyday music listening (Hagen, 2016), in return for advertising exposure or subscription fees (Kjus and Danielsen, 2017, p 2). Via Internet applications, music-streaming services are added to personal media devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers (Hagen, 2016). As a result, these media are becoming deeply integrated into users’ everyday routines (ibid). Between 2000 and 2013, global recorded music income saw a decline by 39.7% (Mulligan, 2014, p 5). Although a 1% growth

in 2013 could potentially point to the beginning of a change in fortunes, the impact of the previous 12 years has been catastrophic for the music industry with labels and artists alike feeling the pinch of plummeting recorded income (ibid). What caused a generation of the industry's bet customers – fans in their teens and twenties – to abandon the record store? (Anderson, 2009, p 33). The industry's answer was simply “piracy”, as the combined effects of Napster and other online file trading and CD burning gave rise to an underground economy of any song, anytime for free, in addition to offering massive, unprecedented choice in terms of what one could listen to (ibid). Kjus emphasise that the rise of streaming services, such as Spotify, must be understood within this particular historical and industrial context (Kjus, 2016, p 130). Spotify was, thus, conceived of an explicit response to the growing “piracy” and unsanctioned peer-to-peer distribution that proliferated the internet in the early 2000s and presented itself to labels and artists as a legal and profitable alternative means of line distribution (ibid).

Spotify was intended to make finding and sharing music easier, and invested heavily in advanced search engines, comprised of automated, algorithms that linked related artists and featured recommendations based on the individual listener's prior use (Kjus, 2016, p 130). Many artists and labels were reluctant to use Spotify, however, finding that it favoured the rights holders of music catalogues that were already popular at the expense of relative newcomers (ibid). Whereas TIDAL favoured human curation and established an editorial team with in-depth local knowledge, Spotify focused on automated algorithms and recommendations guiding fans of one artist to others they might like based on quantitative estimations of similarities in the database of the service (Kjus, 2016, p 130). Intuitively, the democratization of access to music – both on supply and demand sides – coupled with vastness of digital catalogues would mean a dilution of the superstar economy (Mulligan, 2014, p 9) and open up for more evenly spread revenue for hits and niches. And indeed, according to the Long Tail, consumers will increasingly engage with niche content across digital services because of easier access (ibid), but also with help from Spotify's various mechanisms for discovery such as Discover Weekly, Release Radar, Related Artists, Genres and Moods (Snickars, 2017, p 189). As confirmed by Matthew Ogle, who oversees Discover Weekly at Spotify, “We now have more technology than ever to ensure that if you're the smallest, strangest musician in the world, doing something that only 20 people in the world will dig, we can now find those 20 people and connect the dots between the artist and listeners” (Snickars, 2017, p 208).

2.2.1 The Tyranny of Choice

While the top 1% of musical works accounts for 77% of all artist revenue – a concentration which reflects the natural bias of music towards hits – it is interesting to note that digital stores and services are seen to have an even stronger bias towards the top 1% (Mulligan, 2014, p 3). Thus, although the market for digital tracks grows, the share of titles that sell far too few copies to be lucrative investments is growing as well, and more and more tracks sell next to nothing (Elberse, 2013, p 160). This development can be considered a consequence of the small amount of “front end” display for digital services, especially on mobile phones, in addition to consumers being overwhelmed by “the Tyranny of Choice”, in which excessive choice actually hinders discovery (Mulligan, 2014, p 3).

When subjective differences among products drive buying behaviour, Elberse points to the importance of recommendation engines and other collaborative filter mechanisms that can help people find the products they like (Elberse, 2013, p 155). Nonetheless, digital music catalogues typically contain upwards of 25 million entries and are growing at a rate of 100,000 tracks every month (Mulligan, 2014, p 10). This rapid growth means that however good at music discovery and recommendation the algorithms might be, they need to get 1000,000 tracks better at their job every single month just to be as good as they were the previous month (Mulligan, 2014, p 10). In other words, more tracks paradoxically mean less discovery, and there is so much choice that there is effectively no choice at all (ibid). This is the Tyranny of Choice that in turn leads to mainstream consumers flocking, like the sheep they are, to the familiar and the easy to find (Mulligan, 2014, p 10).

3 Methodology

3.1 Methodological choices

In order to study how events are influencing listening activity, it is necessary to use a methodological approach that allows users to share their everyday streaming habits.

Based on prior research done by Anja Lund Hagen (2015) and Henrik Sanne Kristensen (2014), I decided to perform a mixed-method study, combining Experience Sampling Method (ESM), including the tool “scrobble” provided by the service Last.fm, and semi-structured interviews. One of the most widely used qualitative functions of ESM data is to illustrate a particular experiential pattern through the use of the detailed description of a single case (Hektner et al, 2007, p 3). Descriptions usually focus on a precise moment in time and provide details on what the respondents were doing, thinking, and feeling (ibid), which allows informants to include various influences on the music they are currently listening to. By supplementing the ESM with individual semi-structured interviews at the end of the period, the interviewer is able to read through the participant’s responses and ask for elaboration on particularly interesting moments in order to stimulate a conversation about specific issues (Hektner et al, 2007, p 3).

I believe a triangulation of methods is a beneficial choice in this study where each method possesses qualities that together work well when researching music and events. First, ESM and Last.fm observations offer insightful information over time which can create an overview. Further, interviews can contribute rich reflections regarding the informants’ patterns. While the connection between events and music streaming is the focus of this study, it is essential to additionally include other influential factors such as traditional media outlets (TV, newspapers and radio), one’s social network online and offline, as well as mechanisms and playlists within the streaming service that further contribute to the phenomenon.

3.1.2 Experience Sampling Method (ESM)

Through Experience Sampling Method (ESM) and Last.fm insights, I aim to examine the users’ streaming patterns in everyday life and more specifically how they may correlate to various events as a broader phenomenon of eventization. Experience Sampling Method is designed to capture individuals’ representation of experience as it occurs, within the context

of everyday life (Hektner et al, 2007, p 2). The method is best suited to measure dimensions of experience that are likely to be context-dependent (i.e., “What are you listening to right now?”) and/or are likely to fluctuate over the course of a day or a week (ibid). By letting people track their own progress, it is possible to achieve an unobtrusive view into their experience without having to stare over their shoulders for months at a time (Goodman et al, 2012, p 243). Thus, this approach can serve as a great method to observe routines that isn’t available through regular observations (Tjora, 2012, p 169), with its strength in the ability to capture momentary or episodic representations (Hektner et al, 2007, p 3) with a reduced time between the event and its documentation. As memory is reliably unreliable ESM studies help, avoid asking people to remember events of interest (Goodman et al, 2012, p 243). Further, since the method gathers data at multiple time points from multiple individuals, it enables both detailed studies of individual cases as well as more general analyses by aggregating across cases (Hektner et al, 2007, p 3).

When designing the study, Goodman et al suggest that participants complete a questionnaire where they may record date, time, context, content and purpose every time they perform a certain activity (Goodman et al, 2012, p 248). The ESM form was created via the survey service provided by Microsoft Office where participants would complete entries by “responding” to the survey I created, in which I would receive a notification. I set the duration of the ESM activity for four weeks, with each participant starting at different times. The participants would then answer questions at random intervals signalled by an e-mail with link to their online form and a text message from me. Hektner et al points to the key of finding a balance between achieving a representative sampling of daily experience and overburdening respondents (Hektner et al, 2007, p 11). It is thus suggested that longer signalling periods (lasting three weeks or more) are more feasible only if the reporting forms are short (taking less than two minutes to complete) and/or if the number of signals per day is low (ibid). In order to prevent fatigue in participants, I kept the questions as short and simple as possible including three short questions and three longer ones¹, and the frequency for two days a week. I, additionally, tried to vary both days of the week and times during the day for all informants and created an Excel overview in order to keep track.

¹ See appendix 2 for entire form.

3.1.3 Last.fm

In both Hagen and Kristensen’s research, the Last.fm service feature “scrobble” was used to supplement the ESM studies. To “scrobble” is an activity that can be observed via the digital platform Last.fm that finds, processes and distributes information about a person’s listening patterns (Hagen, 2015, p 639). When connected to Spotify, the feature tracks and logs the music you play in real-time as well as providing information regarding which artists or bands that make up for the five or ten most played the last month. By asking all informants to create a Last.fm-account that they connect to their Spotify accounts, I would be able to go through and check their ESM entries compared to their accounts. This automatic tracking mechanism thus provides unique insight into the informants’ listening activity and can act as an accurate information backup if individual reporting should fail. The artists and songs tracked via Last.fm by participants will then be tied to current macro- and micro level events outside the streaming service, as well as mechanisms and playlists in Spotify. In addition to ESM studies and Last.fm observations, Hagen followed the user’s Facebook profiles during the months of data collection. However, I do not find that necessary to my research as I perceive Last.fm as sufficient enough and besides befriending informants on Facebook adds several ethical concerns.



Screenshot 1: *Andreas’ Last.fm scrobbling activity 21.10.2017.*

I followed the seven informants on Last.fm during the four weeks and took screenshots of all their activity during this period. Their listening patterns were then copied and pasted in an Excel document with an overview of which concerts were held in Oslo/Trondheim during this period along with new singles, EPs and album releases. Each Friday, the weekly updated editorial playlist New Music Friday Norway was also screenshotted. In that way, I would be able to discover whether it occurred any correlation between what the informants were listening to and which events and releases that were happening within the same time period. As opposed to personalized, algorithmic recommendations such as Discover Weekly and Release Radar, New Music Friday presents the same songs for every user each week, which means that those of the informants who followed this playlist would all receive the same songs. However, in order to also study any similarities in these personalized algorithm-based playlists, I asked all the informants, after the logging period in mid-November 2017, to screenshot their Release Radar and Discover Weekly playlists and send them to me.

3.2 Sample and preparation

As informed consent is vital to solicit voluntarily participation and prevent undue influence and constraint (Kvale, 2006, p 67), I began by creating an information sheet² consisting of basic information regarding the study, criteria for participating, letter of consent, contact information and appreciation of their effort. The criteria for applying included being fluent in Norwegian, interested in music and a heavy user of Spotify, specified by having an account for at least a year and using it 5-7 times a week. Following Hagen's approach, I sought to recruit heavy streaming users systematically to ensure that the study would capture people well-versed in the technology who also were active and passionate music streamers. The information sheet made it clear that all personal information would be treated confidentially and that I would be the only one having access to these during the duration of the project.

Because of the considerable effort expended in an ESM study, most sample sizes are modest by social science research standards (Hektner et al, 2007, p 4). Due to the richness of the data, however, even studies with as few as 5-10 participants can produce enough data to be used reliably in simple statistical analyses (ibid). In my research project, resources and capacity set limitations for the possible number of informants in the sample. The goal was to

² See complete letter of consent in appendix 1.

get four main informants and three-four extra informants for backup. Since my choice of research design stretches over a longer time and consists of several parts, I found it essential to choose a sample size that was manageable and not so big that the analysis would risk becoming superficial. Besides, within qualitative research one should prioritize how well the data will span over the subject of interest with a suitable sample size rather than producing a representative sample (Kvale, 2006, p 58-59). Further, ESM samples are usually purposive and targeted at understanding the experience of a specific group, instead of being nationally representative (Hektner et al, 2007, p 4).

3.2.1 NSD – Norwegian centre for Research Data

Prior to creating the information form, I applied the research project³ to the NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data). There is an obligation to notify NSD about your research project if personal information (directly and indirectly) will be gathered via a digital questionnaire in addition to the use of sound or video recording (Do I have to notify my project, 2018). Since I was to use Microsoft Office Forms for the ESM form in addition to record the qualitative interviews, my project fell within the need to notify. Since the interviews were going to be based on the findings from the ESM replies, I would have to send the interview guides later when they were finished. The University of Oslo has a data processing deal with Microsoft Office and it was thus safe to use Microsoft Forms for my research. After about five weeks, the project was accepted and I could begin the recruitment process.

3.2.2 Recruitment process

The information sheet was distributed via a dropbox link that was shared with people in my network who are interested in music, assuming that they had friends who shared this interest they could pass on the project to. I also printed out the information sheet and hung it in various faculties at the university campus. While friends and family are not encouraged to be included in a research study as their relationship with the researcher will affect the way they behave, Goodman et al explain that recruiting people you do not know such as friends of friends is perfectly legitimate (Goodman et al, 2012, p 103). At first, I experienced that by

³ NSD project 55956.

asking people close to me, I unfortunately received several e-mails from people that I had met before. Therefore, I pursued to ask people that I didn't have that much contact with and didn't share many friends with.

In a couple of days, I received several e-mails from people who had heard about the project and wanted to participate. However, two of them turned out to be friends of close friends of mine whom I had met before, one worked within the music industry, one lived in another city and some didn't really seem very articulate, reliable or interested. Finding the people, I wanted, thus, turned out to be a difficult task and I realized I could not be too picky. The two who were friends of close friends of mine will be discussed below concerning ethical considerations. The informant from Trondheim responded quickly and well to all e-mails and seemed eager to participate, in addition to travelling frequently to Oslo. Thus, I chose to include him in the project.

Although factors related to geographical dispersion and line of work or education was not of importance to the project, I wanted to avoid informants working within the music industry. This was a combination of having a goal to study everyday people's listening activity as opposed to professionals, while at the same time being worried that people within the music industry would have too much knowledge about the mechanisms of streaming and aware of the phenomenon I was researching. Further, I suspected that this could reduce the research project's validity as informants in the industry might have difficulty distinguishing their personal and professional thoughts on the subject. Nevertheless, I ended up with one informant, Silje, working in a small record label. After days of correspondence, I found that I didn't want to miss out on an informant that was such a heavy user of Spotify, responded quickly and seemed such eager to participate. The solution became to include her as one of the extra informants in the first part of the data collection consisting of ESM and Last.fm observations but exclude her from the semi-structured interviews. While Goodman et al emphasize that one should be prepared for dropouts and that often a small percentage of people who sign up will withdraw midway through (Goodman et al, 2012, p 269). Luckily, I didn't experience this and all informants finished.

3.2.3 The informants

Kristian, 27, student, Trondheim

Karoline, 23, student, Oslo

Ida, 24, student, Oslo

Andreas, 27, IT-consultant, Oslo

Silje, 24, record label, Oslo

Ingrid, 20, student, Oslo

Stian, 28, social worker, Oslo

As seen above, four of the informants are female and three males. Ideally, the total number of informants would have been eight, which could have secured a 50/50 gender spread.

Although I had set the initial age range in the information sheet from 20-35 years I ended up gathering a considerably young group with Stian at 28 being the oldest and Ingrid at 20 being the youngest. Initially in the recruitment process, I would have wanted a more heterogeneous representation in terms of age. It is, however, completely random that all male participants turned out to be the eldest and the females the youngest.

All the informants are anonymized with the help of SSB's (Statistics Norway) overview of the ten most popular names in Norway within a given year. The names given to the informants represented the first or second most popular name within the year each informant's year of birth. This was done to ensure that the informants' statements would not be connected to names later.

The large proportion of student participants may be a result of me being a student myself and recruiting via my own network, which naturally consist of many students. Another factor may be that the college-age years are when we typically have the most time to search out and consume music. As Vanderbilt explains, during a period of life when most of us do not have fancy watches or cars, music becomes a cheap, socially important signal of distinction (Vanderbilt, 2016 p 104). Since I had no compensation to give them for participating, the informants had no reward to motivate them to participate until the end, apart from their own interest in learning more about their own streaming habits. Thankfully, I experienced that several of the informants found the subject of the study exciting and wanted to be a part of it.

3.2.4 Ethical considerations

As mentioned, the seven informants were anonymized with the help of name statistics via Statistics Norway. Two of the informants used in the research project is good friends with friends of mine, but although I had greeted them once before, they are not a part of my extended circle of friends. The reason for including them was their own motivation to participate in the research, being active Spotify users and showing great reflection. I believe they are valuable because they are able to get their experiences, thoughts and feelings down on paper, in addition to clearly representing two very different types of music listeners. Through in-depth reading of transcription, I have not found any sign of the informants being treated differently compared to the informants I had never met previously.

3.3 Procedure

3.3.1 Experience Sampling Method (ESM) with Last.fm observation

Briefing conversations were done via Skype for five informants, one was done by phone and one by e-mail. The most typical type of ESM studies involves signal-contingent sampling, indicating that participants are signalled at random times over the course of several days or weeks (Hektner et al, 2007, p 10). Kristian was the first informant to fill out the form after I sent him an e-mail with link to the online form and information in addition to an SMS. However, I quickly received an e-mail in return saying that he couldn't open the link to the form without a Microsoft account which he didn't have. After some research, I found that I change the settings in the form to become available for everyone with the given link. The only consequence was that the answers would become anonymous, but as I had already made independent forms for each informant it didn't affect the research. The informant seemed to still have issues opening the form and I was worried he would have to answer via e-mail instead. Eventually, it worked out and he got access, but I was off to a rocky start and should have pre-tested the forms more. Two fellow students had tried out the forms in advance but both of them have office 365 accounts through the university and therefore didn't get this issue. I had to apologize for him having to be a bit of a test rabbit since he was the first informant to try out the forms. It also turned out that one of the questions in the form had

been duplicated and unfortunately appeared twice. After this was fixed, I continued the research with the remaining informants.

<p>Why did you choose to listen to this song/artist/album/playlist?</p>	<p>I'm attending a Jason Isbell concert soon, and this album is the one he is touring with so I had to listen to prepare myself for the concert.</p>	<p>I'm pretty hungover in the morning today, and thus it fits perfectly with some depressive lyrics and beautiful melodies.</p>
<p>Was it factors within the streaming service that inspired you to discover this song/artist/album/playlist? Explain what.</p>	<p>Nothing specific from the streaming service.</p>	<p>Nothing specific from the streaming service.</p>
<p>Or was it factors outside the streaming service?</p>	<p>I heard about the artist for several years ago via comedian Dag Sørås on Twitter. I've been listening to this album ever since it was released, and was informed about the album via the artists' Facebook page.</p>	<p>A good friend of mine recommended the artist, and I have additionally heard a lot of his music in various TV shows.</p>

Screenshot 2: Extract from the Excel document with Stian's ESM replies.

The replies have been copied from the Microsoft Office forms, translated to English and colour coded according to source of inspiration. Blue indicates macro events (usually concerts and releases), pink indicates micro events related to mood, memories or context, yellow indicates social media and green indicate social network (friends and family).

Since I signalled the informants at random days and times, there was always a risk that I would choose a time when they didn't listen to music. This happened a couple of times, but it was not always due to choosing the wrong time, as the Microsoft Office forms sometimes failed to update itself when an informant had answered or that Last.FM failed to track their listening. In other words, some technical difficulties are bound to happen when using technology in the data collection. Collecting data using ESM yields a tremendous amount of

information very quickly (Hektner, 2007, p 3), which can lead to a lot of extra work at the end of the study if entries aren't organized instantly as they come in (Goodman et al, 2012, p 268). As a result, I created an Excel document with one individual paper for each informant where I would copy and paste and organize their diary entries as they answered each week. Seen below, I chose to colour code their entries in terms of source of influence for their music listening.

3.3.2 Limitations

a. Technical issues

A downside with the use of digital tools in research is the risk of it failing due to technical errors that may affect your data. Unfortunately, I experienced that the scrobble feature showed itself to be somewhat unreliable at times, as I had to inform three informants on various occasions that the service did not seem to track their listening activity. Sometimes it was due to Spotify having disconnected from the service, other times it was simply because Last.fm do not seem to track music that is listened to *offline* (streaming without the use of mobile data or Wi-Fi). This turned out to be a bit of an issue with Karoline as she mostly listened offline and as a result, many of the days during the four weeks turned out completely blank despite the fact that she listened to music during the time. This does perhaps give a skewed representation of the data. However, I don't feel like using Last.fm as a method was all a waste as the service did work relatively well with all other informants. Besides, the little scrobbling activity I did receive from Karoline's Last.fm account gave me some insight into her listening patterns, which gave me something to base the follow-up interview on. Luckily, I managed to complete a very rich qualitative interview with Karoline and do not believe that the lack of Last.fm data had much effect on my research.

b. Bias

What can be considered a big drawback with my recruitment method is that the informants, being friends of my friends, probably resemble me in many ways. Seven of eight informants are living in Oslo, four of seven are students and they are all below the age of 30. However, I do not believe the fact that I resemble the majority of my informants will affect my results. In many ways, I think it gives me an advantage as I have similar streaming practices, which

helped me creating relevant questions for the ESM forms and semi-structured interviews. At the same time, I was careful not to assume that they would have identical listening activity as each other nor me, and thus included general questions that help the informants open up and reveal their differences.

When linking relevant events to the listening patterns of the informants during October – November 2017, it was impossible for me to cover all macro and micro events occurring within that period. Therefore, I chose to focus primarily on the concerts performed in the biggest venues in Oslo and releases found in Release Radar and New Music Friday playlists. I also attempted to stay updated on when venues and festivals announced new concerts via social media and note whenever there were adverts for specific artists in Spotify during the four weeks. For the most scrobbled artists, I additionally checked whether their music had been reviewed in the biggest newspapers. Nevertheless, since trends and news feeds are fleeting, there is a chance that I missed important micro events when gathering my data.

c. Observer effects

Since I observed the informants' listening behaviour via the music tracking service Last.FM, it is necessary to consider that observer effects may affect the research findings. Observer effects – also referred to as “researcher effects”, “reactivity” or the “Hawthorne effect” occur when the presence of a researcher influences the behaviour of those being studied, with the implication that individuals will behave better (more ethically, more conscientiously etc.) when being observed (Monahan and Fisher, 2010, p 357-358). Thus, it is worth noting that when the informant Karoline was asked how she felt about her followers seeing her listening activity via Spotify, she admitted that it was something she generally felt negative about.

“I noticed that I was a lot more self-conscious when I knew that you were studying my scrobbling activity. I tried to not let it affect me as much, but I started to become aware of what I was listening to, and then I listened to what I wanted to listen to, but I was a bit more aware when I knew someone was watching me”.

