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The Underrepresentation of Female Personalities in EDM

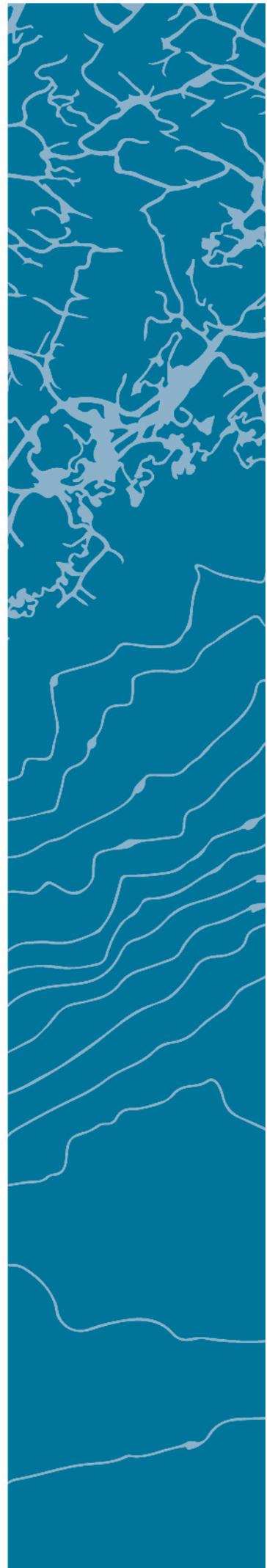A Closer Look into the "Boys Only"-Genre

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There's no language for us to describe women's experiences in electronic music because there's so little experience to base it on.

- Frankie Hutchinson, 2016.

ABSTRACT

EDM, or Electronic Dance Music for short, has become a big and lucrative genre. The once nerdy and uncool phenomenon has become quite the profitable business. Superstars along the lines of Calvin Harris, David Guetta, Avicii, and Tiësto have become the rock stars of today, and for many, the role models for tomorrow. This is though not the case for females. The British magazine DJ Mag has an annual contest, where listeners and fans of EDM can vote for their favorite DJs. In 2016, the top 100-list only featured three women; Australian twin duo NERVO and Ukrainian hardcore DJ Miss K8. Nor is it easy to find female DJs and acts on the big electronic festival-lineups like EDC, Tomorrowland, and the Ultra Music Festival, thus being heavily outnumbered by the go-go dancers on stage. Furthermore, the commercial music released are almost always by the male demographic, creating the myth of EDM being an industry by, and for, men. Also, controversies on the new phenomenon of ghost production are heavily rumored among female EDM producers. It has become quite clear that the EDM industry has a big problem with the gender imbalance. Based on past and current events and in-depth interviews with several DJs, both female and male, this paper discusses the ongoing problems women in EDM face. Finally, this thesis addresses the central research question on how we can narrow down the existing gender gap in EDM through actions such as closing down the sexism, motivating role models, and further raising awareness, thus creating a better future for women in EDM.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1. Introduction

Electronic Dance Music, or EDM for short, has become a big and lucrative genre. But not for females. The British magazine DJ Mag has an annual contest, where listeners and fans of EDM can vote for their favorite DJs. In 2016, the top 100-list only featured three females; Australian twin duo NERVO and Ukrainian hardcore DJ Miss K8. Nor is it easy to find female DJs and acts on the big electronic festival-lineups like EDC, Tomorrowland, and the Ultra Music Festival. Also, it's hard to spot the female music producers of the vast amount of the released EDM records. And for genuine female EDM-producers, they are usually prone to controversies if they made the music themselves. Why do males so dominate this profession?

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the reasons why the women are underrepresented in the EDM industries globally, in an age where both discussions regarding freedom and equality have great value within the modern society. By exploring the experiences of women, and men, have faced in the EDM industry, this thesis shows the issues the majority of women within the industry are facing on a daily basis, and how women experience being the gender minority. Furthermore, this thesis addresses what it literally requires for a DJ to do their job, and to which extent the feminine- and masculine stereotypes have been embodied within the industry.