(KAROLINE 23)

Although Karoline does claim that she generally listened to what she wanted to listen to, she also admits that she is affected by me studying her listening activity. Observer effects are

framed as inevitably bad because they somehow indicate a certain “contamination” of the supposedly pure social environment being studied (Monahan and Fisher, 2010, p 357-358). Further, staged performances and self-censorship are ways observer effects may manifest (Monahan and Fisher, 2010, p 371). However, ethnographers have argued that, over time, self-censorship fades away, especially if the researcher becomes taken for granted by the informants (ibid). Possible occurrences of observer effects in my data would most likely been reduced if I had a longer period of gathering data. While Anja Nylund Hagen had four sampling periods in her research project, I only had one and with a shorter time span, which makes it, is less likely that the informants took me for granted. Another way to perform validity checks on data suspected to be dubious is comparing discourse to practice and looking for inconsistencies (Monahan and Fisher, 2010, p 371). Since Karoline’s scrobbling activity was somewhat compromised due to technical issues, it is difficult to see whether she listened differently before and after the four weeks of gathering data. Nevertheless, I did manage to gather valuable data from the qualitative interview with her without experiencing any notable inconsistency with her scrobbling activity. Moreover, although it is unfortunate that Karoline felt that that way, I did not see any signs of this experience among the other informants. Thus, I perceive her feelings as an exception rather than the rule during the data collection of this research.

3.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

When asking people to report their own experiences, they are asked to step outside their normal perception of themselves and comment on their behaviour. While some people will provide accurate answers, others will have more difficulty (Goodman et al, 2012, p 256). Although this problem applies to any self-reported information, it is especially problematic in ESM studies as “there’s no way to ascertain what’s called the “ground truth” of their behaviour” (ibid). Goodman proposes follow-up interviews as a way to reduce self-reporting bias in order to clarify important statements (ibid). The semi-structured lifeworld-interview is defined as an interview with the goal to gather descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee, with the purpose of interpreting the phenomena described (Kvale, 2006, p 21). While the data gathered from ESM studies and Last.fm observations are valuable, semi-structured interviews can provide more depth to the research compared to the somewhat more simplistic and superficial Last.fm tracking and self-reported entries.

Compared to an everyday conversation, the research interview is characterized by a methodological consciousness regarding the way questions are asked, a focus on the dynamic in interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, and a critical approach towards what is spoken (Kvale, 2006, p 31). Another difference found between the everyday conversation and a research interview is the usual asymmetrical balance of power: the researcher is responsible for the questioning of a more or less volunteer and naïve interviewee (ibid). Since these qualitative interviews are made to illuminate elements brought up by the informants during the self-reported ESM studies, the interview guides were created after the ESM data collection ended. Kvale underlines that prior to conducting the actual interview, it's desirable to gather a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the phenomena of research, in order to create a foundation for the supplying and integration of new knowledge (Kvale, 2006, p 53). Further, knowledge about the phenomena is necessary to be able to ask the right and important questions (ibid). Prior to creating the interview guide, I went through all the ESM entries and Last.fm trackings and attempted to find some main themes to focus on. The interview guide ended up on two A4 pages, including a fixed section with standard questions for all informants and then an individually adjusted section that focused specifically on the listening patterns of the participant in question.

a. Sample and procedure

I chose four informants (Karoline, Ida, Andreas and Stian) out of the total seven to execute qualitative 40-60 minutes interviews with. Although, it would be favourable to interview all seven informants, I decided to set a limitation at four due to my own resources and capacity. Kvale explains that the number of informants necessary is dependent on the purpose of the study, exemplifying that while a too small sample would make statistical generalizations impossible, too large of a sample disables the possibility of conducting thorough interpretations of the interviews (Kvale, 2006, p 59). Thus, as I had already gathered a substantial amount of data from the ESM studies, I decided it would not be necessary to interview everyone in order to achieve valuable findings. The goal was rather to find a smaller sample I could focus on and delve into. This is something that is reflected in the general way of thinking within a qualitative research approach is a greater emphasis on quality than quantity (Kvale, 2006, p 60). One of the reasons for choosing exactly these four was that they all provided good and articulate answers in their diary entries and showed great interest in the research project. Additionally, their Last.fm loggings and ESM entries revealed

interesting variations. A paradox from the history of psychology shows that if one is aiming to gather general knowledge, it is recommended to focus on a few, intensive case studies (Kvale, 2006, p 59). In other words, choosing to gather significant knowledge from few informants has proven to be generalizable for larger groups (ibid). After studying the four informants' listening patterns closely, I could begin to see more general similarities and differences between them that I wanted to explore further.

Three of the interviews were completed during December 2017, while the last one, being unavailable before Christmas, was interviewed in January 2018. Out of consideration for the informants' efforts, I allowed them to pick the location for the interviews, which were performed at three different cafés and at the University of Oslo. The interview guide worked well as a helping tool in getting the informants talking about relatively the same themes while at the same time discussing specific parts from the diary studies. For recording, I used both the recorder on my phone and my computer in the case of one of them failing. This turned out to be a good choice as some of the cafés were noisy with music on speakers along with other people chatting. With two recorders, I was able to have one close to me and the other close to the informant to ensure that our voices would be as clear as possible. All participants brought their telephone with Spotify to the interview which helped the participants to speak more freely as the content in question could be seen in direct relation to the actual listening habits being described. They happily showed me how they organized their music in playlists and folders as well as the social aspects of sharing music with friends and following each other within the service.

Semi-structured interviews usually have a range of themes to be covered and suggestions for questions. At the same time, there is room for changes, both in the order and form of questions, which enables the interviewer to follow up the answers and stories told by the interviewee (Kvale, 2006, p 72). I experienced that some of the interviews were more comprehensive than others. While some informants talked for a long time on their own, others needed me to push more, resulting in varying durations for the interviews.

In a research situation, it is the interviewer's responsibility to, within a short time frame, create a connection with the informants and establish an atmosphere where they feel safe to talk about their own experiences and emotions (Kvale, 2006, p 73). I believe it was beneficial that I already had corresponded with the informants via Skype, texts and e-mail over the course of four weeks prior to the interviews, which hopefully reduced nervousness on both

parts. Additionally, music streaming and listening patterns are generally not regarded as heavy subjects to talk about. Thus, when it comes to the quieter informants, I do not believe it was a result of them not feeling safe or comfortable in the situation. Rather, my perception is that they found it difficult to be conscious and reflect about their own listening activity, which involved remembering how they discovered songs, which factors they believed were the most influential etc. It is understandable that it would be challenging to articulate specific reasons for listening to music which they a lot of the time experienced as spontaneous or random.

Nevertheless, I experienced that all informants seemed passionate about music and very keen on sharing information about their taste and their various everyday music related activities. With the very talkative informants, I noticed that some repetitive questions occurred on my part, as they could have browsed through several of the topics during the first question. As a result, the structure of some of the interviews appeared somewhat messy and could have been better directed on my part. However, by not being so controlling in the flow of the interviews I do believe that unprepared and interesting themes were able to appear.

3.4 Transcription and processing of findings

The four interviews were transcribed without any form of software such as HyperTranscribe, which resulted in a lot of time spent on rewinding and pausing. In hindsight, I believe it would have been more beneficial to use some form of software where I would be able to adjust the pace and therefore write more words in real-time. I spent about six-seven hours on transcribing each interview that varied between 40-50 minutes. In the process of writing down what I heard, I decided to not include all sounds, as I do not believe it was necessary for the subjects of this research. I did, however, choose to include pauses if it was clear that the informant was insecure about the answer. During the work of transcribing, I noticed that I in some situations had asked the informants leading questions, especially when the informant was quiet or reluctant to answer. While this might be regarded as a negative element regarding the interviews' reliability, Kvale however, argues that consistently asking leading questions are suitable to both check the reliability of the answers and to verify the interpretations of the interviewer (Kvale, 2006, p 97).

Transcription involves translating from an oral language, with its own rules, to a written language with others (Kvale, 2006, p 104). It is also worth noting that all diary replies and

interview statements have been translated from Norwegian to English by me. This can on the one hand strengthen the informants' anonymity, while on the other; raise certain issues related to making loyal interpretations and representations of their statements. There is naturally certain Norwegian sayings that are difficult to translate directly without losing its meaning. Nevertheless, I believe that the informants' general feelings and thoughts regarding the phenomena discussed clearly appear, even though some specific jargons might get lost in translation.

3.4.1 Analysis and coding

After transcribing the four interviews, I used the method of meaning condensation (Kvale, 2006, p 125) where I simply shortened the statements of the informants to shorter and more summarized formulations within each theme. Then I created an excel sheet with one column for each informant, and copied and pasted the short, summarized formulations of their statements in rows. By having all the statements by the informants within each theme side by side, I could more easily compare their statements which could lead to more general findings. I left one blank column for comments where I could write interesting discoveries and suitable theoretical suggestions along the way. Since the document ended up becoming quite complex, I realized that I had to do some colour coding to separate the various subjects that were discussed. It also made it a lot easier for me to instantly see what was discussed in each row. Here, I used the same colour coding as with the ESM entries with each colour indicating a source of influence for their listening activity: purple indicated traditional media outlets (newspapers, radio and television), yellow indicated social media, green indicated their social network (friends and family), blue indicated macro events (concerts, releases), red indicating Spotify (algorithms, features and editorial recommendations), pink indicating micro events (moods, memories and contexts) and orange for indicating general listening habits and streaming use.

3.6 Conclusion

After gathering detailed descriptions from ESM replies and daily tracking of their streaming activity via Last.fm for four weeks, I had to broaden the discussion to consider the participant's experience during the entire period, and how this pattern is both illustrative of a

wider pattern and unique to a particular individual (Hektner et al, 2007, p 3). I followed the informants on Last.fm for a couple of weeks after the initial four weeks of data collection had ended, in order to see if any differences appeared. After this period, I also asked all seven informants to screenshot their Discover Weekly and Release Radar playlists within the same week, so I could compare them and find potential similarities. My accumulation of data over time produced a comprehensive impression of individualized and contextualized user practices with regard to how events are influencing streaming patterns. Hopefully, the process of combining qualitative research methods including ESM replies, countless Last.fm screenshots and numerous transcribed interview pages has given life to the data in a way that a numerical table could not do and finally, lead to the discovery of trends or patterns that have not previously been considered (Hektner et al, 2007, p 3).

4 Eventization of listening

In the past two decades, there has been a great deal of research dedicated to the nature and impact of media events in a variety of contexts, and – be it a television drama, news coverage, or sports – such events are generally conceptualized as exceptional, disruptive moments in the mediascape (Cooke, 2013, p 539). They generate a sense of shared experience among the public, allowing the whole society to feel as if they are part of a community, with television in particular acting as a community’s “ceremonial centre” (ibid). Recently, however, scholars have been focusing on the increased volume of media phenomena that have been defined as “events”, along with what has been described as an increasingly common process of “eventization”, that is, the self-conscious construction of a media event (Cooke, 2013, p 539). Transferred to the music industry, with ever-increasing catalogues found in streaming services such as Spotify, Maasø emphasize how events may prove to be an effective way of eliciting attention for particular acts within a given period of time (Maasø, 2016, 17). Thus, in a world that is larger and more diffuse than ever, production companies are increasingly attempting to co-ordinate content across platforms in order to create the kind of disruptive events that seemed to be generated less deliberately in the pre-digital age, when consumers had few options (Cooke, 2013, p 539).

In order to analyse the influence of events on listening activity, I believe it’s necessary to distinguish between micro-level (individual) and the macro-level (collective) events, as Maasø does (Maasø, 2016). The concept of “eventization of listening” (adapted from the German term *Eventisierung* by Ronald Hitzler) is defined as the phenomenon in which outside events and happenings influence streaming patterns on a micro-level (the everyday choices individuals make when using music-streaming services) and on a macro-level (event-related streams common to many users) (Maasø, 2016, p 12). Although major events have prompted listening activity throughout popular music history, as seen by the decades of Top 40 and hit-based radio formats;

“It is only with the popular embrace of music streaming – and so many users sharing instant access to the same sprawling catalogue of music – that it has become possible for big events to grab the attention of a huge group of streamers immediately and in turn introduce eventization as a regular and recurring phenomenon”

(Maasø, 2016, p 14).

When it comes to macro-level patterns, Maasø describes them as ritualized, shared responses that may or not imply gestures in the tradition of media events as described by Dayan and Katz (Maasø, 2016, p 16). This is further exemplified with situations such as the streaming after the terror attacks in Norway in 2011 or other events that provide a shared basis for conversation as the passing of a superstar (ibid). Micro-level streaming, on the other hand, is more individual and can be seen as based more on taste and identity, however, these can run together in a river of similar choices suggesting collective behaviour (Maasø, 2016, p 16). Thus, initially private associations turn into fewer common connotations, based on concurrent events or happenings (ibid).

4.1 The legacy of media events

When defining macro-events, I believe a lot of inspiration can be taken from the concept or traditional *Media Events* and its development. Although, a concept that has received its fair share of criticism during the last 25 years – primarily for being outdated and too broadcast-focused – I find the characteristics of media events and especially the way it has been incorporated in our current media landscape necessary to eventization. While not essentially aimed towards music, I suggest, as done by Maasø and Toldnes (2014) and Maasø (2016), that its characteristics of contributing with a shared experience can be transferred with regards to streaming activity as well. With its focus on live television coverage, *Media Events* made itself vulnerable to criticism in that it was only the product of a particular time in media history and thus it's easy to reject for having little to offer in our digital era (Sonnevend, 2018, p 124). However, as Sonnevend argues, its main intellectual achievements are not bound to television, and it is relatively easy to expand *Media Events* backward (to radio) or forward (to digital media) without compromising its basic tenets (ibid). Young people today may or may not watch television anymore, but they still know the feeling of being immersed in locally, nationally or transnationally shared events (Sonnevend, 2018, p 124).

Dayan and Katz' *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History* (1992) is widely considered to have started the English-language research tradition of studying media events (Ytreberg, 2017, p 309-310). Characterized by an emphasis on media events as “proclaimed historic” and broadcast live, their work was oriented towards ceremonial events from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, following the Moon landing, the U.S. Senate's Watergate hearings

and the wedding of Diana and Prince Charles (ibid). Considered the “high holidays of mass communication”, media events tell a “primordial story about current affairs” and intervene in the normal flow of broadcasting and our lives, based on scripts while transmitted live (Frosh and Pinchevski, 2018, p 136). One of its strengths, underlined by Frosh and Pinchevski, is the proposal that many aspects of media (production, distribution, reception, commentary) could, under certain conditions, come together in a social and political form, the media event, which was clearly distinct, yet had consequences (for public life in particular) (ibid). Further, with broadcasting as one of its basic functions, it reproduces the uneventful routines of daily life which are now and then punctuated by great occasions that resonate in everybody’s memory and thus everyone can recall their own memorable broadcast events (Scannel, 1995, p 151).

4.1.2 Criticism and new contributions

As mentioned, Dayan and Katz’ notion of the concept have been argued to be highly restrictive in the way it is conditioned to broadcast technology and limited to the post-war period (Ytreberg, 2017, 310). With the focus on the “media” in media event, it involved a lot of information about the former but relatively little about events as a more general phenomenon (ibid). Television’s position has, however, gone through several changes in the past years; among them, being retronymically renamed as “broadcast” television (Scannel, 2018, p 154). A “retronym” is a recent neologism for “a word or phrase created to make a distinction where previously none was needed (ibid). Further, while there used to be just “television”, and everyone knew what it meant when the word was mentioned, the digital revolution and the rise of “new media” have downsized it to just another example of “old media” (ibid). During this thesis I have also chosen the word “traditional media” as a collective term for television, newspapers and radio. In other words, television has been renamed in order to be distinguished from video-on-demand and online streaming content in which, argued by Scannel, most people both “inside and outside of academia are seemingly more interested” (Scannel, 2018, p 154). Others have critiqued the concept for only focusing on planned and celebratory events, although it is worth noting that Dayan and Katz have readjusted their own thinking about events in the light of 9/11 (Scannel, 2018, p 155) to also include agonistic events (such as terror attacks, disaster, conflict and war) and 24/7 news to manufacture eventfulness (Ytreberg, 2017, p 311). This is also where research into media events have moved during the last years, towards a greater emphasis on disasters and events of terror, where the media are not in charge (Ytreberg, 2017, p 317).

Couldry and Hepp offer a new definition of media events as certain situated, thickened, centring performances of mediated communication that are focused on a specific core (Couldry and Hepp, 2018, p 116). Thus, the events are able to bind people from different social and cultural backgrounds into a complex process of communication (ibid). The question becomes striking as to which “digital traces” are left when communication about the event and to what extent these traces themselves become part of constructing media events (Couldry and Hepp, 2018, p 116). Furthermore, as the construction of media events is also a question of “size” and “reach”, the analysis of such traces is an issue for the media coverage about the events itself. It is thus only a question of time until some forms of “algorithmic journalism” (Anderson, 2012) or, even more fundamentally, “algorithmic constructions of reality” (Loosen and Scholl, 2017) become part of constructing media events. This means to rethink the articulation of these events even further – as media events, they will remain somehow “centralizing” and related to questions of power, however, to analyse the underlying forces means also to reflect the role of data and algorithms in new ways (Couldry and Hepp, 2018, p 116). Sonnevend argues that ceremonial events might just be as alive as they have been before, although people follow them on a variety of platforms and on a multiplicity of screens (Sonnevend, 2018, p 125). Although the interpretations of ceremonial events are even more fragmented than they were in the 1990s, there are still moments that glue many people to screens that are discussed for years to come (ibid).

4.2 Expanded definition

When studying the various events that influence streaming activity at the micro and macro level, I believe it is advantageous to work with an expanded definition of the event term. This idea gradually developed as I analysed ESM replies, transcribed interviews and studied the informants’ streaming activity in Last.fm while attempting to connect the findings to previous research. While the characteristics of ceremonial media events are helpful in order to define macro events such as festivals and big concerts; their connection with micro events, their relation to streaming and how these events are less static in their temporal and spatial qualities is less clear. Perhaps especially with streaming of music being such a fleeting activity due to unlimited access to an endless catalogue which enables spontaneous listening choices based on influences from a range of outer sources both online and offline. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep these as separate concepts.

Streaming services have activated a particular taken-for-granted “mode of access” which to a stronger degree than before enables individual everyday music management (Hagen, 2016, p 11). The function and role of music in particular daily situations, either in terms of a call to action to enhance the situation (doing homework, relaxing, exercising etc.) or in terms of a secondary activity or background element to accompany said situation (ibid). This was reflected in my data material as well, where the informants often made spontaneous listening choices in order to fit the context they were in or the activity they were performing, as exemplified by the informant Kristian, who noted that, “Desert Blues is pretty comfortable music to listen to when you’re working with other things, like now when I’m writing a paper for school”. And Stian reported that, “When my wife and I play board games with our neighbours we always listen to Jokke or Kaizers Orchestra. Always. Today we chose Jokke to a round of Settlers of Catan. It has become a tradition to listen to these two when we play games, so my choice was based on a specific setting”.

At the same time, they were also often times influenced by their mood and emotions which I consider to be inner factors affecting their music choice. Although music now largely can be taken for granted, it doesn’t make it any less relevant to daily life. On the contrary, music streaming provides musical meaning that is intensely self-referential and personal, and even basic to how individuals perceive themselves, others and their immediate surroundings (Hagen, 2016, p 11). Exemplified by the informant Stian, “I’m listening to Father John Misty – Everyman needs a companion. I’m pretty hungover this morning, and thus it fits perfectly with some depressive lyrics and beautiful melodies”. Here he uses depressive music to mirror the feeling of being hungover, and similarly “I’m having a bit of a heavy day at work, so it seems like a good match to listen to some very self-pitying Warren Zevon”. As seen from these statements, the format of music streaming invite users to actively take part in shaping their experience involving emotional, cognitive, psychological and physical processes (Hagen, 2016). Further, I believe that these individual forms of everyday music management can be linked together through associations and connotations from various outside factors, I also believe inner factors can be included as well.

Emotions and moods can elicit a need for a specific soundtrack associated with, for example, feeling down. And I believe that, although being an individual listening choice, people may have similar associations and connotations with these feelings. These might initially be

inspired by outside factors but not necessarily exclusively. Besides, the association may spread within one's social network and further via social media making it a collective listening practice. Ruud writes about how individuals use music to address specific health problems or emotional difficulties, such as life crises or intense losses (Ruud, 2013, p 165). People undergoing a life crisis seem to experience a whole range of complex emotions, such as emptiness, frustration, anger, sorrow, fear and resignation (Ruud, 2013, p 166). When reporting how music impacts these feelings, Ruud describes how several consistencies emerge: music comforts them, it releases the body from a "frozen" state, and it eases the pain (Ruud, 2013, p 166). At the same time, music seems to invite and/or accommodate change, hope and constructive struggle (ibid). However, music can also make us more vulnerable and inward-facing. We might find that we are not able to hold back tears when we hear certain music, as any defence we may have constructed intellectually breaks down and disappears into this potential musical void (Ruud, 2013, p 167).

Events today are more comprehensively mediatised, while at the same time, with the help of digital and social media platforms, they are seen to feature ever more complex interweaving with the everyday lives of audiences/user, via current affordances for participation, contribution and discussion (Ytreberg, 2017, p 321). Dayan and Katz' original work had limited interest in how events travel from one medium to another, although media content travelled across multiple platforms such as media events receiving coverage from television, radio, and the printed press, at the time of the book's publication (Sonnevend, 2018, p 124). My findings also show that the factors influencing listening activity is fleeting and multi-faceted as the combination of algorithms, one's social network and various digital media forms work through "a wide range of representations that are anything but homogeneous and free of contradiction (Couldry and Hepp, 2018, p 116). This can be connected to Frosh and Pinchevski's use of the term "eventness" to refer to the shift to media events as distributed configurations rather than unified productions (Frosh and Pinchevski, 2018, p 137). Working through assemblages – interconnected points of agency arranged across dynamic networks of technologies, representations and persons result in a multiplication of media devices capable of transmitting to others through networks meaning no stable single perspective associated with the orchestration of the event (ibid). Further, the "center" of the event is highly dynamic, fluctuating with the spreading and dissemination of fees, streams, posts, tweets, images and so on, which as such constitute the event both as a duration and as an aggression (Frosh and

Pinchevski, 2018, p 137). It is a bottom-up making of the event rather than the top-down orchestration of broadcasting (ibid).