1.1. Motivation

Since my early teens, electronic music has appealed to me as something new, fresh, and exciting. And it didn't take long for me to get interested in producing music. With the new technological evolvement of the early through mid-2000's, everyone with access to the computer could create the hits of tomorrow. And my interest didn't stop there. When I was of the legal age of 18, I quickly got an interest in playing danceable music to drunk young adults in night clubs. I felt like a rock star, controlling the mood for those lucky enough to experience me from the dance floor. But with the commercialization of electronic music from the last decade, I wasn't alone. Electronic music producers and DJs keep getting more and more recognition. Electronic music went from something nerdy to something rather fresh and hip over the span of a few years. Today, everybody wants to be a DJ, or the music producer responsible for this summer's party anthem. And as the equipment used in dance music production gets better and more accessible, the competition becomes even more preeminent.

One thing I've noticed over the last decade, though, is the lack of women in dance music. Men are almost dominating the industry. Surely you'll see them in the audience at the concerts or festivals, where the genders are usually evenly distributed. But you rarely see them behind the DJ booth. You spot similar gender gaps in other music genres as well, such as heavy metal. While you can argue that a female voice can't reach the lower tones of those heard in genres such as heavy metal, electronic music should be a genderless music genre. Everyone should be able to compose a track on your favorite computer software. Everyone should be able to collect and play, physical and digital music at the nightclub. Electronic music has become quite the boys club. Hence, I found it natural to combine my interests and knowledge of dance music, with the recurring debates of gender equality in today's society, in a thesis on this very subject.

1.2. Statement

I'm an individualist. I don't believe in any system that sacrifices the individual to artificially try to balance the scales by empowering the other side. The individual much to dynamic than to be both reduced and identified by his or her mere attributes such as race, sex, etc. I'm against all social justice movements that try to tip the scales one way or the other; rather I'm for empowering the individual. Attributes are only a small part of what makes us human. Give all the individuals equal standing under the law, and you won't have to spend all this time bickering and separating everyone into their "groups." Also, I recognize that life isn't fair. Someone will always be complaining that they're "oppressed" in some way or another. The truth is we're all oppressed by life in some way or another.

1.3. Importance

The discussions regarding equality are one of the biggest topics of the modern society. Over the course of the recent decades, women's rights have been further legitimized, leading to raised gender equality. Feminist movements, throughout the later 20th century till today, have resulted in women's liberation in the modern society. Though, certain aspects of the underlying social practices within several fields in the society haven't changed as much over time in some areas. We still find a small number of women in labors involving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Similarly, the gender gap is found within health

care, social workers, and at nurseries, to name a few. Said workers have been given a fitting feminine name; pink-collar workers (Elkins 2015).

Even though the DJ profession goes way back to the introduction of the physical record, the commercial DJ industry is comparatively new. And it wasn't until the recent decade, where it ultimately skyrocketed regarding commercial success. If you see a poster for a commercial festival, chances are there's a DJ on the lineup. Though, due to gender stereotypes among electronic music, technology, and hardware, there's hardly any women in the scene. Last year, festivals specializing in commercial EDM music like Beyond Wonderland, BPM, EDC NY, Mysteryland, and Ultra had an average of 7.3 percent of female personalities in the lineups (Friedlander 2016). Thus being heavily outnumbered by the go-go dancers on stage, all usually dressed in sparkling, and tight, bikinis. Is it only natural that women tend to gravitate toward stage acts like exotic dancers, rather than being producers or performing DJs? Or are there any other underlying reasons for the apparent gender gap in the EDM industry? I found this theme to be fitting in the endless debates regarding equality in the modern society, thus being of high importance.