4.2.1 Connecting macro and micro levels

I believe it is becoming more and more difficult to separate macro and micro events as a result of a blurring of the public and private sphere, modes of being online and offline, and an increasingly high level of connection between us. One can observe an increasing amount of co-ordination and convergence across media channels of entertainment and the consumption of media events across media is becoming increasingly individualized (Cooke, 2013, p 544). On the one hand, this transmedia construction and consumption of events would seem to undermine the type of community described by Dayan and Katz – reliant on communal experience (ibid). On the other, although we are increasingly consuming music via individual smartphones and drawing inspiration from a variety of source online and offline, our engagement with such media also facilitates both the synchronous and asynchronous direct communication with other consumers, maximizing the sense that an individual is part of a larger community centred on a given event (Cooke, 2013, p 544). Thus, I find that outside factors as Spotify’s weekly updated playlists, a popular television soundtrack and seeing what your friends are listening to can no longer be seen as separate from the everyday management of inner moods, emotions and memories. An expanded definition of events is more about creating a bridge between the outside and inside world as well as the collective and individual and emphasize that events are dynamic, complex and diverse in the way they are spread, interpreted and influencing our listening choices. I think it is important not to set an equation sign between outside factors marking an event which inspire us to listen to a specific song but also incorporate inner, psychological processes in the calculation. And it is this connection between macro level events in the music industry such as concerts, releases and television synchronization and to micro level factors such as one’s social network, memories, identity and taste which I aim to discuss throughout this thesis.

4.3 Releases and concerts

Events are invested with expectations and anticipation, and this event structure also informs the other promoted content in the streaming service, such as daily record releases and other music “news” (Maasø, 2016). Both New Music Friday and Release Radar have a clear event

structure in the way they present new releases on the same day every week, something that by now is known in advance and looked forward to. In that sense, they have a ritual aspect which encourages its users to seek out the playlist on Fridays. The way their recommendations may contribute to collective listening practices will, however, be discussed in more detail in chapter 6. Maasø concludes that eventization may on the one hand bring attention to local events or artists that are not part of the global mainstream, as is the case with the Øya festival for audiences in Norway and especially in Oslo (Maasø, 2016, p 17). Which is line with Lee and Cunningham's research on the geographic flow of music which showed that while many of the most popular artists are listened to around the world, music preferences are closely related to nationality, language, and geographic location (Lee and Cunningham, 2012). On the other hand, it may promote or validate already trending events and artist already dominating global music culture, as when a superstar releases a new album, or dies, or both (Maasø, 2016, p 17).

“I'm listening to The National – I Should Live in Salt from the playlist “This is: The National” created by Spotify. I'm going to see them live tonight so that's the reason I'm listening to it. I've known the band for a long time, but I searched for The National and then this playlist by Spotify came up. I know them primarily from the Øya festival where I saw them live some years back”

(STIAN 28).

Reflected in the statement above, Maasø's findings regarding streaming activity before and after a live experience is to a great degree supported in my findings. Especially big live events like festivals Øya and Bylarm in Oslo, as well as concerts in the big venues located in the city are mentioned several times among my informants as well as reflected in their scrobbling activity. What the statement also shows is how Stian uses the streaming service's curated playlist for the band he is going to see, in order to prepare himself and get hyped for the gig. The fact that he knows the band from a previous concert he attended also shows how events travel through platforms offline via his own memory and online via the streaming service he uses to prepare for the next concert. Karoline also states that she prefers to know the songs well beforehand, in addition to relive the memories from the concert in retrospect by listening to the best songs.

My findings indicate that all the informants are heavy concertgoers who actively seek out gigs, from those of small bands at tiny local venues to international acts in grand arenas. They also consider live experiences to influence their music choices, especially in contributing to create a new spark for the band you are going to see or have just seen perform. While they frequently attend concerts with bands they are already fans of, some of the informants also happily joined friends for something unfamiliar in order to discover something new. These findings also reflect a shift in the music sector in recent years where revenues from live music seem to have overtaken the recorded (Wikström, 2013, p 58). While sales of recorded music have diminished since the early 2000s, revenues from live music have grown rapidly (Wikström, 2013, p 139). Further, most attention is given to the largest and most spectacular global tours with the brightest, shining superstars (Wikström, 2013, p 59), which I also to some degree have chosen to focus my research on. This is partly due to practical reasons since it is difficult to measure and analyse data for all the smaller gigs played at pubs and underground venues around the city, but also because the concerts played at the biggest venues are the ones that will more likely be reflected as collective listening practices among my informants as those concerts are shared by more people. Wikström proposes at least two explanations for the growth of the live music sector as: 1) average ticket prices having increased, and 2) more artists giving more concerts (Wikström, 2013, p 139). These factors caused the number of shows to multiply (ibid). Thus, the loss of revenue from recorded music is also able to explain the increase in the number of events (ibid). A live music experience is difficult to digitize and is therefore considerably easier to control compared to those areas of the industry that have been affected more profoundly by digital technologies (Wikström, 2013, p 139). As a consequence, more and more artists resort to touring, which has caused the number of yearly concert events to grow (ibid).

Several of the informants meant that particularly this fall was very good when it came to concerts they wanted to attend in Oslo, resulting in for example Andreas attending about 2-3 concerts a week within October-November. "It was so many concerts! And suddenly they all came within a very short time period, like Gorillaz, then The National, then The National again the day after, and then we attended something else as well. It was five days in a row, and then it was The War on Drugs two weeks after that. November was crazy, but so fun!". As seen from Andreas' statement the period of gathering data in October-November involved a lot of concerts including several big artists filling the city's large venues. Andreas mentions he has a Facebook group chat with over 40 friends where they plan concerts and keep each

other updated on upcoming gigs. As a result, all concerts tickets he has purchased in Oslo have been due to friends posting in said group, which reflects how social network effects may amplify certain events within a given time period. The way the informants share music and its effects will, however, be discussed further in chapter 5.

4.3.1 Relevant artists were popular

My data show, unsurprisingly, that musicians that were active through releasing albums/EPs or singles and performing concerts during the period of data collection appeared more frequently in the Last.fm scrobbling activity of the informants. Two of the artists that appeared the most were Susanne Sundfør (listened to by Silje, Ingrid, Ida and Andreas,) and No.4 (listened to by Ingrid, Ida, Andreas and Karoline), and both these released new albums during the year and played concerts in Oslo in the fall. Susanne Sundfør's album "Music for people in trouble" also received top reviews in VG, Dagsavisen, GAFFA, Dagbladet and NRK P3 upon its release in September. No.4's album "Hva nå" also received great reviews by GAFFA and Musikkenheter, in addition to performing a sold-out concert at Parkteatret on the 18th of November. Further, the group released several singles prior to their album release, which were included in Spotify's playlist "New Music Friday" on the 3rd, 11th and the 17th of November. This was most likely the case with Susanne Sundfør also, however, Spotify has made it impossible to go back and see previous "New Music Friday" playlists. Therefore, No.4 is safer to say to be tied to eventization of listening for my informants, given that their music releases, concert and Spotify appearance was within my data collection period of October – December. It is also worth noting that the title song for No.4's album appeared as algorithmic recommendations in Karoline, Ida and Ingrid's Release Radar playlists in mid-November. It is also interesting that two of the most streamed artists among informants were Norwegian which illustrates the importance of language, geography and nationality for music preferences.

When it comes to international artists, The National was listened to the most during the period of data collection, and except for Karoline, the band were listened to by all the other six informants several weeks during the four weeks. The National released the new album "Sleep Well Beast" in September and performed two sold-out concerts at Sentrum Scene about two months later in November. This is a pattern that follows several of the artists being streamed the most by my informants as for example The War on Drugs and Sufjan Stevens,

both releasing new albums during the year and with the former performing a concert in Oslo Spektrum during the period of data collection. However, with that being said, all the musicians mentioned can be considered to be relatively established by now with an already big fan base. Susanne Sundfjør has had a successful career since 2007, releasing in total five albums and won several awards (Bergan, 2018). Similarly, The National and Sufjan Stevens have released seven successful albums and The War on Drugs three.

“I’m listening to Susanne Sundfjør – Good luck bad luck, because it’s in my everyday playlist, named “October”, which I more or less listen to every day. It contains a little bit of everything, and generally always fit my mood. ☺ I’ve had a relationship with Susanne Sundfjør for as long as I can remember”

(SILJE 24)

As seen from Silje’s statement above, she states that she has known about Susanne Sundfjør for as long as she can remember. It can, therefore, be argued that the artists mentioned above would have received a lot of streams independently of good reviews, concerts, new music and being included in Spotify’s playlists due to having a well-established group of followers. Thus, one can expect that the informants would listen to their favourite artists regardless of these outstanding factors. However, this might not be the case for new, up and coming musicians who perhaps are dependent on exactly these factors to achieve streams compared to more established musicians.

4.3.2 “Updated listeners”

As seen above, there were indications of collective streaming practices among the informants surrounding well-known artists that had released new recordings in addition to playing concerts during the period of data collection. Something which also became apparent when analysing my data was that most of the informants seemed greatly up to date on new music and frequently searched for new tracks on the very same day as they were released in the streaming service. The word “updated” in itself was also frequently used when describing their listening habits, usually followed by checking Spotify’s weekly updated playlists on Fridays. In the music industry, Friday is the big day when new singles and albums drop which further will dominate radio play and streaming services for the next few days, weeks, and months (Pierce, 2016). Especially, the scrobbling activity of informants Kristian, Ida,

Andreas and Silje could demonstrate the occurrence of playing new releases on the same Friday of release. This activity was rarely seen with Stian which is in line with his answers during the interview, admitting that he doesn't find it as important for him to discover new music. Although he attempts to "stay updated", it's not his top priority, but rather being able to listen to all the music he already loves. This view is also to some degree shared by Karoline, and in several aspects the two share more similar streaming habits compared Ida and Andreas whom are a lot more discovery-oriented. These similarities and differences in terms of discovery will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

During the period of data collection, two Norwegian artists, namely SASSY009 and Fieh, released their first material and subsequently received considerable attention and buzz within a short timeframe. Both artists also popped up several times in the scrobbling activity of the informants and it was interesting to follow the two artists' journey from the release date as they were gradually picked up. Fieh released their debut single "Glu" the 27th of October while SASSY009 released their debut EP "Do you mind" on the 3rd of November.

	Events	Kristian	Ida
Friday 27.10.2017	Releases: First Aid Kit - "Postcard" single release and Oslo Spektrum concert release (13.03.2018) in Facebook via Atomic Soul and Oslo Spektrum, Unge Ferrari - Romeo Må Dø (EP) release , Jonas Alaska - Fear is a demon (album) release , MØ - When I was young (EP) release , Stranger Things sesong 2 release on Netflix , New Music Friday: Franz Ferdinand - Always Ascending , Kygo + John Newman - Never Let You Go , Selena Gomez - Wolves , MØ - WHEN I Was Young , Unge Ferrari + Medina - Venstre , Fieh - Glu , First Aid Kit - Postcard , Kelly Clarkson - Heat, Paradise - Crying , Jon Olav - talentfabrikk , Alan Walker - All Falls Down	Fildar - Me Too (album), Comet Kid - Beaten, Taylor Swift - Gorgeous, Miike Snow - Genghis Khan, Franz Ferdinand - Always Ascending , Jonas Alaska - My Girl , First Aid Kit - Postcard , Weezer - Any Friend of Diane's	Kyle Dixon - Nancy & Barb , Kyle Dixon - Stranger Things

The left column lists new releases and which songs that were included in the current New Music Friday playlist. As seen here, both Ida and Kristian listen to new releases on Friday 27.10.2017.

Screenshot 3: Overview of scrobbling activity and currents events in Excel.

The colours indicate the different artists, and the underlining indicates a correspondence between scrobbling activity and events.

Andreas	Silje	Ingrid
<u>Jonas Alaska - Diamond in the Shadow</u> , Beach Slang, TheSound of Arrows, <u>Paradise - Yellow (EP)</u> , <u>MØ - When I was Young</u> , <u>First Aid Kit - Postcard</u> , MisterWives - Never Give Up On me, <u>Franz Ferdinand - Always Ascending</u> , George Ezra - Barcelona, Radiohead, Kurt Vile - Pretty Pimpin, ondt blod - Finnmark, Weezer - Happy Hour, Bear's Den - Berlin, Beck - Fix Me, No.4 - Det finnes bare vi, 1975 - Milk, <u>Unge Ferrari - Romeo Må Dø</u> , Sløtface - Try not to freak out (album), Mt. Wolf - Aetherlight (album), Daniel Kvammen - Ultraliv, Makthaverskan - In My Dreams, Passion Pit - I'm Perfect, Arcade Fire - We Don't Deserve Love, Taylor Swift - Rady For It, The National. MYE iulemsikk	The National, Sufjan Stevens, James Blake, Susanne Sundfør, The Antlers, The Drums, <u>Kygo - Never Let You go</u> , <u>Selena Gomez - Wolves</u> , Clean Bandit - I Miss You (feat Julia Michaels, <u>Alan Walker - All Falls Down</u> , Willow - Romance, tUnE-yArDs - Look At Your Hands, <u>Jon olav - Talentfabrikk</u> , Munroe/Knutsen - Insider	Thundercat - Captain Stupido, Dawn Penn, Kelly Lee Owens, Klabbes Bank, Barbara Lewis, Silvana Imam, <u>Fieh - Glu</u> , Hanne Hukkelberg, Billie Van, Susanne Sundfør

Screenshot 4: Overview of scrobbling activity and currents events in Excel.

Tied to the screenshot 3 above, this excel sheet illustrates that informant Silje and Ingrid listen to new releases on Friday 27.10.2017. The colours indicate the different artists, and the underlining indicates a correspondence between scrobbling activity and events.

On the Friday of release, the song was added to Spotify's playlist New Music Friday Norway, a playlist carrying the tagline "The best new releases gathered in one playlist" with 105,456 followers at the time being. Ingrid listens to the song several times on the same day as release, and in a couple of days Ida (29th of October) and Silje (9th of November) listen as well before Andreas (1st of December) follows. The song is listed by the radio station NRK P3 and they are guests at the music radio show, "Christine", performing the song live as well as a cover of "Hotline Bling" by Drake which are filmed and posted to YouTube the 14th of November, gathering nearly 8,000 views in the first month. The 25th of November they play a free concert at Victoria Nasjonal Jazzscene in Oslo with a line out the door and with a message that the venue is full two hours before the concert began.

	Events	Ida	Silje	Ingrid
Friday 10.11.2017	<p>SASSY 009 Release concert at Jaeger, New Music Friday: Tone Damli - Strangers, Sigrid - Strangers, Madcon + Arif - Ting & Tang, Philip Emilio + Astrid S - VIII TO, Sigrid - Everybody knows, No.4 - Hva nå, Sandra Lyng - Når julen kommer, Kimbra - Top of the world. Other: Sigrid - Strangers receives good reviews in NRK P3 and gets listed by the station. SASSY 009 - Are you leaving listed. Sigrid - "Strangers" listed on Hypemachine.</p>	<p>Kimbra - Top of the world, Sigrid - Strangers, The Ballroom Thieves, The Staves, Gåte, Simen Lyngroth, No.4 - Hva nå, City of the Sun, Wardruna, Anneliese Danielsen, Tone Damli - Strangers, Iron & Wine - Beast Epic (album)</p>	<p>Selmer, Cigarettes after Sex, The Black Angels, Sigrid - Strangers, Kjartan Lauritzen</p>	<p>Beyonce, SASSY 009, Hanne Kolstø, Siri Nilsen, Sandra Kolstad, Barbara Lewis, Mount Kimbie, Omou Sangare, Van Morrison</p>

Screenshot 5: Overview of scrobbling activity and currents events in Excel.

The left column indicating events for Friday the 10th of November show SASSY 009 having a release concert at Jaeger, a club in Oslo. Ingrid can be seen listening to said artist on the same date. Tone Damli, Sigrid, No.4 and Kimbra released new songs that were included in the week's New Music Friday playlist and are listened to by Ida and Silje.

After releasing two singles in September and October, the group SASSY009 released their debut EP the 3rd of November, which received great reviews in GAFFA and a mediocre review in the international music site Pitchfork. They had already been booked to the showcase festival Trondheim Calling February 2018, and a week after their release, it was also revealed that they were to play at the festival Bylarm March 2018. A song from the EP was included on Spotify's New Music Friday Norway playlist the 3rd of November and was picked up by Silje the same day. They performed a release concert the 10th of November and on the same day, Ingrid begins to listen to them frequently, something she continues to do for about every day until December. The 13th of December, the Øya festival, reveal that both Fieh and SASSY009 are booked to the next year's festival line-up.

These two cases reflect the interplay between music, audience and the media where the music industry is completely dependent on the media as a promoter, user and distributor of its products (Wikström, 2013, p 86). Most professional music artists communicate with their audience primarily via some kind of electronic medium and only a fraction of the audience is able to experience the artist's live performance (ibid). The dynamics of this interplay between

the audience, the music and the media can be illustrated by the “audience-media-engine” model which consists of four variables: media presence, audience reach, audience approval and audience action (Wikström, 2013, p 87). Media presence represents the number of media outlets (television shows, radio shows, websites, etc.) where the artist appears during a specific period of time (ibid). Further, audience reach represents the percentage of the total audience the artist is able to reach through its media presence, while audience approval is defined as the fraction of the entire audience members who respond positively when they encounter the works of a musical artist. Although this variable of course is affected by several other factors, the audience-media engine focuses entirely on how audience approval is driven by the artists’ presence in the media (ibid). Interestingly, SASSY009 kept a very low-key and mysterious profile both prior to and after the day of release. The group are rarely doing interviews and leading up to the release concert they evidently sent a cryptic e-mail to club venue Jaeger with a picture of the trio and a link to their Soundcloud account (Myrvang and Woldsdal, 2018). There was no press release included and no material, but it resulted in a release party. In a way, this indicate that their mysterious and low-key promotion strategy have proven to be an important part of their success, and perhaps how word-of-mouth via social network sites are becoming a more important platform for new bands to be discovered as opposed to through traditional media channels. The way the informants discover releases through social media channels will be discussed more in chapter 5.

As seen through this chapter, my findings included several occurrences of the informants immediately seeking out new music on the day of release. For example, Sondre Justad released his single “Paradis” on the 20th of October which was instantly listened to by Karoline and Andreas. Franz Ferdinand released their single “Always Ascending” on the 27th of October which on the same day is streamed by Kristian and Andreas, in addition to being included to New Music Friday. Another interesting example involves the release of the second season of Netflix series “Stranger Things” on Friday October 27th. On the same day, the new season’s soundtrack was made available for streaming and Ida’s scrobbling activity show her listening to tracks from said soundtrack. The link between television and music came up frequently in ESP replies and interviews and shows that, although traditional television may be perceived as decreasingly important, the medium’s incorporation of music demonstrate its power in orchestrating the media event.

4.4 Television soundtracks

Television, the important medium through which the ceremonial media events characterized by Dayan and Katz were enabled, is currently undergoing a profound period of disruption led by the mobility and ubiquity of television technology, together with the downgrading of scheduled programming (Synchblog, 2017) (Cooke, 2013, p 542). As the competition with the proliferation of other media channels is intensifying, it is now almost impossible to achieve the share of audience as in the golden age of television (Cooke, 2013, p 540). Thus, Cooke argues that a particular shift has occurred from the television event to the “eventization” of television, involving broadcasters using a range of media deliberately to construct a sense of mass viewing community (ibid). In ESM replies and during interviews, the informants rarely mention traditional media channels such as radio or newspapers as source of influences for discovering music – soundtracks from various television shows, on the other hand, are mentioned frequently. This reflects the general trend that has made its mark over the past few decades in which media commodities often are coordinated across media forms and genres exemplified in the way TV shows are released together with its soundtracks (Bolin, 2011, p 11).

Licensing music to TV and film is, from the musicians’ point of view, viewed today as a golden career opportunity as sync-deals have become an important source of revenue (Paterson, 2018), which usually can pay more than physical sales, especially if the song is re-used on multiple platforms (Anara publishing, 2017). Every time a specific song is reproduced in any visual media, the original owner of the music is paid a fee or royalty (ibid) and especially for newcomers to the music scene, sync deals become a stepping-stone towards discovery locally and internationally. Thus, it seems that the integration of the two cultural commodities; music and television, may be more important than ever in order to reach the fragmented and inattentive audiences in both markets.

4.5.1 The power of synchronization over time

Several of the informants mention TV shows from the early 2000s such as “One Tree Hill” and “Gossip Girl”, in addition to recent shows available through streaming such as Norwegian shows “Unge Lovende” and “Skam”. These are described as important influences due to the way they have incorporated music to the point where it is as an important element as the plot, if not more. Although the temporary fame achieved by artists when contributing

to a successful TV show is a well-established phenomenon, it was interesting to discover that informant Andreas still listens to the music he originally heard through the TV show “Gossip Girl” as a teenager.

“(…) With “Gossip Girl”, I didn’t really care for the plot, it was a bit cool and sexy with New York, but I didn’t really care about that. I watched it again to… because there were so many songs, many of my favourite songs to this day actually, that I discovered via “Gossip Girl” like The National and Science. I was introduced to those songs there and it was very relevant and current to the time. When they use music that’s just been released, it gets a lot more of a “now”-feeling to it”

(ANDREAS 27).

Thus, the soundtrack from a TV show that aired for the first time in 2007 turned out to be of great importance in Andreas’ discovery of many of his favourite musicians and songs. Further, it is interesting that he mentions The National as one of the bands the TV show introduced him to, which turned out to be one of the most streamed artists during the period of data collection. This shows how music integrated in television can be remembered even years down the line and highlights how powerful synchronization can be in the way people discover or perhaps rediscover music (Paterson, 2018). It also demonstrates the undeniable influence it can have on the overall success of an artist (ibid). For Andreas, TV show soundtracks were the biggest music influence for him in high school and mentions “The OC”, in addition to the ones listed above, as shows that invested a lot in their music profile. An important common feature between the shows is the focus on current up and coming musicians, which is reflected in Andreas statement emphasizing the relevancy and “now” feeling. It is worth noting that all these TV shows revolved around a group of teenagers and aired while the informants were teenagers themselves. Thus, being a part of its target audience, it is not so strange that it would strike a chord with them. However, for Andreas, the plot didn’t really matter – the music was what made him come back.

Andreas is not alone in his appreciation for the music that characterized his youth, as one of his Spotify playlists titled “Music from TV shows from the 2000s” had over 100 followers at the time of data collection. One reason for this could be the feeling of nostalgia and memories, which will be discussed more in chapter 5. Another potential explanation could be the fact that TV shows were previously more popular. As underlined by Dayan and Katz, the

great thing about broadcasting is its ability to bring one show to millions of people with unmatched efficiency (Anderson, 2009, p 5). Streaming services such as Netflix, HBO, Viaplay etc. can be seen to contribute to the opposite of broadcasting by bringing billion shows to one person each (ibid). Although the informants, all in their 20s, have grown up with digitalization enabling YouTube and pirate sites for downloading, they still have more or less the same music references tied to watching the same TV shows in their youth. Which makes sense as television continued to be a great unifier throughout the eighties, nineties and into the twenty-first-century (Anderson, 2009, p 30). However, what about more recent TV shows? Andreas emphasized that the influence from soundtracks on his music discovery have diminished through the years. At the same time, the informants are still mentioning several of the newer TV shows and the importance of their soundtrack.

4.5.2 Soundtracks for the streaming generation

Kassabian emphasize how the activity of listening has, through its ubiquity, become a frequently less-than-fully attentive activity (Kassabian, 2012, p 51). Most people rarely allocate time to listening as a primary focus, and a lot, if not most, of our listening takes place somewhere in an attentional field that also include other simultaneous activities (ibid). His statements are reflected in my research where the informants' frequently state that their music listening takes place on public transport on their way to or from work and school, while doing homework, exercising, cooking, eating, playing board games or shopping for groceries. A similar case, Kassabian continues, can be made for television that also frequently is accompanied by a range of other activities (Kassabian, 2013, p 53). In other words, television and music can be considered to accompany everyday life, while everyday life accompanies them in return. As a solution, Kassabian highlights how television and music work to make a bid for our undivided attention when joining forces (Kassabian, 2013, p 57). I believe one such way, is the trend with recent drama series creating soundtracks that focus on the new and current in order to attract the young, streaming generation.

For example, instantly after watching both seasons of the Norwegian TV show "Unge Lovende", Karoline searched for the soundtrack playlist in Spotify. "I started making a playlist "Deilig og Digg" in order to have a place for gathering all my favourite songs from the TV-show. After finding the soundtrack playlist, I shuffled my way through it and saved the songs I liked the most". She also mentions the show "Skam" and "Breaking Bad" as

series with great soundtracks she enjoys listening to frequently. Likewise, Stian uses TV soundtracks as a source of inspiration by rewinding and using the app Soundhound when watching an episode and hears a cool song, or by searching for specific soundtrack playlists within Spotify, as seen with Karoline. Although Andreas mentioned that his influence from TV shows has decreased, he does get inspired when something extraordinary comes along which is exemplified with “Unge Lovende”.

“In shows like that you notice that there’s a focus on the music genuinely resonating with its audience, while at the same time fitting the setting it is played in, so I guess I use it a lot, but more unconsciously, I just do it when a song I really need to know the name of pops up, right. It’s not just something that plays in the background”.

(ANDREAS 27)

His statement demonstrates that what makes a soundtrack “extraordinary” is its ability to resonate with its audience while fitting the context it is played in. It is therefore something that makes a connection and is relevant for those in the story, but perhaps just as relevant to us watching. “Unge Lovende” is a Norwegian TV show that since its beginning aimed to use current, unknown, young musicians, thus, offering a platform for artists to be discovered. At the same time, by focusing on Norwegian music, its plot may be perceived as more relatable and authentic for its young, 20-something Norwegian target audience. A similar case can be made with another recent, Norwegian TV success “Skam”, mentioned by the informants. The show even received the term “The Skam effect” to describe the way young, Norwegian artists achieved rapid fame after contributing to its soundtrack. Music journalist Blegeberg underlines that without the young audience and without Spotify, NRK P3’s success would not have affected contemporary pop culture with the same impact and at the same pace as it did (Blegeberg, 2017). Via “Skam” playlists curated by Spotify, Tidal and NRK P3, played on repeat – superstars as Drake and Beyoncé are mixed with less established, Norwegian, urban teen-hop/R&B acts such as Hkeem & Temur and Amanda Delara (ibid). The importance of Norwegian artists is also stressed by the music supervisors of the series, as synchronizing within Norwegian music made the production feel closer to Norwegian teenagers, which was a goal (Ørgrim and Klausen, 2018). Had they only used international music, they would have distanced themselves (ibid).

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the idea of the ceremonial media event has received much criticism in retrospect, especially for its emphasis on television and its power to disrupt our everyday. Streaming has had its effects on both television and music by giving consumers more choice and thus less shared experiences. However, my findings indicate that the integration of the two mediums are an important source on influence for the informants' music discovery which can benefit both. At the same time, I believe an important factor, from a broadcaster's point of view, to create a successful show is achieving a soundtrack that adjusts to the ever-changing streaming trends, especially when reaching young consumers. Concerned with the "new" and current, TV shows wanting to reach a young crowd need to use music that feels relevant and unknown that can spark discovery and, thus, interest. As seen with my informants, there is an urge to stay updated on what is new at all times and in order to do that they have to rely on various sources and platforms for inspiration. Feeding into that urge of young consumers may be a solution for a national broadcaster such as NRK to reach its adolescent audience, especially in a nation as Norway with a high level of broadband diffusion, prevalence of smartphones and comparatively small music market (Kjus, 2016, p 128). "Skam" can be considered better than most when it comes to capturing the "now", which is essential with an internet-based show moving parallel with what we like to call the real world, with pop songs that the characters listen to or could have listened to (Blegeberg, 2017).

At the same time, when studying Spotify numbers, Blegeberg points out the importance of how the music is used in a show, simply being included is not enough. It is with "Skam" as it has been with movies and popular music for years – context has a liberating effect, and the visual images that create the connection the audience often need in order to listen attentively (Blegeberg, 2017). A connection that otherwise in life can show itself in thousand different ways, in the form of a concert or an unforgettable trip (ibid). Thus, popular music has a lot to gain from integrating with television as well, as it can provide a shared context and common associations for audiences. Further, Spotify playlists become an important tool for today's TV shows to market their soundtracks and the gathering of streams for its included artists become a measurement for its success. An official "Skam" playlist created by the broadcaster NRK P3 has over 135 292 followers, while another curated by Spotify has over 163 000, in addition to numerous playlists curated by fans from all over the world. In other words, television can still be considered a great unifier, which interestingly here is manifested in its integration with popular music. An important aspect of both "Unge Lovende" and "Skam" is

that, while they are both produced by the Norwegian broadcasting corporation, NRK, they are also available for streaming online. The recent explosion in content budgets for streaming platform adoptions is good news from a music licensing perspective, and a2017 has proven to be a huge success in terms of film and TV soundtrack popularity (Synchblog, 2017). Further, more screens mean more opportunities to sync music and while one sync alone may not necessarily dramatically affect an artist's exposure to new audiences – when that magic placement happens, within a pivotal scene of a great show, it can be hugely positive (Paterson, 2018). Thus, it seems as if film and TV is driving music discovery in more ways than ever, which have led to more streams for the artists behind them (Paterson, 2018). And from a music industry perspective, such TV shows focusing on Norwegian pop music, become powerful platforms where the local share of music can receive a boost in the sea of global hits. Thus, by coming together, it is evident that television and music are attempting to fight against the fragmentation of attention that they worked so hard to teach (Kassabian, 2013, p 58).

4.5 Events travelling through platforms

As demonstrated in the introduction of this chapter, one of the challenges tied to the definition of the media event offered by Dayan and Katz is the rapidly rising scale and frequency of phenomena defined as “events” (Cooke, 2013, p 542). We now experience a range of different events through various media at different times, and we are presented with ever-changing recommendations based on our individual taste. Hayden White describes what he defines as “modernist events” as something more incomprehensible than anything earlier generations could possibly have imagined, with its documentation so full that it is difficult to work up the documentation of any one of them as elements of a single “objective” story (Cooke, 2013, p 543). Yet, for better or worse such visual representation is becoming ever more central to the way we negotiate these events, driven by the omnipresence of digital media and their ability to circulate music, video and images around the globe instantly, as well as by the need for media providers to capture the attention of consumers in an ever more diffuse market (ibid).

This was something that became apparent when analysing the informant's ESM entries regarding the inspiration for their current listening activity. They rarely included just one

source of influence, but instead tended to include a combination of outer factors like events, the activity they were performing, playlists inside the streaming service, social media, television and more inner factors related to their mood, memories or feelings that given day. Besides, I also found that they often distinguished between the influence for listening to one of their favourite songs at a given time, and the discovery of a new song or artist for the first time. The most fundamental factor for liking a song is whether you heard it before which underlines the importance of exposure; the more you hear something, the more you will like it (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 100-101). Which means that it is less likely that the informants would seek out something completely unknown when they are in need of music suggestions compared to music they already know. Thus, when they discovered new music, it was usually the result of exposure from multiple platforms online and offline, as well as inside and outside the streaming service. For example, when informant Kristian searched for and listened to Drunk “Drivers/Killer Whales” by Car Seat Headrest, he explains that the source of inspiration for the time being was that the song had appeared regularly in Discover Weekly, but the original source for discovery was via a recommendation from a friend. Thus, it is less likely that Kristian would have searched for the specific song if he wasn’t already exposed to it by his friend and subsequently several times via the streaming service. This phenomenon of multiple exposure is further exemplified by informant Andreas below.

“I saw that he (Rostam) played a concert at BLÅ via Instagram and had to check him out. It was pretty random that I listened to him right now. I primarily wanted to listen to him since I saw he was featuring on another song, which was a result of the automatic playback of similar songs via Spotify where this suddenly came on.”

(ANDREAS 27).

This statement shows how an event travel through various media platforms in our digital age, leading to multi-faceted influence on our streaming trends. Again, exposure of an artist from different channels seem to be essential to whether one chooses to check out a new artist or not. Andreas listening to the artist Rostam was a result of the artist performing a concert at a venue in Oslo which he discovered via the social network service Instagram. Additionally, the artist was featured on another song he already was listening to which again, was a due to algorithms within the streaming service recommending him the song based on what he has listened to previously. It’s not clear whether Andreas saw the post about Rostam’s concerts

via a friend or through the venue or artist's profiles, however, it gives a demonstration of events, algorithms and social network effects working in tandem to gather streams.

“I was reading music reviews by NRK P3, and I saw that this song (Sondre Justad – Paradis) had received a good rating. Even though I already had listened to the song prior to reading the review, I wanted to listen to it again to find out whether I agreed with the result, and I do. I was initially informed that the artist was going to release new music via Facebook/Instagram and searched for it on the day of release”.

(IDA 24)

Similarly, when Ida listened to Sondre Justad's new single, it was a combination of exposure from various platforms revolving around the release. What is interesting here is that the song is included in two of Ida's ESM replies. The first time she mentions listening to it, 29th of November, it's a result of the song being included in New Music Friday, although she makes it clear that she was already aware of the release via social media. Thus, the release was something expected and looked forward to by Ida because the artist had already informed about the upcoming event via his social media profiles. On the Friday of release, she searched for the specific song in Spotify and listened to it, while its inclusion the playlist New Music Friday further reminding her about it. Two weeks later, Ida mentions listening to the song again as a result of reading a positive music review about the song published by NRK P3.

In all three cases, the informants were already familiar with the artist they were currently inspired to listen to. The same can be observed with Silje when listening to the song “Sugah Daddy” by D'Angelo which was a result of her searching for the artist and choosing top hits within Spotify, initiated because she just purchased tickets to his upcoming concert in the following summer. At the same time, she specifies that it's a Friday afternoon and that it was “feel-good Friday music!” Further, the discovery of this particular artist was due to a recommendation from a friend. Here, the concert was the initial event which influenced Silje's listening activity, although Spotify's affordances can be argued to bias the particular song choice by having the five most popular and recent songs easily accessible. At the same time, her mood that day affected by the fact that the weekend is approaching also inspired her to D'Angelo's, but none of it would have happened without the recommendation from her friend. To conclude, there are several channels of influence which attract the informants toward macro events such as releases or concerts. While Spotify's affordances and algorithms

can bias our streaming activity towards the new, popular and trendy, which will be discussed in chapter 6, it seems that they don't have as much impact if the recommendation doesn't fit the context or haven't already been suggested by someone in their network. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that the informants' streaming activity don't follow current macro events or Spotify's algorithms blindly, but incorporate them into their activities, contexts and emotions in everyday life. Much like the way the informants not only listened to the soundtrack playlists of TV shows found in Spotify but picked their favourites to add to their own playlist along with new releases and various recommendations from friends. For example, Karoline listened to Pale Honey as a result of visiting a friend whom she recommended their upcoming concert in Oslo to. "My friend was curious about what kind of music it was, so I searched for the artist and played the top hits. After I left, I simply continued to listen to the same band". Further, the informants expressed the ways they gave and received music tips to friends and family, in addition to how they used music to manage various moods and accompany different settings, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

5 Music of everyday life

I believe an important element in the connection between the macro events, discussed above, and micro events can be found in Hesmondhalgh's description of why music matters. It derives from two contrasting yet complementary dimensions of musical experience in modern societies where: 1) music often feels intensely and emotionally linked to the private self, and 2) music is often the basis of collective, public experiences, whether in live performance, dancing at a party, or simply by virtue that thousands of people can come to know the same sound and performers (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p 2). These private and public dimensions of musical experience may further support and reinforce each other, for example in our excitement or sadness at hearing a song can be intensified through the sense that such emotions in response to a particular piece of music are shared by others, or even just that they might be shared (ibid). When listening to music through headphones as you wait on a bus, you might, however semi-consciously and fleetingly, imagine others – be it a particular person, or untold thousands - being able to share that response (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p 2). That sense of sharedness is one of the pleasures of pop music and many people are suspicious of it, perhaps because the feeling of community involved may seem to derive from sentimentality or even a loss of individuality (ibid). However, according to Hesmondhalgh, communal sentiment also derives from music's capacity for enhancing experiences of collectivity, and there are reasons to value that (ibid). This is relevant to the phenomenon of eventization providing shared listening experiences in a liquid modernity, which will be discussed further in chapter 6.

In historical terms, there are now unprecedented technological opportunities for individuals to find emotionally resonant music (Maasø and Toldnes, 2015, p 27). With first portable digital music players, and now streaming services as apps on our smartphones, we are able to carry entire personal collections, through all of the events activities, moods and interactions that constitute daily life (Maasø, 2016, p 14). In other words, these possibilities to use music to control our moods or accommodate any given situation, context, or event are increased exponentially through music streaming services (Maasø, 2016, p 15).

5.1 Memory and emotion management

Research on the role of music in everyday life has given increased insight in “emotional work” and the way in which individuals make active choices in order to monitor moods, feelings and physical energy levels through music (Maasø and Toldnes, 2015, p 26). The influential music sociologist Tia DeNora found that music listening for a lot of her informants awaken strong emotions, and remind them of specific time periods, events or relationships (Maasø and Toldnes, 2015, p 26) (DeNora, 1999). Further, DeNora and psychologist John A. Sloboda, both emphasize the extent to which people now regard music as a personal tool, something to be used for “emotional self-regulation” (Frith, 2002, p 43). Thus, as a technology of the self, music has become crucial to the ways in which people organize memories, identity and their autonomy (ibid). They suggest that the driving force of people’s everyday use is the need to be in control, and that today this means integrating emotional and aesthetic control: creating the setting for the appropriate display of feeling (whether to oneself or to others) (Frith, 2002, p 44).

Similar to Hagen and Lüders findings, my own showed that most of the informants had music experiences connected to life narratives and memories (Hagen and Lüders, 2016). Several of the informants pointed to the fact that they now have had their Spotify accounts for many years, which enables them to go back and listen to old playlists in order to relive memories.

“I have some moments from my teenage years, or my time as a student, and if I listen to the playlists from back then, it’s like coming back to a different time”.

(KAROLINE 23)

This shows the personal aspect of music and the way it is incorporated into our life throughout various phases and events. Vanderbilt explains that we have a tendency to insist that the music we enjoyed when we were younger was better (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 105). This is related to the term “reminiscence peak”, described as “the events and changes that have maximum impact in terms of memorableness occur during a cohort’s adolescence and young adulthood” (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 105). This is much the same way we tend to remember positive life events more strongly than negative events – only the “good” music from our past tends to survive in our memories (ibid). Memories tied in with extreme pleasure or intense sorrow are likely to stick to our minds, due to the brain’s tendency to store sound perceptions

along with their affects and motor-sensory impact (Van Dijck, 2007, p 83). The explicit narratives carried out of these memories are deemed worthy of sharing because they exemplify both universal and intimate experiences (ibid). It's interesting to see that even the young informants, all in their 20s, become reminiscent about their teenage or student past, and how music is an important tool to create these flashbacks. Memories are, thus, not always tied in with specific affective experiences, but may also evoke the mood of a time, place, or event in which the song first became meaningful (Van Dijck, 2007, p 83).

“I'm listening to Kråkesølv – “Romskipet revideres” from the album *Bomtut til jorda*. It was simply a feeling of wanting to listen to this music (...) first and foremost, nostalgia. I've been a Kråkesølv-fan for many years, and I often listen to their old records. Especially when it's raining outside, like it does today. Their music is perfect for grey autumn weather.”

(IDA 24)

Here Ida uses the term nostalgia to describe the feeling that made her choose to listen to the band Kråkesølv, which can be defined as a “sentimental longing or wistful affection for a period in the past” (Oxford Dictionary). Thus, the memory of a different time and the feeling of wanting to reminisce were factors that influenced Ida in her listening activity. This general longing for the mood of a past era is associated with lived experience (Van Dijk, 2007, p 83). And while music can evoke memories of youth and act as a reminder of earlier freedoms, attitudes and events, its emotive power serves to intensify feelings of nostalgia, regret or reminiscence (Van Dijck, 2007, p 84). Although these memories might at first be regarded as personal and thus individual, I believe that since all the informants are around the same age and grown up in the same country, will have some of the same associations in regard to the music from their youth. This was partially proved in the chapter involving TV soundtracks, and how several informants had memories of the music from early 2000s teenage series.

Thus, whereas believing that music is personal may influence one's sharing practices, music listening also promotes a sense of belonging and relates one's sense of self to one's larger community and even one's generation of peers (Van Dijck, 2007) (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 3). Narratives of music often braid private reminiscences into those of others or connect them to larger legacies, leading certain songs to become “our songs”, as they are attached to the experience of various collectives, as family or peer groups (Van Dijck, 2007, p 85). This is demonstrated with Ida, “There are many of my friends that I have kind of developed a

similar music taste with because we have discovered a lot of new music together”. Similarly, Karoline who explains that her whole family has pretty similar taste in music and often give each other recommendations, “Nick Cave is my favourite musician, and he was an influence from my parents when I was very young. I went to my first Nick Cave concert in 8th grade”. Musical memories can thus be understood as an intergenerational transfer of personal and collective heritage, not only by sharing music but also by sharing stories (Van Dijck, 2007, p 86). Thus, that older people are eager to pass on their stories along with their preference for certain recorded music is therefore not surprising (ibid). As a result, Karoline was seen scrobbling a lot of music from the 1970-80s including Nick Cave, Nick Drake, Tom Waits and Patti Smith. “A lot of it is from my parents as I grew up listening to it and found out that I enjoy it and thus has brought it with me”.

Maasø and Toldnes tie the term “musical memory object” – defined as “a musical work that get allowed and authority to symbolize and create social memories and serve as memories” – the active reliving and processing of memories and emotions through streaming (Maasø and Toldnes, 2015, p 43). When I asked the informants if they could remember a specific song or artist they connected with a distinct event – it was not surprising that the terror attacks in Norway July 22th in 2011 and the songs relating to that were mentioned.

“If I listen to those songs I’m right back to it, and I had some personal relations that were very affected by what happened so in that way I was very involved in the whole situation. If I listen to, for example, “Some Die Young” by Laleh, it takes me right back to those rose marches”.

(KAROLINE 23)

Similarly, Stian has specific songs he momentarily associates with that event mentioning “Barn av regnbuen” by Lillebjørn Nilsen and the song “Til ungdommen”. Through these statements, it is reflected how music can act as memory objects and also how a macro event like the terror attack affect streaming activity on an individual, micro level.

While all the examples above demonstrate how music can be used as a tool to relive happy, nostalgic memories or to promote comfort and solidarity after tragic life events, Karoline has also used music for the exact opposite. When Karoline and her ex-boyfriend broke up, she was very vigilant about not listening to any music because she didn’t want it to later remind her of what she felt at the time. In fear of her favourite bands becoming tied to the breakup

she listened to a lot less music than usual during that time period. Thus, aware of the power music when it comes to active reliving of sad memories and emotions, Karoline chose to not listen to music at all. This is interesting as the functions of music are usually only presented as a way to make individuals feel good by “promoting relaxation, alleviate anxiety and pain, alleviate the boredom of tedious tasks and create environments appropriate for particular social events” (Frith, 2002, p 44). In other words, the powerful connection which appears between music and specific life events can also trigger negative feelings to the point that a music enthusiast such as Karoline would choose to not listen to anything. Thus, while events can affect increased streaming activity towards certain songs or artists, they can also do the exact opposite. This was introduced in chapter 4 where Ruud specifies while music can produce a feeling of comfort in moments of crisis, it can also make us more vulnerable and inward-facing (Ruud, 2013, p 167). Further, he thinks music therapy as a discipline should concern itself with these stories, in the interest of learning more about the power of music, in and of itself, as well as the contextual or individual aspects of use of music as a health promoter and regulator within these self-care practices (ibid). Apparently well aware of this effect, Karoline simply chose to not take the risk.

What’s more, the use of music to relive memories doesn’t necessarily have to be linked to an event happening many years ago. Seen below, Andreas enjoys going back to see what he listened to already in 2015, which at the time of the interview were just two years ago.

“It’s fun to go back and see what I listened to a lot during spring 2015. I think it’s supercool, like “wow, I have completely forgotten about this”. Because I listen to an extremely varied combination of music, I forget a lot of what I have listened to previously, and then it awakens a lot of memories. That’s fun!”