1.4. Research question

The numbers above speak for themselves. The current EDM industry has become quite the exclusive club for the boys. All that has been presented has spawned an opportunity to view this particular theme through an academic lens; how the experiences from the female DJs in the EDM scene of today can be compared to those discussed in existing literature in the gender segregated conversations in modern commercial music. The results concluded in this thesis are based on research on several qualitative interviews, carried out with several EDM-DJs and music producers, located in each corner of the globe. The very leading question of this thesis reads as follows:

  - *How can we narrow the gender gap in the EDM industry?*

1.5. Previous research

The leading question of the thesis will be supported by existing data presented in the following chapters. The selected literature addresses the main issues female DJs have had from the very beginning, till the recent decade. Although there's a very limited amount of

existing research on this exact theme, some books have created the theoretical framework for this thesis. The first one is "Beyond the Dance Floor: Female DJs, Technology, and Electronic Dance Music Culture" (2012) by Rebekah Farrugia. In her book, Farrugia addresses the portrayal of women in EDM, as well as exploring women's place in the production of EDM. At least up until 2012. "Pink Noises: Women on Electronic Music and Sound" (2010) by Tara Rodgers is another central book, where the social networks and gendered trajectories in the various DJ cultures are discussed. Lastly, Bernardo Attias' "DJ Culture in the Mix: Power, Technology, and Social Change in Electronic Music" (2013) examines the DJ culture an the commercial club scenes globally. Although they're all just a few years old, they're already getting outdated, as the EDM scene is in current change. Firstly, the hardware needed for DJs can be narrowed down to a single app on your smartphone or tablet today. And the DJ can, with the literal click of a button, perform a set to thousands. Secondly, the tools and software for creating electronic music are more accessible. Got a laptop? Then you've got all you need. Don't know how to design this particular synth? Read this forum post, or even, go watch a tutorial on any multimedia site such as YouTube. Lastly, in the light of social media, new ways to discover, discuss, and market new music are now easier than ever. In addition, social media has also created an over-saturated scene. These are all reasons why the articles online are equally valued throughout the thesis. Other articles cited in this thesis, mostly from genre-related blogs and magazines, all addresses the gender imbalance, sexism, credibility, and authenticity in the light of the commercialization of EDM.

1.6. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter, I've addressed the theme of this thesis, presented the research questions. Also, I've included previous data which will be valued throughout the paper. In Chapters 2 and 3, I'll introduce the theoretical fundament for the several relevant questions presented in the methodology. I decided to structure the theoretical part into two chapters; the past and the current developments in the industry. The methodology is presented in Chapter 4, where I introduce the research design, validity, and implementation. This data is provided in Chapter 5, and later on discussed in Chapter 6. Finally, in the subsequent section, I conclude with a summary of my findings, where I answer the central question in the thesis.

The references are presented in the final chapter in APA 6th format, as suggested and preferred by the University.

2. The EDM genre

Dance music has evolved the recent decades very much. In 2004, Dutch DJ Tiësto performed at the Greece Summer Olympics (Hancox 2011), DJs play at the Super Bowl, they work with Cirque Du Soleil (Smith 2013), and music producers are even being awarded at the Grammys. In today's club culture and EDM-environment it's common to both experience and acknowledge the DJ as an artist, and not necessarily attending the club just for dancing along to the music. The role of the DJ has changed the past decade dramatically, going from an unknown person in charge of the music to the new rock star (Greenburg, 2012). In 2017, both a visual presence and interest from the audience is central, and in this chapter, I will focus on the fundamental technological and social changes the past decades, and why it's an important development to address. Also, I will discuss the female roles in the music, and how they have developed throughout the evolvement of EDM.