(ANDREAS 27)

Here, memory becomes an important factor or point of reference in order to organize the vast music catalogue found in Spotify. As Andreas points out, he forgets a lot of what he has listened to previously. I believe this is partly due to him listening to a lot of music which makes it difficult to remember everything, but also because Spotify’s design and algorithms is built around discovery continuously feeding us the “new” and current. Additionally, it is difficult to find what you have listen to previously within the service and thus playlists curated at a specific time period become important memory objects. Tied to this, Karoline

express that she really enjoys the playlist “Your Top Songs 2017”, a personalized, algorithmic playlist that gathers users most streamed songs during the year. This is a playlist that users receive at the end of the year and is perhaps the only feature where Spotify doesn’t promote discovery, but rather encourages you to listen to what you have already listened a lot to previously. This reflects that the service is aware of how music is tied to memories and context, and that users enjoy listening to music they already know. Additionally, to the playlist mentioned here, users also receive the playlist “The Ones That Got Away” which involves a collection of songs “you’ll wish you’d discovered earlier this year”. In other words, songs that are similar to what you have already been listening to, but haven’t discovered yet, which is more similar to Discover Weekly, but limited to releases of 2017. While findings have demonstrated how the emotions and memories tied to specific life events can influence listening choices, the next chapter will explore how various social contexts and moods further emphasize how music is used as a tool to monitor our everyday life.

5.2 Mood and context

“With Spotify, it’s easy to find the right music for every moment (...) There are millions of tracks on Spotify. So, whether you are working out, partying or relaxing, the right music is always at your fingertips. (...) Soundtrack your life with Spotify”

(Spotify, 2018).

As introduced earlier, the enormous catalogue found in streaming services such as Spotify enables its user to choose the precise music to fit a certain contexts, activity or mood throughout the day. This is reflected in my findings where informants frequently share that their main influence for music choices is about a certain feeling, memory or social context.

“It’s a lot about my state of mind that day. But it also depends, if it’s new music for example I’ll listen to that. I try to listen to what is new. However, generally I guess it’s my mood that decides what I want to listen to at any given moment”

(STIAN 27)

Although Stian tries to listen to new music, which once again shows that keeping yourself updated on music is expected, his mood seems to be the greater decision-maker. The music we listen to is often linked to our sense of “inner self”, expressing our current state of mind,

influencing our mood and giving meaning to our everyday life and routines by organizing experiences and acting as a symbolic referent for actions, experiences and feelings (DeNora, 2000). Besides, above and beyond their presence on desktop computers, music-streaming services arose as applications designed for mobile devices like smartphones and tablets, which further encourages users to listen to them in a host of other contexts (Hagen, 2015, p 636-637). The conditions and purposes of these contexts therefore often determine the music aggregations that users fit for them (ibid). A clear manifestation of the activity of “soundtracking one’s life via Spotify” can be illustrated with the informant Andreas, who is extremely systematic when it comes to organizing his music into folders and playlists based on themes, genres, decades and seasons. The most used playlist in his case, is his season-based playlists with songs that are currently relevant for him at the time being, which primarily involves new releases but also old songs that he wants to rediscover and somehow fit the atmosphere outdoors.

“I have a playlist for each semester, so now I’ve got the playlist “Autumn 17/winter 18”, then when I feel as if winter is coming to an end I’ll begin to remove three quarters of the songs and save them in their own playlist called “Winter 18”, then I’ll rename the original playlist, so it becomes “Spring 2018”. In that way I’ll always have the same playlist, without it becoming too big. So, I’ll archive and move stuff over”

(ANDREAS 27).

Here, context becomes an important outer factor which influences Andreas’ listening patterns, and the music he associates with the current setting and season. In other words, an important aspect which makes the playlist specific for the time being is the way it primarily involves new music. A spirit of exploration governs playlists made in the interests of gathering current releases, exemplifying a context sensitivity that is directed at the immediate present (Hagen, 2015, p 637). Consequently, many users tend to update and manipulate these “main” current-release playlists more frequently than other theme-based or situational playlists (ibid), which is reflected in the way Andreas organizes the songs, moving and archiving them the moment they feel outdated. Hence, while there are millions of songs to discover within Spotify, there seems to be a pull towards the new and current which is ever-changing, something that will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

Since his playlists are named after each season, it would seem that Andreas also associates certain artists with each season. When it’s Christmas, he explains, he’ll add Sufjan Stevens,

while in the summer, he'll add Håkan Hellström. This was something I found to be the case with several of the informants and something that manifested itself when I studied their scrobbling activity at the beginning of December. In the time period of 1st to 3rd of December, Kristian, Ida, Ingrid and Andreas were seen streaming Sufjan Stevens, reflecting a shared winter or Christmas association with this artist. He was also among the most streamed artists during the logging period, along with The National, The War on Drugs and No.4, mentioned previously. While it is worth noting that, along with the other artists mentioned above, Sufjan Stevens released a new album. In November during the period of data collection, "The Greatest Gift" was released, however, I believe their scrobbling activity may additionally be connected to his Christmas album from 2012. Further, given that the informants claim to choose music based on factors as mood, atmosphere and season – these four artists can certainly be argued to fit the atmosphere of October-December. While The National and The War on Drugs have a dark and somewhat sombre rock sound, No.4 and Sufjan Stevens create more melancholic and beautiful pop. This is also reflected in Silje's ESM replies when listening to Sufjan Stevens because "it's nice music to walk outside to" during the autumn. Similarly, Ida explains that certain songs go with a certain mood when it's dark and she has walked outside alone at night occupied with her thoughts, as a kind of modus. As a result, she created a playlist named "Stjerneklart" (Starry night) where she adds songs that are the perfect soundtrack to being outside and look at the stars.

"I'm listening to Siri Nilsen – La det gå. I was in a fall mood (also known as a bit sentimental) and I wanted some calm music with beautiful lyrics. I simply wanted music that correlated with the mood I'm in. Initially, I listened to Kaja Gunnufsen, whom reminded me of Siri Nilsen since they both sing in Norwegian, have quiet music and lovely lyrics"

(INGRID 23)

Similarly, Ingrid associates fall with sentimentality and consequently seeks soothing, beautiful pop music. This tendency shows how personal mood affected by outer factors as season influence the music the informants prefer, which indicate that they use the self as a context for choosing music. It also indicates an interplay between outer contextual factors such as the season fall and one's inner mood which together manifest in specific music choices. This supports Hagen's findings that personal mood, feelings, memories or biographical history are considered the most efficient and practical dictate for sorting music because these internal logics serve as hooks for expediting the evaluation of potential new

playlist tracks (Hagen, 2015, p 639). In other words, these inner factors become important points of reference when making listening choices in the ever-changing and growing music catalogue of Spotify.

However, social events at a micro level are also an important arena for discovering new music, for example when other people are playing music, demonstrated by Karoline, “I have discovered a lot of good music on nachspiels, and I have become pretty good at (...) when someone plays something cool I’ll use shazam or ask the person having the party. And then I’ll write the name down as a note on my phone. As a result, I have a list of names of artists I have written down from various parties etc.” Similar to Hagen’s findings, social events inspire listening and playlist curating too (Hagen, 2015, p 637), evident as Karoline lists up her playlists: a setlist from a concert, a playlist for work, trip-related playlists, bachelorette party playlist, 1st of May playlist and a PRIDE playlist. Likewise, Ida has created a playlist for a friend’s wedding and various playlists for all the music festivals she’s attending. In addition to holidays or seasons, social events in life define playlists which demonstrates how music in playlists made and used frequently during a specific period of time can become contextual representations in retrospect (Hagen, 2015, p 637). This chapter has shown how social events, contexts, moods, and memories on primarily micro-level influence music listening and playlist curation which also reflected similar associations among informants. Further, an important factor in the process of individual micro-level events becoming collective events is social network effects. The ways one’s social network contributes to discovery and shared listening experiences will be emphasized next.

5.3 Social network effects

Although, for the given listener, private listening may be considered more important, Maasø believes that the possibility of private listening becoming a collective practice at the macro-level is greater with regard to streaming compared to earlier mediated music culture because of the instant availability of the music (Maasø, 2016, p 16). Since we are social beings, people tend to want to listen to the same music that others listen to, which makes social influence a powerful force in the markets for popular culture (Elberse, 2013, p 68). Thus, an important factor which affects diffusion is network effects at the macro-level through one’s online and offline social networks (Maasø, 2016, p 16). In other words, music that is heavily

streamed and shared spreads quickly and reaches more listeners over a shorter time than was the case previously, apart from broadcasting (ibid). This analysis of processes in interpersonal networks provides the most fruitful micro-macro bridge, as it is through these networks that small-scale interaction becomes translated into large-scale patterns which, in turn, feed back into small groups (Granovetter, 1973, p 1360). Further, the strength of interpersonal ties can influence varied macro phenomena such as diffusion, social mobility and social cohesion in general (Granovetter, 1973, p 1361).

This phenomenon can also be observed through the growing importance of events in Facebook feeds as expressed by Andreas, “It’s the way Facebook has become now. None from of our generation uses Facebook for anything else than creating events for birthday parties and click attending on concerts and things like that”. His statement reflects how events spread through online networks as word of mouth and as a mechanism is being tailored towards the powerful influence of friends. While at the same time, it is demonstrating a shift of increasingly discovering music through social media, as opposed to radio play (Dewan and Ramaprasad, 2014, p 101). Although these word of mouth processes are in no way new to the music industry (Wikström, 2013, p 164), today’s filters make the process more powerful by measuring so much more of it from so many more people and for a lot more products (Anderson, 2009, p 141). From a Facebook event for a concert you are able to receive information about the given concert as venue, date, time and some promotional text about the band. However, perhaps even more importantly, you can instantly see how many people have set “attending” or “interested” to the concert and which of your friends the list consists of. Similarly, while wanting to listen to the same music as others are listening to, we would want to attend an event that a lot of others are attending too. This is relevant to Gillespie’s discussion of trending algorithms, while they may be new in the technical sense, they are not new to our culture (Gillespie, 2016, p 10). They build on a century long exercise by media industries to identify (and often quantify) what’s popular and innovate the ways in which these measures themselves feed back into cultural circulation (ibid). The way these mechanisms are built into the streaming service and the ways it may lead to cumulative effects will be discussed in chapter 6.

Through the growing importance of social networks, these kinds of uncontrolled processes are no longer merely random flukes but are becoming more or less the norm of music promotion in the digital age (Wikström, 2013, p 164). However, while mainstream music

preferred by the mass market can be considered likely to be publicized and hence discovered through traditional media channels, niche music, with an inherently smaller market of interested consumers is almost exclusively discovered through social media (Dewan and Ramaprasad, 2014, p 2014). This is simply because niche music rarely receives attention of traditional media unless it becomes wildly popular (ibid). Given that the informants consider themselves as music enthusiasts and heavy streamers which make them fitting for the title of “music aficionados”, it is expected that online and offline social networks are an important source of discovery.

5.4 Online discovery

With the prevalence of social media today, most of us receive content daily shared by a lot more people that belong to the group of weak social ties, as opposed to previously when we rarely met people in our peripheral network face-to-face (Maasø and Toldnes, 2015, p 40). This is demonstrated in the way informant Ida discovered the debut single by the artist Fieh via buzz in her friends’ social media profiles.

“She was included in the New Music Friday playlist that Friday, and it’s the same playlist that a friend of mine was included in. And one of the band members of my friend also plays in Fieh’s band so it was shared a lot in social media. I saw that people had commented his post, even though I don’t know him, so it became a kind of merge of people in that milieu”.

(IDA 24)

Something that became apparent in findings and which is also reflected here is that Ida is very much connected with the music industry. She has several friends who are musicians and has studied music herself. Additionally, she is involved in organizing a music festival in the town she’s from where she booked all the performing live acts last year. This involvement combines two of her favourite activities: 1) contributing to people discovering new music through a live experience and 2) helping upcoming bands get discovered. Thus, it makes sense that she gets more easily updated on new bands, releases, concerts as she has strong ties within the “milieu”. Empirical studies of millions of users in social network sites like Facebook confirm previous theories about weaker ties among acquaintances are especially important for the prevalence of new knowledge fast among a big group of people (Maasø, 2015, p 40). Although she wasn’t friends with the musician who posted about Fieh, she has

friends who were, which made it pop up in her feed as well and shows how online social network sites like Facebook contribute to greater diffusion. Granovetter emphasizes the significance of weak ties in achieving bridges which create more, and shorter, paths (Granovetter, 1973, p 1365). This means that whatever is to be diffused can reach a larger number of people, and traverse greater social distance when passed through weak ties than strong (Granovetter, 1973, p 1366).

Similarly, Andreas has also been involved with booking concerts as a student, in addition to having worked at the Bylarm festival in Oslo, which subsequently resulted in a network in the industry. I found additional similarities between Ida and Andreas when it comes to their sharing and discovery practices, which interestingly contrasted those of Karoline and Stian. For example, Karoline admits that she's usually not the first one to get updated on new, upcoming Norwegian artists but often rather hears about them when they have already been hyped for a while, mentioning Cezinando as an example of a new and hip artist she discovered late via NRK. Not being able to keep up with the recent and trendy musicians is something she blames on not having a lot of friends interested in pop culture which causes her to miss new happenings. Further, Granovetter underlines that individuals with few weak ties will be deprived of information about the "latest ideas and fashions" from distant parts of the social system and will be confined to the provincial news and views of their close friends (Granovetter, 1983, p 202). However, although all the informants expressed that their social network is an important source for music discovery, the degree of discovery seems to be dependent on the knowledge and interest of the people within said network.

When it comes to keeping themselves updated on new events in the form of releases and concerts, all the informants expressed following their favourite artists' social media profiles, along with music media channels NRK P3, GAFFA and Musikkniheter. Additionally, various music festivals were mentioned for being active in social media channels. This reflects the importance of these online platforms for disseminating information about events, something most music festivals seem to have realized, as they focus heavily on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat to launch their live acts each year.

"When Roskilde launch artists they use snapchat, they always launch it on Snapchat first. (...) And Trevarefest up in Henningsvær, we're going there now this summer, and they don't have a website up and running yet so they share everything on Instagram and Facebook. I mean, a website in that sense is kind of outdated really (...) Primavera's website is impossible to

understand and then it just gets cumbersome. Then I'll use Instagram to see line-ups and important news instead.”

(ANDREAS 27)

However, an important aspect of using social networking sites for music discovery was that it primarily involved artists the informants already follow, and thus they weren't necessarily introduced to completely new or unknown music but rather new material from musicians they were already fans of. As Ida noted, “I follow various bands on Facebook and Instagram (...) when they come with releases, I'll usually listen if there's someone I'm a fan of” and Karoline who says she follows a great deal of musicians on social media, but then primarily musicians she really loves as she wouldn't follow a musician without knowing their music. This reflects the limitation of social media feeds as it reinforces the preferences you already have, as an effect of powerful word of mouth feedback loops, making the reputation-rich even richer and the reputation-poor relatively poorer (Anderson, 2009, p 141). In other words, as demonstrated, success breeds success and in network theory, such positive feedback loops tend to create winner-take-all phenomena, which is another way of saying that they are powerful hit-making machines (ibid)

5.5 Sharing your music

Via Spotify and Last.fm, music listeners are able to broadcast to the world what they are listening to at any given moment, as the role of record collections as manifestation of people's musical identity has been replaced by a steady flow of information about their real-time musical experiences (Wikström, 2013, p 163). While listening to music has always been a social activity, the “virtualization of the living-room bookshelf” radically transforms the communal aspects of a person's listening experience (ibid). Now sharing one's listening experience is no longer based on purchase decisions made over an extended period of time, but rather on listening decisions made in real-time (Wikström, 2013, p 163). At the same time, music has increasingly becoming an important aspect of the identity one wants to communicate. Although, as streaming activity no longer is shared with only one's intimate friends in the sanctity of one's home, but also Facebook friends and perhaps the general public – sharing practices become complex decisions.

At first, none of the informants expressed any particular interest for the social aspects incorporated in the streaming service. They weren't as concerned with whether their playlists were public or private, nor were they conscious about who they followed or who followed them. This supports Hagen and Lüder's findings about Spotify use involving the archiving of personally meaningful music compilation placing the individual at the centre of the streaming experience, regardless of the social networks that tend to feature so prominently there (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 14). One such feature in Spotify is the ability to follow selected Facebook friends and receive a music feed from them in a sidebar tracking their listening activity real-time. I was interested to uncover whether the informants were affected by this sharing feature; either through inspiration from seeing what others were listening to or if they felt a need to moderate their own behaviour.

Ida doesn't seem concerned about it, "Not really, I don't think a lot of people are following me. I essentially create playlists for myself unless someone have asked me to create playlists for them". Similarly, Stian follows this way of thinking believing that he doesn't have a lot of followers nor follow a lot of people himself, "It's primarily personal, I usually listen to music with a headset on the bus or out walking". As a result, he doesn't really care about what others are listening to and underlines that it doesn't affect his choices when listening.

Karoline, on the other hand, generally feels negatively towards people seeing what she listens to, which also was expressed in relation to participating in this research project in chapter 3. She explained that she doesn't like having to worry about listening to music she would have been embarrassed to tell people she listened to. This shows the elements of reflexive self-presentation that are included in one's motivations for making music public and how personal music exposure is regulated according to expectations of how others will perceive the music (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 8). In other words, what kind of music that is diffused through one's social network is largely related to identity and what kind of music one wants to be associated with (ibid).

When it comes to actively sharing and receiving music recommendations within their networks, the informants had different experiences and positions among their peers. Hagen and Lüders distinguish between all-sharers and non-sharers (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 6). While the former come across as omnivores who are either confident or seemingly indifferent to how music as shared taste statements connect with taste cultures, the latter experience music listening as too personal and intimate an activity to be shared (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 6). While Ida, Andreas and Stian express a certain indifference toward their music

being shared and would fit in the description as all-sharers, Karoline's experience seem more fitting within the non-sharer category. Non-sharers perceive music as a way to show off and their primary motivation is to listen to music without letting others into their personal universe (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 6). Similarly, Karoline is worried about coming across as "too pushy" when giving recommendations to others. Thus, she is more comfortable with receiving recommendations from family and close friends when it comes to discovering new music, especially as she isn't as concerned with doing so herself.

"My family and friends play a pretty big role, especially my brother. He is very good at discovering music that I like that I haven't heard before, especially these indie bands that I listen to, those are tips I have received from him. He plays music himself and listens to a lot of good music, discovering a lot of new stuff and then he gives tips about music he thinks I'll like, and a lot of his recommendations have ended up being my favourites!"

(KAROLINE, 23)

Her statement reflects the importance of one's social network in the discovery of new or niche music, which dismisses Anderson's claim that simply having access to everything via streaming services will make consumers easily find niches. Just because the niches are available in Spotify, does not necessarily make people search for them and especially not when discovery isn't your prime motivation for subscribing to the service. Both Karoline and Stian share that having easy access to all their favourite music via Spotify is more important than discovery, which explains why their network become an important source.

Simultaneously, the level of knowledge and interest of music within the network seems essential, as seen with Karoline's big brother who is "good at discovering". Likewise, Stian mentions a friend he describes as a "music freak" with a huge Spotify playlist including a lot of new music which Stian follows. However, it's not enough to only have knowledge of music in general, one has to be able to distinguish different taste cultures to find the right recommendations to give, as Karoline mentions the significance of her closest friends' recommendations because they know her taste. Similarly, Stian has a group of friends consisting of six-seven people who are very interested in music and whom Stian has attended a lot of concerts with through the years. Within the group they continuously share new music with each other. For both Karoline and Stian, their social network seems to be a better and more reliable source of music discovery, as opposed to the incomprehensible recommendations suggested by the streaming service, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

5.5.1 Opinion leaders

As discussed above, the informants' social networks are important platforms for discovering new music although they expressed different sharing experiences. One important aspect of the level of music discovered by one's network, however, seemed to be the knowledge and interest of the person giving the recommendation. Thus, while Karoline and Stian were not as concerned with discovering new music compared to the music they already love, they are dependent on their social network consisting of people who seek out the new trends and niches and who know their taste well enough to share the right music with them. Literature distinguishes between general market mavens – people who know a lot about many different consumer products and share that information on a regular basis with friends and colleagues – and opinion leaders, who tend to develop expertise in a particular domain as music, food, politics etc. (Tepper and Hargittai, 2009, p 229). Discovery is a key aspect of opinion leadership in culture and opinion leaders tend to have higher status and be well respected in their communities and by their peers (Tepper and Hargittai, 2009, p 229). Correspondingly, Anderson describes a radical change for marketers because faith in advertising and the institutions that pay for them is waning, while faith in individual tastemakers is on the rise (Anderson, 2009, p 98). Today, millions of regular people are the new tastemakers, some of them acting as individuals and others as part of groups organized around shared interests (Anderson, 2009, p 106-107).

Among the four informants chosen for the qualitative interviews, Ida and Andreas stand out as opinion leaders in their tendency to stay up to date with music, seeking discovery through various platforms, and sharing their taste with their social network. This can also be seen in the screenshots of scrobbling activity tied to events in chapter 4, where informants Ida and Andreas, along with Silje and Ingrid frequently listen to new tracks on the same day as release. Ida and Andreas, as mentioned previously, both have several ties to the music industry via their network which they have gained through working with booking of festivals. Similarly, the informant Silje currently works with promotion within a record label, which seemingly also provides her with a great network within the music industry. Thus, it seems to be a shared factor between them which may be an important part of making them opinion leaders among their group of peers. In our age with information being considered ridiculously easy to get, and with the information gathering no longer being the issue – making smart decisions based on the information is now the trick (Anderson, 2009, p 107). For making

smart decisions, recommendations serve as shortcuts through the thicket of information (ibid).

Ida shares music recommendations with many of her friends, with whom she has developed a similar taste due to discovering a lot of music together. She initially calls the process a two-way street with the friends who actually care, although she described it as a lot more giving than receiving on her part when it comes to others. Friends frequently ask her to create playlists for them, arguing that she “knows what is cool to listen to right now”. As a result, she has created playlists to several of her girlfriends and it’s something she loves doing, while feeling grateful for being allowed to do so. In return she receives a lot of positive feedback on her recommendations which usually is followed up by a request to continue refilling their playlists.

“I’ve received snapchats from friends who are like “Oh, that song! It’s so cool! Thank you so much for introducing me to it!” It’s strange because somehow, it’s a part of you. Or being like “ok, I think you would like this”. It’s a way of showing that you know them well enough to know that”.

(IDA 24)

As seen above, being an opinion leader is not only about knowing what the latest trend is, it is also about knowing which songs to recommend to who. Thus, in order to do so, knowing about and listening to a wide range of genres and artists is essential. The statement also reflects the personal aspect of music as Ida considers music as a part of your identity and giving well recommendations to friends is a way of expressing how well you know them. As Bonhard and Sasse point out, friends from whom we seek recommendations are not just a source of information for us – we know their tastes, views and they provide not only recommendations, but also justification and explanations for them (Bonhard and Sasse, 2006, p 189). This is an important factor as to why algorithmic recommendations often fail in comparison, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

Similarly, Andreas has three to four friends he continuously sends music recommendation to and he experiences that they genuinely appreciates it. He also receives a lot of recommendations from a friend and assume that he hopes for some recommendations in return.