2.1. The Origin and Developments in Electronic Music

Similar to the technologies used in the practice of electronic music, the history of the genre has been created and conceptualized according to tropes of noise and silence (Kahn, 1999: 55-67). The origin of modern electronic music generally goes with the story of the creators of new futuristic avant-garde sounds in the early 20th century. Italian Luigi Russolo was one of these composers, who designed and constructed some various noise-generating "instruments" he called Intonarumori. These boxes had different types of internal constructions to create various kinds of noises. Repeatedly a wheel inside was touching a string attached to a drum. With these *instruments*, Russolo built his Futurist manifesto The Art of Noises (1913); a courageous celebration of the sounds and noises constructed by modern machines, industry, and war (Papova, 2012). And later, during the new technologies of World War II, extensive research toward the advancement of new approaches for controlling sound were of high magnitude. The result were new methods to safeguard communication in warfare. Post-war developments and discoveries in these processes that were addressed during World War II, were later shared and exploited in the coming years. A new genre, pioneered by French composer Pierre Schaeffer, titled *musique concrète* derived from this; a new futuristic genre exploiting acousmatic listening. This genre was solely based on the construction and manipulation of electronically produced sounds comparatively to recorded sounds. Hence, electronic music.

During the Cold War, sounds of electronic origin became rigidly embedded in the public imagination. Especially with associations with both atomic research and latter the space age. Pop music inspired by the space age began to flourish. This new genre often had exotic portrayals of women on the album covers and exploited new and futuristic electronic sounds to represent the glamor of the stellar exploration. In 1962, German composer Herbert Brün addressed the audience's opinions of electronic music through stereotypes and concern of the atomic rivalry of the Cold War.

> "These electronic composers don't really make music at all. They Just measure, calculate, and construct. They don't have musical, but merely mathematical, ideas. Infested by this technical and materialistic age, they are trying to degrade and despiritualize music. With robots and electronic brains, they want to substitute the creative act" (Brün 2004, 126).

In addition, Brün also stated that making music inspired by weapons and war were distasteful. Still, terms deriving from warfare are endured in the vocabulary of electronic music today. DJ's often "battle" with each other, a producer of performer uses a "trigger" on a "controller" which "executes" a signal or a sample. In other words, references to atomic warfare and armed combat are still unfolded in the very act of creating and performing electronic music.

Similar to noise, the idea of silence is another aesthetic tool crucial in the discourse of electronic music. One of the extraordinary examples of this, is 4'33", or the "silent piece," by American experimental composer and theorist John Cage. This three-movement composition from 1952 features nothing but silence in 4 minutes and 33 seconds. The sounds and noises from the environment create the music, as there's no such thing as complete silence in a concert hall. Cage's intention behind the piece was to show that any sounds may constitute music, even if it's just generated environmental noise (Pritchett, 2009).

Fast forward a decade. Musically, the 60's had grown up pretty seamlessly into the 70's. Bands looked much as they had in the earlier decade, give or take a haircut. Despite punk's angry noise stirring things up for a while, a musical change that everyone could get behind was way overdue, and it needed to be convincingly different. People started looking a little exotic. Youth fashion's eternal twin peaks, the denim, and leather outfit, were losing grip on teenagers that they'd held since the late fifties. After the long, unkempt hair of the

earlier decades, things started looking very future up top. Hair was becoming sculptural. Architectural even. The women wore bright, asymmetric clothes and ambitious sci-fi makeup. And the men began to have asymmetric hair, an even more outrageous makeup. The technology of the Space Age had finally arrived (Chusid, 1995). Everything beeped and flashed. So did the music. New Wave- and synthpop bands and artists along the lines of David Bowie, Sparks, Giorgio Moroder, Blondie, and Kraftwerk began topping the charts and became modern pop music. For the first time since the 60's, pop music was both hip, experimental, and unpredictable. The freaky new Pop stars, emboldened by David Bowie, empowered by Kraftwerk, and embodied by bands along the lines of The Human League, Simple Minds, ABC, The Cure, and Japan, spanned the covers of global music magazines. Critically acclaimed and colossally successful.

New technologies and genres led to new instruments. And one piece of hardware, the Roland 808, became the pinnacle of today's electronic music (Beaumont-Thomas, 2014). When the machine first was released in 1980, the majority of musicians were not impressed. The 808 were supposed to let the users build their rhythms, rather than having to use presets of the drum sequencers of rivaling manufacturers. It had a flaw, though. The drums didn't sound like drums. And the clap samples didn't sound like claps at all (Hamilton, 2016). As a result, the hardware flopped in the commercial market. The machine got a cult following, though. The underground musicians liked it, due to the affordability, ease of use, and distinctive sounds. Particularly the bass drums. And for some, the machine was so bad - it was good. As a result, the synthetic noises of the 808 began appearing on some of the smash hits of the 80's, including Lionel Richie's "Sexual Healing," and Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" (BBC, 2014).

2.2. The Birth and Evolvement of Modern Dance Music

Juan Atkins, one-half of an electro-funk duo called Cybotron, was a 21-year-old black man living in Detroit, in 1983, struggling to make his passion for music reach outside the city borders. He had an ambition though; to take what Kraftwerk had created, but making it funkier (Blush, 2002). Kraftwerk's 1977 album Trans-Europe Express was already fashionable, as it could keep the dance floor going all night. But it wasn't funky enough, Atkins believed. His secret weapon became a Roland 909 - the successor of the 808. With

this machine, he created beats and rhythms that played underneath the many records he was playing (Matos, 2015: 13)

It didn't take long to the idea of creating individual tracks with the hardware came around. The music created were based on repetitive synthesized rhythms, off-key vocals, and one-take production. The arrival of new hardware also made records dead simple to sample, slice, dice, and remix. The idea of sampling short drum breaks from old records became a fad, and the "Amen Break" from The Winston's 1969 track "Amen, Brother" became one of the most popular ones to sample. Today, the "Amen Break" have been sampled over 2.000 times in released records (Potts 2011). These drum breaks were often used to create basic points in the records, giving the synthetic tracks a bit more real elements. Tracks like Strings of Life (1987) by Derrick May and Big Fun (1988) by Inner City became top-ten hits and became a gateway for techno music to reach the mainstream in the following decade (Matos, 2015: 19)

During the spawn of techno music in the early 80's, another genre got created by combining the disco music of the late 70's with the futuristic drum sounds from the Roland 808 and 909. The genre got its name from the Chicago club the music played - Warehouse. House music was born and featured catchy melodies and four-on-the-floor rhythms. The lyrics were often based around going out, having fun, or making love. As a result, this new genre appealed to the gay communities in New York, Chicago, and Detroit. In 1984, Jesse Saunders' house record "On and On" was the released. Similar to what The Sugar Hill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" had done to New York in 1979, "On and On" created a new musical fad - a commercial outbreak of house music. For the first time since the early 70's with Curtis Mayfield and Chi-Lites, black music from Chicago became acknowledged. The music spawned a massive wave of house music producers and record labels. One of these were Marshall Jefferson. As a response to the criticism of the genre that had no piano lines, Jefferson created "Move Your Body" in 1986; a piano-driven house record he dubbed "The House Music Anthem" (Mason, 2015: 35). He even put the lyrics "Gotta Have House Music - All Night Long!" right on top of the track. As a result, the record sounded more like a pop song than a house track. And this particular record created a gateway for house music to reach the commercial scene in the coming years.

Both house- and techno music became the very foundation of modern dance music. From the early 90's, several new genres of electronic music got established. By combining the rhythms

and repetitive characteristics of techno music with dreamy synths and neatly structured arrangements, trance music was created by European producers. This genre featured big melodic climaxes and breakdowns with dream-like themes. The goal was to get the listener into a trance through all the aesthetic elements, hence trance music. Stella (1993) by German Jam and Spoon, Children (1996) by late Italian Robert Miles, and Flaming June (1997) by American BT took the genre to the mainstream. The music genre became a huge commercial success in Europe, and a small island on the east coast of Spain, Ibiza, became the center of it all (Mason, 2015: 47). A hedonistic goal for many Europeans during the summer vacations.