“Yeah, even my ex-girlfriend still sometimes texts me and ask for music recommendations, hahah. And then there’s some people that unsolicited ask if I can give them some tips regarding new music, and then I’ll just send them my newest playlist. But I’ve got a sense that people come to me for advice because they understand that I keep myself up to date on what is... in a way, I do the job for them”.

(ANDREAS 27)

His statement reflects the description of opinion leaders offered by Hagen and Lüders as people who share particular recommendations and playlists, curated with effort and ingenuity, which is shareable for an extended network of peers (Hagen and Lüders, 2016 p 8). Similar to the way Ida’s peers saw her as someone who know what is cool to listen to, Andreas’ network perceive him as someone who keeps himself up to date. He also mentions doing a job for them tied to filtering the vast music presented in Spotify’s catalogue, in other words, hand-picking the tracks that are worth listening to and not. Anderson describes the new tastemakers as people whose opinions are respected which influence the behaviours of others and often encourage them to try things they wouldn’t otherwise pursue (Anderson, 2009, p 107). Thus, the new tastemakers or opinion leaders such as Ida and Andreas do an important job in presenting new and perhaps niche music to their network.

As these recommendations come from our closest friends, we are more likely to check them out as opposed to an advert or review coming from above. Studies have shown that the ultimate success of an entertainment product is extremely sensitive to the decisions of a few early-arriving individuals (Elberse, 2013, p 68). Further, if consumers making decisions about the product later in its life cycle are able to see whether the product is popular, they will amplify the choices of those early consumers (ibid). This result is called a “cumulative advantage process” (Elberse, 2013, p 68), which is relevant to the logic of Spotify’s trending algorithms. Thus, successful songs and artists are not necessarily “better” – it is rather a matter of what people like depending on what they think other people like (ibid). Because judgements about the quality of these entertainment products inevitably are subjective, people tend to trust the tastes of experts or individual consumers (Elberse, 2013, p 69), as demonstrated with my informants. Specifically, due to social networks making it possible to spread information and opinions about new products across the globe instantaneously and better because entertainment executives are often keen to benefit from that buzz – online sharing mechanisms can fuel even bigger releases (Elberse, 2013, p 69).

5.4 Taste and identity

“I don’t even understand what I’m listening to besides that I am apparently listening to most things. (...) Like on the way down here, I’ve probably listened to four different genres from four different decades. It’s just a mess”.

(STIAN 28)

An activity that characterized the informants, in addition to instantly scrobbling new tracks on the day of release, was that they listened to a considerable amount of music each day and listened extremely varied – streaming a range of different genres and artists from Norway and abroad. In the 1990s, Peterson and Albert Simkus discovered a trend: from 1982 to 1992, the so-called high-brows began listening to and liking more kinds of music including “lowbrow” genres like country and blues (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 94-95). They called it “omnivorousness” (ibid) – a term Hagen and Lüders use for people who express little concern with the social need to tailor taste statements to specific contexts (Hagen and Lüders. 2016, p 14). Although it was not as if all relations between music and class were vanishing, a new kind of “distinction” had emerged that was less about symbolic exclusion and more about a wide-ranging, inclusionary appreciation (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 94-95).

This reflects how the links between identity, taste and status are more nuanced today, as there are social advantages to having broad tastes or broad knowledge about diverse culture offering (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 8).

“I listen within a very wide range of genres. I listen to a lot of hard rock, not so much metal at the moment, but like ondt blod and Kvelertak. At the same time, I listen to hip hop, and can suddenly listen to Taylor Swift (...), I believe it’s genuinely good pop music and then I find it important to stand by that. You can’t just dismiss certain genres because you have taken a stand. I think that’s nice, however, although I listen to everything I believe I still have taste. My older brother doesn’t care about music, and he’ll listen to “Staysman & Lazz” and stuff like that, right, without really caring about it, and then you don’t have music taste. But I care about it, and that’s where the distinction is.”

(ANDREAS, 27)

Above Andreas is expressing the various genres he listens to while at the same time emphasizing that he still has taste. The old highbrows, now under the flag of the omnivore,

are redeploying their cultural capital, going wider rather than deeper, while redrawing taste hierarchies with horizontal, rather than vertical boundary lines (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 95). Being a snob could actually be counterproductive, as it lessens one's ability to move across different social networks (ibid). In other words, the social benefits of a broad repertoire of taste relate to cultural taste acting as interactional currencies for different types of relationships (Hagen and Lüders. 2016. P 8). Andreas' distinction is related to whether or not someone cares about the music he or she listens to, and not the particular genre it entails, in contrast to his brother who don't care about and music and thus doesn't have taste. At the same time, he uses the artist "Staysman & Lazz", a Norwegian duo who have created a number of extremely popular party-based pop hits, as a manifestation of the kind of music people without taste would listen to. Ida, on the other hand, show signs of being more open-minded, "Today, it's not as much about whether it's a pop hit or not (...) I have realized that it's not as important to put a label on everything as it's not always beneficial. There's a lot of cool stuff there too, and after all there are reasons for hits becoming hits". While Ida and Andreas might have different perceptions of labels and genres, they both indicate that having a broad repertoire of taste is and being able to listen to different music is important. Additionally, they both show signs of looking down on the party hits that often become popular.

According to Hagen and Lüders, share-all participants come across as omnivores who have no filters, literally or figuratively, and appear to experience no need for "culture-switching" (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 9). While I at first would consider both Ida, Stian and Andreas as share-all omnivores, Andreas demonstrated that he does have some filter for what he would listen to, illustrated in the statement earlier, while additionally filtering what kind of music he wants to share with other, exemplified below. He explains that if he's at a party and his friends are using his Spotify account to stream music, he might feel the need to active the private session feature, which makes his listening activity secret.

"I went on a cabin trip lately and my phone was used for streaming music and people started playing songs like "Pinne for Hemsedal" and then I just thought "Oh no!" That's where the line is drawn. I can gladly listen to Taylor Swift and Katy Perry if I enjoy a song but when it involves music that doesn't really represent what I like to listen to, I use "Private session". It crosses a certain line when it comes to what I want people to think of me".

(ANDREAS 27)

Above Andreas reveals that he is affected by the fact that people can see his listening activity. He noted that this does not necessarily affect the music he wants to listen to himself, but that he is aware of the fact that people can see music that he considers as bad, essentially hit-based dance music, tied to his streaming profile. This touches upon the very personal aspect of people's listening activity which can be tied to Goffman's theatrical metaphor of self-performance (Goffman, 1990) (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 2). Suggesting that the self is shaped and staged according to contexts; we consciously edit the impressions we give and attempt to control expressions given off (ibid). Andreas wants to be able to stand for the music which is being broadcasted in his Spotify profile and experiences different social contexts collapsing as the flattened social context of music-streaming offer limited opportunities to deploy taste according to context (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 8). While it was fine to play the music mentioned ("Pinne for Hemsedal") in the social context he found himself in, he doesn't want his other friends outside said context to see him listen to the music via Spotify. This reflects the way self-identity is viewed as a reflexive project in modern society and the importance of cultural objects in this aspect (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 8). As a part of individualization, human identity is transformed from a "given" and into a "task" which changes the actors responsibility for performing that task while also changing the consequences for their performance (Bauman, 2012, p 31-32). As this happens, human beings are no longer "born into" their identities, but rather needing to become what one is, is the feature of modern living (ibid). Thus, the need to cultivate a certain social reputation and avoid being judged on the basis of one's musical taste evokes the human need to maintain their existential security (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 8). Motivations for making music public therefore include elements of reflexive self-presentation, with personal music exposure regulated according to expectations of how others will perceive the music, or them, as a consequence of sharing (ibid).

6 The liquid streaming culture

It is not new to suggest that popular culture, especially in the West, has become ever more concerned with speed (Gillespie, 2016, p. 9). Gillespie highlights how news cycles, the rapidity with which hit movies or popular songs come and go, and the virality of digital culture, all suggest that contemporary culture is more interested in timeliness and novelty (ibid). Henrik Sanne Kristensen discussed how playlists' liquid qualities could be tied to a larger, overarching change of music culture in recent years (Kristensen, 2014). Similarly, Susanna Leijonhufvud uses the term liquid to describe Spotify's affordances as continuously changing over time and between its users (Leijonhufvud, 2018). These are all qualities which are similar to Zygmunt Bauman's characterization of modern life – although its forms may differ in quite a few respects, what unites them all is precisely their fragility, temporariness, vulnerability and inclination to constant change (Bauman, 2012, p 8). Further, to “be modern” means to modernize – compulsively, obsessively; not so much just “to be”, let alone to keep its identity intact, but forever becoming, avoiding completion and staying underdefined (ibid).

According to Gillespie, the cultural shape of culture is a complex combination of being first in time, first on a list, and first as best – a combination that unites other structures like “top 10” or “breaking news” or “soundbite”, something that “trending” as well (Gillespie, 2016, p 9). Similarly, one feature of modern life which Bauman highlights as perhaps the crucial attribute from which all other characteristics follow is the changing relationship between space and time (Bauman, 2012, p 8). The very idea of speed (even more conspicuously, that of acceleration, when referring to the relationship between time and space, assumes its variability, and it would hardly have any meaning at all were not that relation truly changeable (Bauman, 2012, p 9). Thus, the essence of what Bauman has chosen to call “liquid modernity” is the growing conviction that change is the only permanence, and uncertainty the only certainty (ibid). A way to filter the boundless catalogue of music accessible is to focus on exactly “the new” or the trendy. This can be seen with the way Andreas decides which new releases to add in his playlist.

“Often, when I listen to new music, I won’t listen to the whole song right away, I’ll listen to fragments of it and thus I’ll easily find out whether it’s something I’m going to enjoy or not. I’ll add it to my playlist, and if I’ll regret the decision in the case that it turns out to not be my cup of tea, I’ll just delete it. That’s the way I work, a bit fleeting.”

(ANDREAS 27)

Here, it becomes apparent that making the choice to add a new song to his playlist is not a specifically long and thought-out process. Andreas simply skims through the song to see if it’s something that catches his interest before adding it – after all, if he turns out to not like it, which there is a chance of happening since he has only listened to fragments of it, he’ll just delete it. The process seems fast and no time is wasted on listening or deciding – it is better for Andreas to add the track now and then delete it if he doesn’t like it than to not save it and risk losing it. With new releases constantly added to Spotify every week, it is no wonder that it might feel as a race you have to keep up with. It is the mind-boggling speed of circulation, of recycling, ageing, dumping and replacement which brings profit today – not the durability and lasting reliability of the product (Bauman, 2012, p 14). Spotify as a facilitator of music shows characteristics of operating with liquid culture as the service, in addition to offering traditional music i.e. back catalogues of record labels and artists, is contributing to constitute “a permanent revolution by put forward new releases, new sounds made, and co-creating new artists via the affordance of the service” (Leijonhufvud, 2018, p 285). In this way, Spotify is indeed a company of liquid culture (ibid), but the grand task, however, is how to navigate the excess of possible music in the service. To aid its users in this quest, the service provides various possibilities for such navigation (Leijonhufvud, 2018, p 285). However, while filters are crucial in the vast catalogue found in streaming services, they also come with consequences. With filters and algorithms personalized for every user – one can never view everything, nor can anyone else. In other words, liquid modernity describes an era where there are less common entrances where human beings experience the “same” and where the “common” is per se decreasing (Leijonhufvud, 2018, p 279).

6.1 Algorithms and features

In the ESM forms used for this research, the informants had to categorize whether the source of influence for their current listening activity was tied to factors outside or inside the streaming service. Most of the replies stated that the influence came from outside the

streaming service. Influences included specific social settings, concerts, recommendations from their social network, their general mood that day, social media posts, TV soundtracks or other forms of media exposure. The replies that did categorize the source of influence as within the streaming service primarily involved discovering a song from the playlists New Music Friday, Discover Weekly or Release Radar. Somewhat similar to what Hagen found in her research, the editorial or commercial content highlighted in the interface nor algorithmically provided music suggestions were emphasized as particularly important although service-provided suggestions sometimes inspired the informants' music exploration (Hagen, 2015, p 639). This underpins the autonomous music interest among the group of streaming users, however, although the informants express a clear independence in their streaming activity, it was interesting to find that they regularly utilized various features within the service. These included frequently choosing an artist's top 5 hits, the automatic play feature, shuffle and especially the search field.

6.1.1 Spontaneous listening

There were several cases where the informants were seen taking the mechanisms for granted. For example the informant Karoline didn't categorize the influence for her current listening activity as inside the streaming service although she noted both that she "searched for the artist and pressed play on all material" as a result of Spotify suggesting the artist along with other "artists that I haven't listened to in a while". Although searching for a specific artist can be considered an individual choice, the search field immediately gives you autocompleted suggestions as you write. Surprisingly, I found that several of the informants preferred the technique of searching for specific songs, artists or albums rather than using playlists or saved albums. Ida explains that although she does have a good portion of saved albums, she forgets about them and searching takes less time than to check whether she has saved a specific album or not. Similarly, Karoline often forgets the albums she has listened to and enjoyed, and as a result she forgets that they exist for a while before re-discovering them again later. Besides, saving albums and playlists to listen to later involves an aspect of planning ahead which doesn't always fit the informants' spontaneous listening practices.

"There's times when I feel like listening to a specific artist that I don't generally listen to on a daily basis. Like yesterday, I suddenly felt like listening to an artist I haven't listened to in several months,

but that doesn't mean that I'm going to continue to listen to that artist any further. It was a spontaneous choice made in the moment"

(IDA 24)

Ida's statement reflects the liquid aspect of streaming music through which a user can make spontaneous listening choices as a result of having everything available. Maasø argues that music available "on a whim" appears to be a precondition for the possibility of eventization to take place and is arguably one of the fundamental affordances of interactive streaming as such (Maasø, 2016, p 5). Hence, searching for a specific song, artist or album in the endless sea of recordings is an important aspect of making listening choices based on outer factors, in contrast to previously when they were based on the record collection you have at home. This can also be exemplified by the informant Kristian, "I actually woke up with the song "No Surprises" on my mind and wanted to listen to it. But I didn't feel like playing the whole album after listening to top 5".

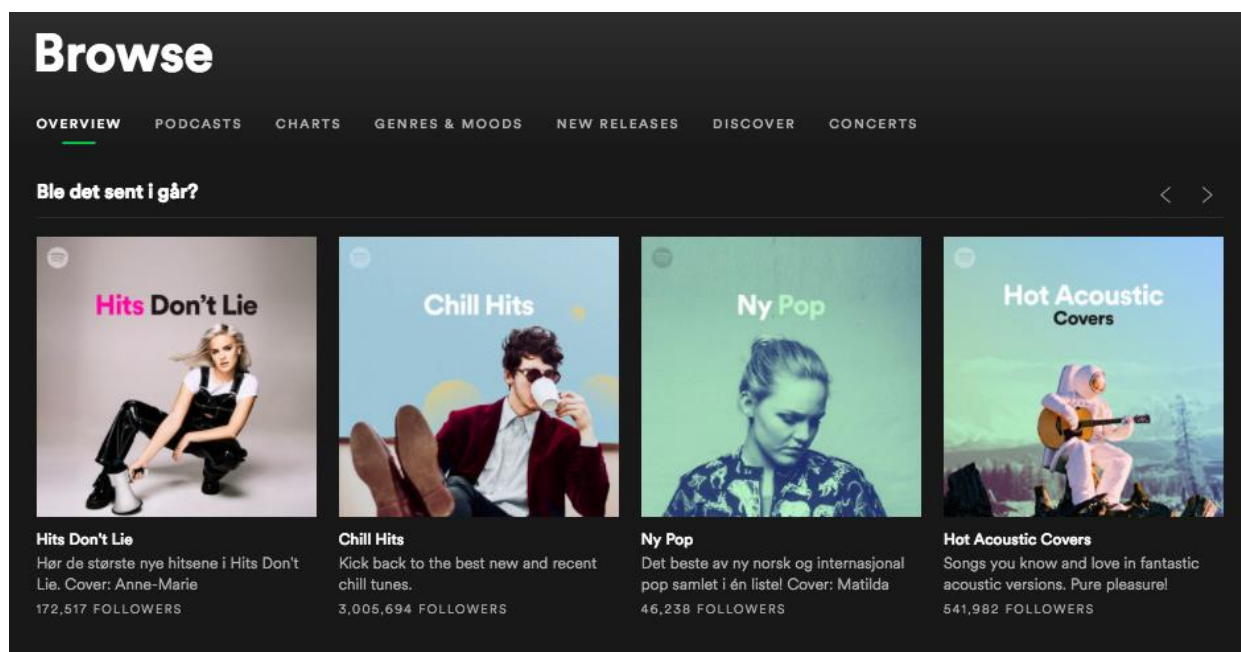
Another reason for using the search field is the ability to use one's previous search history for inspiration when you're out of ideas. Spotify has made it difficult for its users to see what they have listened to previously, and as a result, several of the informants used their search history as well as Last.fm track history to re-discover music. This is exemplified by Karoline, "If I'm going to work early in the morning and don't have any clear idea of what I want to listen to, I'll usually check my search history. Thus, it is often that my search log becomes the decision maker those days". By streaming music, they have already listened to, the informants are sure to find music they know they will enjoy when making spontaneous listening choices. Karoline listened to a lot of Tom Waits during the period of data collection which she explains was a result of her opening her old Last.fm account and discovering that the last musician she had listened to was him, and thus was inspired to listen to him again. In this way, the informants are influenced by their previous listening activity which tools like Last.fm and Spotify's search history enables them to rediscover.

6.1.2 Top 5

The act of searching for an artist was usually followed up with playing what was presented as the top 5 hits among the informants. When clicking on an artist, the first and most prominent offer is these top five songs, according to Spotify's measure of play count, although adjusted for how recent the music is which in other words is a trending algorithm (Gillespie, 2016, p

9). These five songs are not only more likely to be played, they are presented as a way to encounter and evaluate that artist (ibid). Unlike search, trending algorithms offer a glimpse into what may be popular or of interest to others and presents a barometer of “what’s going on” (Gillespie, 2016, p 8). They aspire to say something about public attention, beyond the user-selected community of friends or followers; they say something about cultural relevance, or at least we are invited to read them that way (ibid).

All these features frequently used by the informants during the period of data collection and can be considered various tools Spotify give to its users to make discovery easier or relieve them from some the burden of choice. However, these mechanisms can also steer users to the same artists and tracks by feeding popular activity back to us and giving it privileged placement. This can be observed below with hit-based playlists.



Screenshot 6: *Spotify's homepage (22.04.2018).*

“I’m listening to Emir – “Faller” from the playlist “Hits Don’t Lie”. It was at the front of “Browse”, therefore I chose the playlist. Other than that, I wanted to listen to some new music with a lot of energy to get Saturday started!”

(SILJE 24)

Informant Silje’s ESM reply rendered above was categorized as an influence coming from within the streaming service, which demonstrates that she is aware of Spotify’s influence for her current listening activity. When opening the streaming service, the “Browse” section

screenshotted above is the first thing you see along with four playlists typically tailored towards the season, the day of the week and the time of the day. The screenshot was taken on a Sunday morning and I am thus presented with the caption “Did you have a late night last night?” along with the four playlists. Additionally, the other playlists highlighted when arrows to the right included “The Hangover Cure”, “Morning Coffee”, “Spring Sun”, “Peaceful Retreat” and “Cabin Trip” to name a few. In other words, context-specific playlists for the season of spring, but also quiet and peaceful playlists Spotify assumes you want to hear on a Sunday morning. However, the playlist “Hits Don’t Lie”, where Silje found the song she was listening to, is also found here, along with “Chill Hits”, “Hits Hits Hits”, “Happy Hits” and “New Pop” which are irrelevant to the context.

In other words, Spotify makes hit-based playlists easily available by having three of four playlists highlighted in the interface based on hits or new releases. This reflects the line of thinking that mainstream users want to listen to what everyone else is listening to. The interface and its mechanisms are thus structured to reward popularity with visibility and if visibility matters for further exposure, then the metrics of popularity that determine visibility matter as well (Gillespie, 2016, p 8). Thus, despite marketing itself as a service aimed towards discovery, there are several mechanisms that push its users towards the most popular songs and artists. For example, when informant Ingrid listened to “Africa” by Toto, “I don’t have the artist or song in a playlist, so I’m listening to the first song that popped up when I searched for Toto in Spotify. The songs that follow are the most popular (top 5)”. There is evidence that these metrics not only describe popularity, they also amplify it – indicating a Matthew Effect with real economic consequences for the winner and losers (Gillespie, 2016, p 8). As some consumers use metrics as a representative for quality, it means that early winners can see that popularity compounded (ibid). Further, Gillespie considers the dynamics of these feedback loops as likely to be more pronounced and intertwined for trending algorithms (Gillespie, 2016. P 9). Since the calculation is in near real-time and is fed back to users at exactly the point at which they can interact with that highlighted content, the amplification of the popular is likely heightened (ibid).

Anderson claims that filter technologies sift through a vast array of choices to present you with the ones that are most right for you (Anderson, 2009, p 108). Further, in today’s Long Tail markets, the main effect of filters is to help people move from the world they know (“hits”) to the world they don’t (“niches”) via a route that is both comfortable and tailored to

their tastes (Anderson, 2009, p 109). However, as demonstrated above, there are filters within Spotify that promote the exact opposite. These filters show how algorithms within streaming media may work in tandem to transform micro-events into macro-events (Maasø, 2016, p 16) by making what is already popular more easily accessible.

In the next chapter, I discuss the informants' relation to the various hit-based playlists in Spotify and how it influences their streaming activity.

6.2 No viral hits and charts please

Interestingly, while Spotify's weekly updated editorial and algorithmic playlists such as New Music Friday, Release Radar and Discovery Weekly were mentioned frequently, none of the informants seemed interested in hit-based playlists, viral hits or trending charts.

Consequently, they can be considered to reflect the right side of The Long Tail in streaming statistics, concerned with non-hits and niches. Being heavy streaming users and passionate about music, they also might reflect Mulligan's claim that it ultimately is a relatively niche group of engaged music aficionados that have the most interest in discovering as diverse a range of music as possible (Mulligan, 2014, p 16).