Several other major genres of electronic dance music got established from the mid 90's till today. By using cut-and-paste techniques, with help from the new computer software around, big beat became a fad and was pioneered in the United Kingdom from the likes of Fatboy Slim, The Chemical Brothers, and The Prodigy. This genre often featured punk-like vocals, large jazz loops, distorted bass sounds, and acid synths (Bernardo, 2013: 117). The records also often had psychedelic influences from UK bands like The Beatles and Led Zeppelin. In other words, a bizarre mixture of rock and modern dance music. Similar to big beat drum and bass spawned in the United Kingdom in the early 90's. It was akin to the previous breakbeat genre that utilized complex jazz, funk, and hip-hop loops. Though, the tracks often were produced with a tempo in between 160 and 180 beats per minute. As a result, the genre became very aggressive and fast. A different style of Drum and Bass, Dubstep, evolved from the same characteristics in the mid-2000's. Though, the tempo was halved and featured darker atmospheric elements. And in the recent decade, US producer Skrillex mashed dubstep with a heavy-metal style of song structure. New aesthetics along the lines of monstrous screams, sci-fi elements, and robotic noises helped characterize the genre. This new genre also utilized drops; a phenomenon that occurs when a new part of the track is *dropped* into the record, giving it a sudden unexpected change. Other genres, such as trap and future bass, have combined the modern sounds of hip hop and EDM and is currently as of 2017 leaving their footprint in commercial music.

Once the various genres of electronic dance music got carried onto the mainstream, the European commercial response was through euro dance in the early 90's. Mr. President's "Coco Jambo," Aqua's "Barbie Girl," Vengaboys' "Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom!", Daze's "Superhero." The list goes on and on. They're all examples of hits loved by many, and hated by even more. The acts behind the hits were often groups of 3 or 4, with a female front

singer. The lyrics repeatedly had themes of love and pop culture, and the instrumentals were straightforward and *cheesy* with uplifting melodies and steady bass rhythms (Verwey 2013). In the following decade, the euro dance acts became replaced with other groups along the lines of Alice Deejay, Scooter, and DJ Sammy. All with records fronted by female singers. There were even times when the front singer turned out to be just a beautiful face, and the real singer was someone else. In 2004, Norwegian glamor model Christine Hansen released the record "Vil Ha Deg" (Want You). The singer turned out to be Tonje Vågen Aase from the gospel choir HIM (Tjersland, 2004). Hansen was in the following days fired from Sony Music after the scandal, and her career as an artist reached an end. This was a man's industry.

The evolvement of modern dance music has always been based on borrowing elements from other genres, combining it with new. And today, it's become hard even to characterize electronic dance music. Modern house music, for example, utilizes repetitive themes from the techno genre, arrangements from trance music, distorted bass-elements from the big beat genre, complex loops from breakbeat, and the drops from dubstep - and everything in between (Bouchal, 2012). The tempo of modern house music is usually around 128 beats per minute. And this tempo is not a random act, as it mimics the speed of a beating heart. This generates trance-like feelings when dancing. And all the characteristics of electronic dance music has also spread the commercial pop scene. Nowadays, it's common to hear four-on-the-floor beats, uplifting synth lines, distorted bass elements, or even drops, in modern pop music. As superstar DJ Steve Aoki explains (Polderman, 2015):

> "It's a really diverse time in music, with all these different DJs and all these different categories, and we are all taking footnotes from everyone else. There are no real genre boundaries anymore; you can take a trance idea and put it into a trap record - it's not that uncommon".

Rihanna's 2010 hit "Only Girl in The World" and Lady Gaga's 2011 album "Born This Way" are both great examples of records that feature huge, airy synth lines and uplifting chord progressions. It's even possible to label house music as pop music. With several successful releases, producers and superstar DJs along the lines of Avicii, Swedish House Mafia, and Eric Prydz have all been recognized as global superstars. And they're all from Sweden! A phenomenon of established pop- and rock bands and artists being featured artists on an EDM track has also spawned the recent years. Great examples are the collaborations between Calvin Harris and Rihanna (We Found Love), David Guetta with former Destiny's

Child Kelly Rowland (When Love Takes Over), and recently The Chainsmokers and Coldplay (Something Just Like This). It's easy to conclude that electronic dance music is of constant progression regarding characteristics, and it's hard to tell what the future will bring us, as the borders between genres in music are getting more transparent every day. One thing is for certain, though; electronic dance music was initially created by black men, exploited and pioneered by men worldwide, and brought to the global charts with white, Swedish men. The *only* female role in electronic dance music has been on the featured vocals that sometimes found their way on a record.