“Charts are not really my thing. Every once in a while, I might check it out, but the songs usually stay there for a very long time (...) “this song has been listed for seven weeks” or something, and that’s not as interesting (...) it doesn’t renew itself as often. Some songs move up and some move down, so I have very few playlists like that where I discover music”.

(IDA 24)

Although she reported that she might check them out from time to time, Ida does not find charts interesting, something she blames on the fact that they simply remain too static.

Likewise, Andreas reported that he used to check them out previously in order to prepare for music quizzes, but he would not use it besides that and definitely not to discover new music.

“No, not really. I used to do it previously when I was a part of a quiz team with a group of friends, and there was usually a round of music-related questions. We would know the majority of the questions, but then there were always included some questions related to hit-based music, and we were completely blank. Thus, we started to listen to charts in advance of

the quiz in order to know what was “in” at the time. Besides that, I don’t use it (...) I definitely don’t go there to find new music”.

(ANDREAS 27)

Judging from Ida and Andreas’ statements above, it seems as if they consider hit-based playlists an inferior source for discovering new music, which demonstrates an inherent individualism in their listening practices. Measures of the popular claim to represent the public and its tastes, though it might be more accurate to say that they momentarily bring a “public” into being around this claim of shared preferences (Gillespie, 2016, p 14). Whether we think of these metrics as reflections about that public or as constituting one, they certainly are often taken as revealing something about that public, by both industry insiders and listeners (ibid). A public is brought into focus, made legible; a listener of Top 40 feels like they know something about their fellow listeners, and about the culture of which they themselves are part (Gillespie, 2016, p 14). Trending algorithms manifested through playlists such as “Top 50 Norway”, “Top 50 Global” or “Viral 50 Norway” make the claim of this calculate public more explicit: this is what “we” or Norway are listening to today (Gillespie, 2016, p 15). Listening to these playlists indicate listening to what the majority are listening to, and thus distancing oneself from these playlists can be a way to not identify with mainstream “consumers flocking like sheep (...) to the familiar and easy to find” (Mulligan, 2014, p 10).

Living in an age of individualism, many of us have convinced ourselves that we are complex creatures marching to our own drummers, unable to be pinned down into safe assumptions (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 86-87). Hence, having your own taste is a reflection of your specialness, as opposed to all the other people following crowds (ibid). For Boudieu, music stood above all else as a shortcut to cracking someone’s taste (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 87) and there is a clear aspect of taste and class in the statements by Ida and Andreas above. Ida explains that today she doesn’t have any problem admitting that she likes a song by a popular artist as Justin Bieber, as opposed to earlier, when she wouldn’t listen to hit-based music as it wasn’t considered acceptable among her friends who listened to jazz. Thus, although traditional taste signifiers have gotten a bit slippery, and in theory, more democratized (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 85), the informants express a sense of pride in not knowing what the current “top 20” playlists consist of. This was also reflected in chapter 5 where Andreas didn’t consider his brother having taste since he listened only to hit-based music. Although, Ida, Andreas and

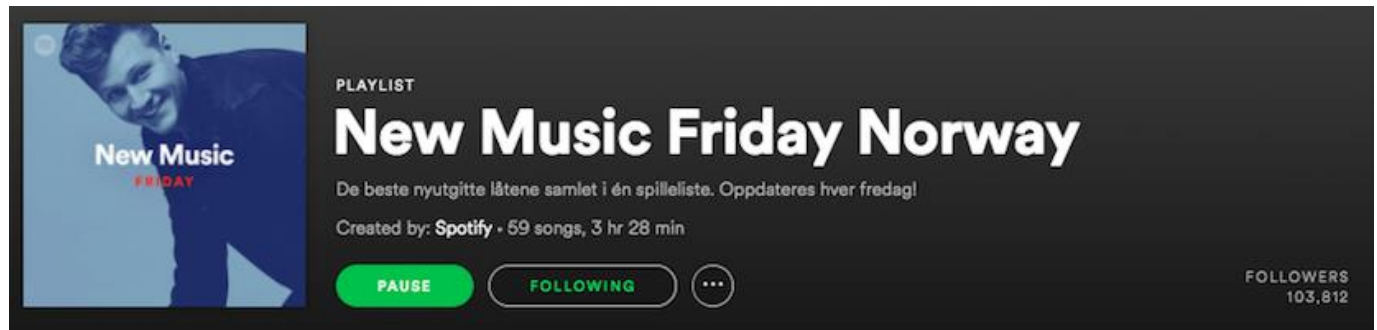
Stian could be considered “omnivores” listening to a range of different music styles, it seems as if playlists based on popularity don’t fit with their image. This reflects the central factor music preferences have in drawing inferences about our personalities, or at least the personality we are trying to project (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 88). One of the reasons for this development is specifically the abundance of music recordings available out there, in addition to the increasingly individualized nature of listening, which together make preferences strongly personal decisions (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 90). Thus, despite several of the informants expressing themselves as “omnivores”, their music preferences are deeply affected by preconceived notions of what an artist stands for, or what a genre means (Vanderbilt, 2016, p 99). In other words, we don’t listen to music objectively, but instead have a knee-jerk reaction to an artist based on something that is not musical (ibid). This was reflected by Andreas in chapter 5 when he reported listening to everything from metal to superstar Taylor Swift because he genuinely liked them, in contrast to listening to songs just because they are popular.

However, my findings showed that despite their claims of having no interest in charts and hit-based music, the informants’ Last.FM scrobble activity demonstrate otherwise. During the four weeks of data collection, all the informants can be observed streaming various hits by superstars that are regularly included on charts. For example, Kristian was listening to Carly Rae Jepsen on several occasions, Andreas listened to Taylor Swift, Ida and Silje listened to Kygo, while Sigrid was streamed regularly by several of the informants. To back these findings further, I compared the streaming activity of the informants to a playlist curated by Spotify named “Årets artister (Artists of the year)” which gathered the most streamed artists in Norway during 2017. These are hence artists that have released hit material during the year which made them gain a lot of popularity illustrated through millions of streams. The playlist included in total 48 different artists ranging from international superstars such as Ed Sheeran, The Weeknd, Nicki Minaj and Adele to Norwegian stars as Marcus and Martinus, Astrid S, Karpe Diem and Cezinando. When studying the informants’ scrobbling activity during the four weeks, I found 19 of the artists that were included in the playlist. Thus, despite being what Mulligan would consider “music aficionados” that one would expect would be oriented towards niches, the informants are streaming a lot of superstars and hits. These findings show that even dedicated music listeners concerned with individual taste are influenced by the cumulative effects of exposure where increased visibility increases consumption and the other way around. While informant Karoline claims not having any relation to trends and

doesn't actively seek out hit-based playlists, she acknowledges that it influences her to a certain degree. This is exemplified with the immensely popular Norwegian hip hop duo Karpe Diem and their recent musical project "Heisann Montebello", "I don't believe I would have listened as much to them if the songs weren't so visible". This reflects the characteristics of the superstar economy identified in chapter 2 where some projects receive privileged placement. At the same time, it supports the reasoning behind "increased product variety" linked to audience fragmentation in which artists need to be active in more outlets than earlier in order to uphold the level of media presence and keep their audience reach on a constant level. The musical project, "Heisann Montebello" by duo Karpe Diem is a good example of a project using a blockbuster strategy through releasing seven singles with their respective music videos, numerous concerts, three-sold out arena performances and a movie. All these outlets have from start (first single release in October 2015) to finish (movie premiere December 2017) have thematically been consistent, creating their own complex universe which was all tied together in an ambitious, full-length movie mixing fiction and concert footage (Myrvang and Alstad, 2018). The movie was shown in theatres across the country for four days and seen by a total of 52 000 people (Halleraker, 2017). The project was very event-oriented in its conglomeration of activities including song recordings, music video recording, film recording and subsequently marketing and merchandising (Cooke, 2013). Such projects can be considered manifestations of eventization in which single releases are embedded within a broader co-ordinated context that appear to transcend the very medium of recording or the streaming platform itself. As a result, it evidently has the power to influence non-fans such as Karoline.

6.3 The event structure of Spotify's weekly playlists

6.3.1 New Music Friday



Screenshot 7: *New Music Friday Norway header (17.11.2017).*

Playlist caption: "The best recently released songs gathered in one playlist. Updates every Friday!"

Marketed as a playlist dedicated to feature the “fifty, freshest, new tracks” hitting the service that week (Billboard, 2017), New Music Friday is about keeping you updated on what’s culturally relevant and the new artists you should know about (McInyre, 2016). Given their scale, Gillespie points to how all social media platforms must provide mechanisms to “surface” new and relevant content in order to offer the user points of entry into and pathways through the archive (Gillespie, 2017, p 2). While the trending algorithms discussed previously were based on feeding users with what tracks are the most popular, the content of New Music Friday Norway is about offer which new songs that are relevant to Norway as a whole. Maasø believes the “trending” phenomenon described by Gillespie is very much akin to eventization; some of the effects are clearly enhanced (if not produced) by algorithms and others by the editorial processes in music-streaming services, or by current events in society and media (Maasø, 2016, p 14).

“I try to listen to this playlist (New Music Friday) every Friday to keep myself updated on new music that have been released and was intrigued by especially this song and have listened to it several times today. I believe it’s primarily because it’s catchy! Besides I’m a big fan of the band (Comet Kid) and have always found it fun to hear new music from them”

(IDA 24).

As seen in the statement by informant Ida above, New Music Friday is regarded as a source that keeps you updated on new music, which is frequently expressed as important for several of the informants. As opposed to Release Radar and Discover Weekly that give personalized

recommendations to every user, New Music Friday Norway presents the same recommendations to everyone, and has thus become a platform for presenting common popular music culture. “It’s a great playlist to get an overview”, Ida explains, “rather than finding music to fit your taste”. Hence, it is tempting to compare New Music Friday to a commercial radio station in the way it has become an important platform for users to discover new music and for artists to be discovered. In the same way that the radio industry grew to be an important role in the dissemination and popularization of culture, New Music Friday show signs of taking over its role, at least for this group of streaming users who no longer listen to radio. An important consequence of the evolution of broadcast media was the establishment of the medium of radio as the music firm’s most important promotional tool (Wikström, 2013, p 63). By spreading their music in the broadcast media, they encouraged the audience to purchase the same music they had just heard in record stores (ibid). With New Music Friday, however, the music presented can be streamed instantly and the artists are rather rewarded with visibility and possibly streams. Additionally, this low threshold for exploring music in streaming services, at no extra cost, makes it virtually risk free to check out editorial content related to an event (Maasø, 2016, p 15). As a result, one can simply move on in the case of stumbling upon something one doesn’t like – freed from the commitment of a purchase or download, as was implied with previous media (Maasø, 2016, p 15).

For radio, the radio show American Top 40, started in 1970, became the carrier signal of pop culture for the generation growing up in the seventies and eighties (Anderson, 2009, p 30). Every week, millions would synchronize themselves to the rest of the nation, obsessively tracking which bands were up and which were down (Anderson, 2009, p 98). This has been transferred digitally to Spotify’s top hits, while those playlists are based on user activity; New Music Friday presents new releases with songs suggested to spark popularity. As my findings demonstrated with screenshot 4 and 5, there is a strong correlation between which songs that were included in the playlist each week and which songs that are streamed by the informants on Fridays. This indicates that the playlist has established itself as a legitimate platform offering which new tracks that are worth listening to, thus, playing an important role in the discovery of new music many users. To back up this argument further, New Music Friday was among the eight most streamed playlists curated by Spotify in 2017 with over hundred thousand followers. Other playlists included “Hits hits hits”, “Chill hits”, “Hits don’t lie”, “Today’s Top Hits”, and “Happy Hits”, leaving the New Music Friday as the only one not directly based on hit-music.

However, one important aspect of the commercial radio station – the rotation policy focusing on constant reiteration and repeated airing of a limited playlist of songs – is not found with New Music Friday (Snickars, 2017, p 195). As the names suggests, the playlist constantly renews itself and instead of pushing the same songs for weeks to its audience, it introduces new songs and relies on user activity to pick up the songs they like and add them to their own playlists before the seven days are out. This way, users can become active participants in their music discovery compared the more passive nature of radio. An important expression of New Music Friday is thus not to give you a list of hits, although this privileged placement can work as an important promotion tool for an artist in order to make their song a hit. It is rather a selection of new releases that could become the next hit, but it doesn't feel as pushy as with a radio station. Because the songs are there only for a limited period of time, it gives you the feeling as if you discovered the song as you checked out the playlist on Friday and saved the song on time. Hence, New Music Friday is not only oriented towards events through its focus on new releases, the playlist has an event structure in itself that makes users gather or “synchronize themselves” to the current new music of the week, resulting in similar streams for a group of artists included. I will consider these effects of New Music Friday to be similar to the festival effects found by Maasø, involving a spike in the streaming of festival artists during the festival week (Maasø, 2016, p 7). Although there is no streaming of the same playlist artists prior to the event, Friday when the playlist is renewed, there is anticipation and expectations associated to this day, and seen from my findings, several of the informants check out the playlist immediately. Then there's streaming of the New Music Friday artists during the week, before the playlist is again renewed, but my findings indicate that streaming of the artists will follow after the week is through. There is, in other words, a shared response to an outer factor namely New Music Friday. There's also a liquid aspect of the playlist, along with other constantly changing recommendations, indicating that a state of temporality which gradually replaces the ultimate and flexibility replaces the solid (Leijonhufvud, 2018, p 44).

Additionally, there is a geographical aspect to the playlist, and Spotify curates different playlists tailored to different countries. These different playlists reflects the importance of nationality, language, and geographic location when it comes to music preferences (Lee and Cunningham, 2012). During the period of data collection of four weeks, four New Music Friday Norway playlists were screenshotted. I found that Norwegian artists were favoured,

however, primarily superstars with high numbers of streams. In several markets, like Norway, there are concerns about the falling local share of music at the expense of global hit-based music (Maasø, 2014, p 3). Although there are editors behind the playlist who carefully picks its content, it gives off the impression as a bottom-up making of the event rather than the top-down orchestration associated with radio or television. This explains why the informants have no problem with sharing that they enjoy this playlist in contrast to the many viral hits and charts that can also be found in the playlist. Ultimately, much like the use of outside events and happenings can inspire and reconfigure one's listening patterns, Spotify's playlists may also be interpreted as co-opting one of radio's traditional functions – delivering us from the burden of choice (Frith, 2002, p 42).

6.3.2 Release Radar

Release Radar is, as mentioned, aimed towards the individual user and can be described as essentially a mixture of New Music Friday and Discover Weekly. The playlist contains music recently released, but by the artist you listen to the most with an orientation towards mainstream acts (McIntyre, 2016). With the huge amount of new music released every week, Release Radar is marketed as a tool to help users find the newly released music that matters to them (Pierce, 2016). The informants generally seem happy about the recommendations exemplified with informant Ida, “Release Radar is genius because there's usually just stuff you want to listen to”. Interested in seeing whether the informants would receive similar recommendations, I asked them to screenshot their playlist in mid-November after the period of data collection had ended. What I found when comparing the playlists was extremely similar recommendations for all seven informants. Several songs were included in three to five of the informants' playlists including Bob Dylan, John Legend, Imagine Dragons, Elton John, Hjerterlag, Sigrid, The Rolling Stones and No.4. Thus, despite being a personalized playlist, Release Radar were extremely similar for these seven informants as a result of being release-oriented and therefore event-specific. However, the recommendations indicate a focus toward superstars, while some are Norwegian, the majority were international and thus the playlist is not aimed towards the discovery of individual niche releases, as opposed to the personalized filters Anderson describes.

6.3.3 Discover Weekly

According to Anderson, simply offering more variety does not shift demand itself (Anderson, 2009, p 53); consumers need to be given ways to find niches that suit their particular needs and interests through recommendation tools and rankings (ibid). Launched in 2015, Discover Weekly was introduced as Spotify's best-ever recommendations including new discoveries combining your personal taste in music with that similar fans are enjoying at the moment (Spotify Press, 2015). Updated every Monday with music tailored towards the individual listener, focusing on lesser-known acts, album cuts, and remixes (McIntyre, 2016), Discovery Weekly seems like the manifestation of niche culture. Thus, the playlist can contribute to drive demand down the tail by revealing goods and services that appeal more than the lowest-common-denominator fare which crowds the narrow channels of traditional mass-market distribution (Anderson, 2009, p 109). Further, when comparing the recommendations received in the Discover Weekly playlists of the seven informants, I found that they varied greatly from one another. None of the songs were the same across playlists, although some of the same artists did appear. For example, informants Karoline, Ida and Silje all received the Norwegian artist Silja Sol in their playlists, but the songs were different. This was the case with two other artists, but that was it. Thus, Discovery Weekly reflect considerable individual recommendations fulfilling Anderson's theory of digital recommendation systems driving demand down the tail.

Informant Silje says she usually checks her Discover Weekly playlist every week to see if she discovers any new songs she would like to add to her playlist, "I usually end up with 1-2 songs I like enough to bring with me further". Out of the approximately two hours' worth of music presented in the playlist each week, 1-2 songs can't be considered to reflect a large amount of good recommendations. Likewise, Ida experience Discover Weekly as generally not good enough, "It might be the same genre and similar to what you like, but it's just not as good". This supports Hagen's findings related to the experience of algorithmic recommendations as mixed and when the service suggest songs that users dislike or do not experience as related, it demonstrates how algorithmic guesses at musical similarity can differ from personal preference (Hagen, 2015, p 634). Thus, as great as music recommendations are getting these days, they evidently aren't perfect. One of the problems with these recommendations, according to Anderson, is that they tend to run out of suggestions pretty quickly as you dig deeper into a niche, where there may be few other

people whose taste and preferences can be measured (Anderson, 2009, p 111). Another limitation involves that many kinds of recommendations tend to be better for one genre than for another, thus, when niches and sub-niches are abundant, there's a need for specialization (ibid).

While Karoline admits that Spotify does have some influence on her music choices, she doesn't actively follow Discover Weekly, New Music Friday nor Release Radar. This was reflected in ESM replies, in which she was one of the two informants who never mentioned these playlists as a source of influence during the four weeks of data collection, "I have done it at times if I feel very experimental, heheh. But usually I'll just listen to the same old" she says. While it happens that she checks them out at times when she's grown tired of what she has listened to recently, she generally experiences that they miss her music taste. Hence, she usually ends up skipping most of the song recommendations and finds it easier to just play the music she already knows and likes. It seems as if one of the problems with Discover Weekly is tied to not being specialized enough in its suggestions, while at the same time lacking context. As seen above, Ida shares that they receive music recommendations that are similar to what they already listen to, but just not as good. This supports Kjus' argument that streaming services not necessarily offer discovery, and the better Spotify's algorithms become at estimating similarity, the more prone the systems are to make it unlikely that listeners will be exposed to unfamiliar genres and develop new tastes (Kjus, 2016, p 130). Besides, as the playlist recommendation can include anything independent of for example release date and no playlist apparently is the same – it can lead to further audience fragmentation and less shared listening experiences. The informants enjoyed New Music Friday and Release Radar because they felt that the playlists keep them "updated" on what is new and fresh. Since both playlists are oriented towards superstars, the informants are discovering something that others are discovering as well, and thus synchronizing themselves to the broader culture through the same points of reference.

6.4 Critical listeners?

Before stating that the informants are a herd of sheep blindly streaming whatever music Spotify suggests in their playlists, it is worth noting that during interviews my findings suggest that this is not the case. Much like critical information gathering in general, the

informants are concerned with using multiple sources when it comes to music discovery. Many have expressed concern that users are ignorant of algorithms and their implications, too often treating complex technical systems as either hopelessly inscrutable or unproblematically transparent (Gillespie, 2016, p 18). Gillespie, however, thinks this may underestimate the kind of inarticulate hesitations many users in fact do feel (ibid), which can be observed in the informants' statements below.

“It is kind of like removing free will in a way, but no, it's just important to have a critical eye towards it and use other channels at the same time to discover. (...) it is alright, they do a lot of the searching job for you. Especially with music, I consider it to be with TV series, with Netflix I believe that I miss a lot of good material because I only receive what they think is fitting for me”.

(ANDREAS 27)

As demonstrated in Andreas' statement above, all informants seemed surprisingly informed and aware of the algorithms and editors of the streaming service and their influence on Spotify's playlists. The general conclusion among the informants was that it was important to stay somewhat critical towards the recommendations received. Interestingly, however, I found that algorithmic recommendations were regarded fairer or legitimate compared to the editorial ones, as seen below.

“I think it's fine because it's algorithms. There is no one sitting and seeding those algorithms, as we know it. In that sense, it's a very fair way to let people discover new music”

(IDA 24)

This reflects a common view of algorithms as unproblematic and automatically generated facts, where user activity legitimizes the playlist as manifestations of the most liked music, or the music they would like according to previous listening history. At the same time, Ida quickly follows up with “(...) there's always people behind the systems, so there's always a reason to stay critical towards that as well. (...) I think it's fair, but then again, you can't be too naïve either, especially with the New Music Friday playlists that are not only based on algorithms, but actual Spotify editors sitting and adding songs”. The statement illuminates that Ida is more critical towards Spotify's editors than its algorithms although she aware that there are people behind them as well.

Generally, there is an inherent ambivalence in Ida's line of reasoning in that on the one hand, it's fair, while on the other you can't be too naïve. Prior research on recommendation systems (RS) have found that, when comparing how advice from friends and RS is perceived, while people overall preferred recommendations from their friends, they appreciated the ability of an RS to provide serendipitous recommendations that broaden their horizons (Bonhard and Sasse, 2006, p 85). This is also seen in Andreas and Karoline's statement in that they are sceptical while at the same time appreciate it as a tool for discovery. For example Karoline says, "It makes it a lot easier to discover new music if you want to, compared to how it was for our parents' generation, as they were dependent on hearing from friends whether or not the new vinyl was any good". At the same time, Karoline admits being a bit freaked out by the fact that they know so much about her music taste, which is something she considers very personal. I believe the zest of Karoline's statement is that algorithms are great for music discovery, "if you want to", followed up with that she considers her music to be something personal. Karoline does not necessarily find it as important to discover new music, at least not through Spotify's recommendations:

"I don't dare taking the chance that Spotify manages to create (playlists with) what I want to hear, so I have a friend with similar music taste as me".

(KAROLINE 23)

She generally doesn't seem to trust Spotify's recommendation skills over recommendations she can receive from friends. This makes sense given that, while recommendation systems aim to emulate the process of seeking advice from trusted sources, users struggle to convert the data they receive into meaningful information (Bonhard and Sasse, 2006, p 84). Thus, the general negative feeling towards the recommendations received from Spotify can be linked to the machinery behind the algorithms being perceived as incomprehensible, secret and hidden due to a lack of transparency. The informants know that it is not a coincidence that they receive the recommendations they receive, and that certain artists are added to editorial playlists and the promotional effects it can bring, but they do not know exactly how the processes or decisions are carried out. Common for most recommendation systems, as Bonhard and Sasse points out, is that they provide little or no information about where these choices come from, and why some items have been prioritized over others (Bonhard and Sasse, 2006, p 84). This is a contrast to when people seek advice from peers or trusted

sources in the “real world” where there are a variety of personal cues, an interaction history, and opportunities to question the advice given (ibid). This seems to be missing in an online system, and thus, when users receive recommendations from a recommendation system without any meaningful explanation, lacking the cues associated with one from a real person, it appears more like search result (Bonhard and Sasse, 2006, p 84). In other words, when we don't understand why these songs are recommended to us, we have difficulty trusting the recommendation. Another aspect of these negative feelings can be linked to individualism. Recommendations are generated for a given user by comparing their existing ratings to those of all other users in the database (Bonhard and Sasse, 2006, p 85). Hence, it initially confirms that your music taste isn't as unique after all as algorithms can easily put together a taste profile based on your listening patterns along with others with similar listening patterns and again give you similar recommendations.

7 Conclusion

The main purpose of this thesis has been to discover to which extent events are influencing users' streaming activity in Spotify through qualitative research. Further, I proposed an in-depth study of the connection between events on macro and micro level and how social mechanisms and algorithms may have a reinforcing effect on the phenomenon of eventization. The research was carried out using seven informants who shared their motivation and inspirations for their current streaming activity for four weeks applying an ESM approach. Additionally, all their streaming activity was studied via the scrobbling feature in Last.fm before conducting semi-structured interviews with four of the initial seven informants. This has been followed up by reflections around the frequently declared outer factors that contribute to specific listening activity such as new releases on Fridays, big concerts and the synchronization of music in popular TV shows. Further, findings revealed that the influence of the events mentioned were usually accompanied by recommendations from one's social network online and offline, management of one's current mood or context, in addition to algorithms and editorial mechanisms within the streaming service. Thus, one of the central discoveries of this research was the way events travel through platforms both online and offline and how outer macro-level happenings are closely tied with one's micro-level music management in everyday life. Finally, I believe these findings contribute to a broader understanding of eventization of listening and how it can be considered a counterforce to the liquid culture that characterizes streaming by providing shared experiences despite a fragmented audience.

Under other circumstances, in a project with more resources, it would have been interesting and beneficial to perform the study with a greater number of informants and over a longer period of ESM research. I believe this could provide valuable findings that could reveal something about eventization in the long-term while at the same time reduce the possibility of observer effects. For a future research project incorporating a similar methodology, a solution to the technical issues experienced with Last.fm could be to follow the informants on Spotify in order to observe their streaming activity in real-time via the service. Using this method of tracking their streaming enables the researcher to receive information about where a current song is played from; a playlist, an album or artist page. By following the informants, one would additionally be able to study the exact date specific songs are added to

the informants' own playlists, while at the same time observe number of followers and which followers they choose to follow. This approach could potentially, however, contribute to a reinforcement of observer effects as following the informants' Spotify accounts would most likely be regarded as very personal. Although, with the exception of informant Karoline, none of the seven informants used in this research expressed any discomfort with me observing their scrobble activity. Moreover, my research only covers a specific group of streaming users as all the informants were music enthusiasts and heavy streamers in their 20s. Hence, I believe an interesting approach would be to include older or more mainstream consumers in order to discover whether distinctive groups are influenced by events in different ways. Further, this thesis stretches itself over a range of subjects while introducing a spectrum of theoretical contributions. As a result, there are interesting ideas and themes that only briefly are discussed which could have been elaborated more. These include for example the way taste is changing with all music is available through streaming and further, how this is affecting the manner we use music to express our identity. In other words, there are certainly various issues introduced that I believe deserve further research.

Below, the most prominent findings discussed throughout the thesis will be presented before providing a conclusion to the research question.

7.1 Events are influencing streaming towards the current and popular

Through the three chapters of analysis and discussion, a range of outer factors influencing the informants' streaming choices have been displayed. Chapter four saw how macro events such as concerts and new releases lead the informants to stream specific artists prior to and after a concert, as well as searching for specific artists on the day of release. Accordingly, the informants' scrobbling activity revealed that the most streamed artists during the period of data collection were artists that were relevant for the time being through recently having released new material, played big, often sold-out concerts in Oslo and received positive attention in traditional media. The artists that gathered the most streams by the informants, namely Susanne Sundfør, No.4, The National, The War on Drugs and Sufjan Stevens, were additionally all established and well-known music groups that already have a stable fan base. Hence, it was suggested that they perhaps would have gathered a fair number of streams

independently of the factors mentioned above, although these factors definitely intensified their visibility and current cultural relevancy. The findings reveal that, besides listening to well-known bands, the informants were greatly concerned with keeping themselves “updated” on new music and discovering up-and-coming bands. This was achieved through a variety of sources such as following the artists’ social media profiles, receiving tips by friends and following Spotify’s weekly updated playlists. Hence, it was interesting to see how the debut material from new, promising artists such as Fieh and SASSY009 were picked up by the informants following the day of release. However, before celebrating the ability to discover unknown bands in the long tail, it is worth noting that although these two music groups released their first songs during the period of data collection, they both received considerable media attention through reviews in Norwegian and international press. This contained being included in Spotify’s New Music Friday playlists, being booked to prestigious music festivals and played their respective concerts in Oslo surrounding the day of release. Therefore, findings demonstrated that the music business has to place its artists in more outlets than previously to break through the clutter by coordinating platforms online and offline tied to the event.

There is not much written about the interaction between television and today’s streaming services, as well as the role of TV in contemporary listening practices. Thus, an interesting finding from my research involved the informants’ frequent use of television soundtracks for music discovery. The informants reported searching for television soundtracks in the form of albums and playlists in Spotify on the day they were released. It was intriguing to uncover that television, the symbol of the traditional media event, is still a relevant medium that contributes to shared experiences through its incorporation of popular music. In contrast, none of the informants listened to radio and rarely discovered new music via newspapers or blogs, which demonstrates how powerful TV synchronization can be for gaining visibility for artists, while at the same time providing an important source of revenue. What’s more, television soundtracks focusing on unknown, young Norwegian artists proves to be successful in reaching young consumers, such as the informants, through creating an authentic and relatable context. Further, by meeting the urge of its young consumers to discover the new and current, these TV soundtracks present a powerful platform where the local share of music streaming is able to receive a boost in the sea of global hits.

Although staying updated on the new and trendy by seeking out discovery through Spotify and playing new singles on the day of release seemed like a general goal among the informants, it was primarily observed with Kristian, Ida, Andreas and Silje. This activity was rarely seen with informants Karoline and Stian who both express that being able to listening to the “same old” music they already love is considered a more important aspect of streaming. Thus, findings in chapter 5 revealed differences among the informants which may affect the level of influence from macro-level events. Karoline and Stian primarily mentioned associations with specific memories, management of their daily mood or current context as the main factors influencing their listening activity, making them more oriented towards micro-level events. Their listening practices were described more as a case of finding songs to listen to among the pool of artists they already know, using their search log history or Last.fm, rather than seeking out current trends and synchronizing themselves to the general popular culture. This activity may reflect the increasingly complex and overwhelming decision of what to play next within the immense music catalogue presented through streaming. Thus, there’s a need for filters in the form of current events, algorithms and opinion leaders in one’s social network that can filtrate the music that is worth listening to and spark discovery.

7.2 Algorithms and social mechanisms as amplifiers

While events have proven to be important for the informants’ streaming activity, findings in chapter 5 and 6 additionally illustrate the importance of being exposed for an artist in several platforms. These include recommendations from one’s social network online and offline, in addition to visibility within the streaming service through Spotify’s playlists. In other words, it is considerably harder for new, unknown artists to be discovered. This reflects the theory of cumulative advantage implicating that initial success breeds success. For users that are less concerned with discovery, their social network becomes an important source of receiving new output. Among the informants, Ida and Andreas showed clear signs of being opinion leaders among their network because of their ability and interest to find which music that is considered “cool right now”. This position was achieved by actively seeking out new music and using various online platforms including Spotify as means of gathering information about new bands, releases and concerts. However, they both additionally have ties within the music industry, and with a network of heavy music enthusiasts, they are continuously updated on

new trends, which are further disseminated through their network. Findings revealed that it was less likely that the informants would seek out music in Spotify that they had not already been exposed to via outside events or through their social network, which means that the streaming service alone doesn't necessarily spark discovery. This was emphasized with informant Karoline who generally wasn't enlightened about new and trendy music as a result of not having ties in her social network that were interested in popular culture.

Although they expressed having music tastes that include a wide range of genres, characteristic of omnivores, all the informants declared having neither interest in nor knowledge of hit-based music. The playlists within the streaming service which continuously gather the most streamed songs were not used as a source for music discovery and were generally communicated in a negative light. Hence, an important finding discussed in chapter 6 included the revelation that all the informants were observed streaming several hits by musicians considered global superstars. The results were supported by the strong correlation with the artists included in Spotify's playlist "Artists of the year" containing the most streamed artists in Norway in 2017. These findings contradict Anderson's notion that the endless catalogue available through streaming will make us discover that our taste is not as mainstream as we might have thought. This revelation proves the opposite, while additionally indicating that Spotify's trending algorithms give privileged placement to artists that are already popular at the expense of relative newcomers. In chapter 6, this was further supported when studying two of the most popular playlists used by the informants for music discovery, new Music Friday and Release Radar, which both turned out to be superstar-heavy for Norwegian and international artists. Other mechanisms within the streaming service such as top 5, automatic suggestions in the search field and hit-based playlists highlighted in the interface are factors which may additionally funnel users toward the new and popular.

However, these findings also indicate a certain yearning in the informants as social beings despite their individualism to listen to the same music as others or be part of a community. This hypothesis was further supported when exploring and discussing the informants' Discover Weekly playlists, where no single recommendation was the same across the informants' respective playlists. Interestingly, the informants generally didn't regard the personalized recommendations they received as good enough. Although similar to what they already had listened to, the music presented were experienced as bad, confusing or simply random. These findings suggest the incomprehensible aspect of algorithmic

recommendations emphasized in chapter 6.4, while at the same time indicating that a lack of context is an issue. In contrast, the playlists New Music Friday and Release Radar focusing specifically on new releases each Friday, and thus carrying ritual characteristics of the traditional media event, received more positive feedback from the informants. While the content of the New Music Friday playlist is the same to every user and Release Radar is marketed as being tailored towards the individual user, findings revealed that the songs that appeared were surprisingly similar across the informant's playlists. This indicates that these event-based playlists not only carry a ritual aspect, but also a unifying one that the informants latently seemed to favour.

7.3 Eventization as a counterforce

Finally, chapter six tied the fleeting and ever-changing qualities of streaming to the term liquid modernity described by Bauman. This was further emphasized using Gillespie's suggestion that contemporary culture in the West is experienced as increasingly focused on timeliness and novelty, exemplified with the rapidity with which popular songs come and go, supported by the virality of digital culture. I believe these descriptions are relevant to several of the themes that have been discussed throughout this thesis including the way today's macro events such as releases and concerts travel through platforms by being more comprehensively mediatized. At the same time, it is fitting to describe the ways users make individual and spontaneous choices of what to listen to depending on their current mood, context and reminiscence of memories. Some of these choices are shared with their social network online and offline according to the ways they want to construct and express their identity which additionally changes over time. Moreover, Spotify's weekly updated playlists, such as New Music Friday, Release Radar and Discover Weekly can also be regarded as liquid in some ways in that their content changes every week resulting in recommendations quickly becoming outdated. Another liquid aspect identified within the streaming service is revealed in personalized, algorithm-based playlists, such as Discover Weekly, which look completely different to every user. Hence, an important element of research findings points in the direction that we as an audience are becoming increasingly fragmented as a result of decreasingly being tuned to the same outlets (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p 88). As a result, it is understandable that, for some, modernity entails a loss of the kinds of collective activity associated with the communal participation in music (ibid).

However, another element of research findings reveal that the various macro and micro events accompanied by trending algorithms and dissemination through social networks are contributing to shared listening experiences. Within the phenomenon of eventization, Ronald Hitzler suggests that media and entertainment culture exists within a constant and self-conscious process of event construction and further, the eventization can be read as a broader process (Cooke, 2013, p 543). In this context, I argue that eventization can be considered a counterforce to the side effects of liquid modernity characterized as “the disintegration of social networks and the falling apart of effective agencies of collective action” (Bauman, 2012, p 14). My research demonstrate how events at the macro and micro level are intertwined and circulated through traditional media channels, as well as within streaming services and through individual tastemakers in social networks. All these elements are influencing the streaming activity of the users and illuminate the importance of events as hooks to organize the vast music catalogue available in Spotify and manage listening in everyday life. Thus, despite living in a world of abundance, the informants are not observed to be “scattering to the winds as markets fragments into countless niches” as Anderson predicted, but make choices incorporating new releases, what their friends are listening to, well-known artists they are about to see live and music synchronized in popular television shows.

With the liquid qualities within Spotify and its emphasis on continuous discovery, Hagen and Lüders found that their informants made efforts to save or stabilize their music listening by creating playlists to combat the tendency for their listening to become fragmented and fleeting (Hagen and Lüders, 2016, p 6). This was a practice I observed in my findings as well, specifically in the way the informants managed their music listening and playlist curation to mirror personal histories and to reflect everyday life, moods and events. These listening practices and playlists later served as “memory objects” to relive these happenings. Similarly, Leijonhufvud’s point of departure is that music streaming essentially emerged in a time where there seems to be an increased space and need for a musical presence in everyday human life (Leijonhufvud, 2018). Further, in that sense, all these small, everyday events on micro-level become important points of reference providing a context to our music listening which become necessary tools for deciding which song to play next. Hence, while the proliferation of media events might seem to stretch Dayan’s and Katz’ original definition to the breaking point, many of these same events ultimately confirm their core principles

(Cooke, 2013, p 544). As identified throughout this thesis, the macro-level events discussed seem to share the ritual and unifying qualities that characterized the traditional media event, along with their attempt to transcend the “normal” experience in order to offer a unique and spectacular moment (ibid). At the same time, they are rooted in the non-mediated world of “live” reality (ibid), which can be applied to the various associations and memories users incorporate to their listening practices at the micro-level. To conclude, this research has discovered that users are, to a great extent, influenced by events when streaming music via Spotify, although the influence is complex as music streaming blends the personal and collective. Thus, the influential power of events is dependent on various platforms both online and offline that are further intensified through algorithms within the service and social network effects. In doing so, these events also create a sense of community that exists beyond the boundaries of for example the concert or TV show within which a given audience participates (Cooke, 2013, p 544). The sense of an event being rooted in the “real world” and of consumers being part of a participatory community on the micro-level, can be found throughout the construction and consumption of contemporary events, even as the proliferation of media channels accelerates in the digital age (ibid).

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Appendix 1: Letter of consent



UiO : Universitetet i Oslo

Forespørrelse om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet Lytttemønstre i strømmetjenesten Spotify

Bakgrunn og formål

Med tilnærmet all musikk konstant tilgjengelig via strømmetjenester, hvilken musikk velger vi å lytte til og hvorfor? Forskningsprosjektet er en del av en masteroppgave ved institutt for medier og kommunikasjon på Universitetet i Oslo og ønsker å bedre kartlegge lytttemønstre i strømmetjenesten Spotify.

Jeg ønsker å komme i kontakt med norskspråklige personer som:

- Er 20-35 år.
- Har interesse for musikk.
- Hatt en Spotify konto i minst et år og bruker denne fem-syv dager i uken.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

- Å fylle ut et elektronisk spørreskjema et par minutter to dager i uka, gjennom fire uker.
- Koble til en tjeneste som logger hvilke sanger du lytter til i en viss periode.
- Et kort oppfølgingsintervju i etterkant av de fire ukene.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og det er kun studenten som vil ha tilgang til disse under prosjektets varighet. Alle deltakere vil anonymiseres og motta kallenavn. Fordi masteroppgaven skrives innenfor et internasjonalt masterprogram vil dessuten all data oversettes til engelsk før publisering. Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 31.05.2018. Elektroniske spørreskjemaer og lydopptak fra intervjuer vil slettes ved prosjektets slutt.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert. Prosjektet er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, og forutsetter godkjenning herfra. Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til prosjektet, ta kontakt med Anne Yordana Lieng Jakobsen på +47 47306473/ayjakobs@uio.no eller veileder Arnt Maasø på +47 41420825/arnt.maaso@media.uio.no.

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 2: Experience Sampling Method Forms

Spørsmål	Svar 8
<h2>Elektronisk spørreskjema om lyttevvaner i Spotify - Karoline</h2>	
<p>Svar så utfyllende som mulig. Ta kontakt dersom spørsmålene er utydelige eller det skulle oppstå noen problemer.</p>	
<p>1. Tid, sted og dato? * <i>Når og hvor lytter du til musikk akkurat nå?</i></p>	<input data-bbox="274 936 1264 1034" type="text" value="Skriv inn svaret"/>
<p>2. Hva lytter du til akkurat nå? * <i>Beskriv hva du lytter til med tanke på artist, album, sang og spilleliste navn.</i></p>	<input data-bbox="274 1196 1264 1294" type="text" value="Skriv inn svaret"/>

3. Hvor hentet du denne sangen fra? *

Beskriv hvorvidt sangen ligger i en spilleliste du har laget selv/en spilleliste du har mottatt fra en venn via sosiale medier/fra et nytt album/søkte opp artisten og valgte top hits osv.

Skriv inn svaret

4. Hva er grunnen til at du valgte å lytte til denne sangen/artisten/albumet/spillelisten? *

Beskriv motivasjonen eller intensjonen for å lytte til denne musikken akkurat nå. Har den et spesifikt formål? En spesifikk setting? Et spesifikt humør? Tid på døgnet? Aktivitet? En spesiell begivenhet? Live opplevelse?

Skriv inn svaret

5. Var det noe innenfor strømmetjenesten som inspirerte deg til å oppdage denne sangen/artisten/albumet/spillelisten? Forklar hva.

*

f.eks. anbefalinger via reklame/tjenestens egne spillelister basert på dine preferanser som Discover Weekly, Release Radar eller Daily Mix/Hitlister/Kontekst-baserte spillelister eksempelvis "Musikk til arbeidsdagen", "Deep Focus" eller lignende/ inspirasjon fra venner via Facebook connect/Annet?

Skriv inn svaret

6. Eller var det utenfor strømmetjenesten?

f.eks. en spesifikk setting/et minne/nylig sluppet materiale fra aktuell artist/presse anbefalinger/hørt om artisten fra venner eller andre via sosiale medier/Film eller TV-serie/Annet?

Skriv inn svaret

Screenshot of the forms used in the ESM study created via Microsoft Office. 1) Time, context and date? When and awhere are you currently listening to music? 2) What are you currently listening to? Describe what you are listening to in terms of artists, album, song and playlist. 3) Where did you find the song? Describe whether it was via your own playlist, a friend's playlist, from an album, searched for the specific artists, chose top 5 hits etc. 4) What was the reason for your choice of song/artisten/albumet/playlist? Describe your motivation for listening to the music you are

currently listening to. Does it serve a specific purpose? A specific setting? A specific mood? Activity? A special event? Live experience? 5) Was it a factor within the streaming service that inspired you to discover this song/artist/album/playlist? Describe what (for example, recommendations via adverts/curated playlists based on your preferences as Discover Weekly/Release Radar/Daily Mix, Hit-based playlists, context-based playlists/inspiration from friends via Facebook/Other? 6) Or was it a factor outside the streaming service? (for example a specific context/memories/newly released material from an artist/attention from the press/recommendation from friends/film or television soundtracks/other)

Appendix 3: Screenshot of the interview overview with colour coding

Comments	Ida	Karoline
The fact that Karoline chooses to rather listen to music she usually listens to, fandom and micro happenings might be more important to her than events and streaming. Ida and Karoline have two different answers to the question of discovery and Spotify. Karoline and Stian got more similar answers.	"Yes, it (discovery) is definitely a factor to why I use the playlists Spotify create with Discover Weekly and the new function where your playlists continues with recommended music . So absolutely, that is an important factor for why I use Spotify ".	Karoline notes that discovering new music is pretty important but that she usually comes back to what she has listened to before . (...) She admits that the threshold can be pretty high for checking out new music if she receives tips and is a bit sceptical about it. While agreeing that discovery is one of the reasons for using Spotify, it's not the most important reason . The main reason for Karoline is having all the music she wants to hear in one place .
Important to also include fandom as something that influence listening choices. Informants mention that they follow musicians they are already fans of on social media to get updated on new releases, which means not necessary discovering completely new music but discovering new releases from their favourite artists.	" I follow various artists and bands on Instagram for example or Facebook. And when they come with new releases, I usually listen to it if there is someone I'm a fan of . And sometimes through newsletters."	Karoline says she follows a great deal of musicians on social media, but then it's musicians that she really likes. She wouldn't follow a musician without knowing their music . Although she admits to having discovered music through blogs and social media, she thinks that it doesn't really influence her music choices as much .
Ida and Karoline also respond differently here. While Ida says she would check out the music when she reads a really good or really bad review (no matter which artist), Ida admits that she usually reads reviews about concerts she already had attended or would want to attend --> which means it's about artists she already know and is a fan of. Ida = more discovery-oriented. Karoline = more fan oriented.	" If there's an artist that have received a really bad review... or a really good one, if someone received top score on their record for example, then I usually always check it out, no matter the artist , just because it is interesting. If there's a review with a medium score I don't bother to check it out because then it means that it doesn't stand out. If someone received the bottom score, I have to check it out because it's so interesting".	Karoline says that she stays updated on traditional press when it comes music, at least a little . Although admitting that when she reads newspapers online, it's usually concert reviews for gigs she attended or would want to attend .

Screenshot of the overview with interview excerpts created in Excel. The statements were colour coded according to theme. Red indicates Spotify, yellow involves social media and purple indicate traditional mass media.