2.3. The role of the DJ

In *Raving, Not Drowning: Authenticity, Pleasure, and Politics in the Electronic Dance Music Scene*, Rupa Huq describes the nonexistent social profile the DJs used to have in the earlier stages of the profession (Huq, 2002: 7). They were even discriminated by the audience, due to their lack of musical knowledge; at least compared to real musicians. And the EDM-genre was also characterized as both faceless and biased due to the low social status of the DJs. For decades, the layout of the popular club was such that the DJ booth was hidden away from the public view, unlike the old stage presence oozing rock performer, Huq describes it. Hence, it was common for a DJ to be a low-profile individual without any credentials. As a result, the audience got to know the names, or alter egos, of the DJs - and not their persona. Also, EDM became characterized as a non-authentic music genres, due to the lack of real instruments used in recordings (Huq, 2002: 97). But the genre was beneficial in the early club scene; guests of underground clubs, like The Loft in New York, would experience the purest form of dance and fun - many thanks to the unknown DJs playing strange synthetic music based on repetition. In other words, with no focus on the DJ, more people would give dancing more attention (Solberg 2011, 27-29).

Solberg acknowledges that the DJ's of today have a bigger role associated with the club- and EDM culture. The role of the DJ has evolved from someone hidden from the public to the rock stars of tomorrow. One can even argue that the DJ's have become full artists. The social status of DJ's and EDM-producers has also expanded, as one has begun to understand that knowledge of music is crucial when producing good music. And the DJ's are no longer limited to clubs. As recognizing a performing DJ as an artist, it's easier to brand the experience as a concert, rather than a club performance (Solberg 2011, 29-31). As Solberg

explains, the role of the DJ has received a new position - being visually acknowledged by the public, due to them being artists.

This is in addition to being the musical conductors for the night. And one can quickly notice if the DJ are there to entertain and satisfy the audience, or just to press play on the CD-player (Solberg, 2011: 30). There's almost a limitless amount of techniques for a DJ to bring the experience and atmosphere to the next level throughout the night, and musical tools such as *breakdown*, *buildups*, and *drops*, are just a few of them. These are events in the EDM-genre that helps to regulate the flow, action, and energy of the dance floor. Small changes in a record have an enormous impact on the dance floor, as the genre is built and structured around consecutive repetitions of rhythms, melodies, and vocal lines. It's also essential for a DJ to recognize the importance of the audience, as together they're responsible for the atmosphere (Bennett, 1999: 88-90). In connection with musical experiences, which in this case is EDM, peak experiences, satisfaction, and excitement have become highly regarded as values. In this respect, the act of dance can be a way to express these feelings. Bennett further argues that if EDM is considered to be an avenue for heightened sensations of pleasure and excitement, then dancing itself is viewed as a form of expression for those sensations (Bennett, 1999: 89). Besides, Bennett pinpoints that if the DJ is not capable of connecting with the audience, the whole point of the event would be a wasted opportunity. Tons of decisions are made by the public when entering the club, just by looking at the dance floor. In most of the cases, one can see by the size of the crowd if a DJ has acknowledged the importance of the audience.

Various methods of producing music have had a tremendous importance of the DJ profession. Not only is playing the accurate records, mirroring the actions of the audience, crucial for the night to be a success, but also creating a perfect mix throughout the evening and night. In pop-music and other radio hits, it's common for the tracks to end after 3-4 minutes - the average of the public's attention span (Desta, 2014). The experience creates a limited here-and-now-*bubble* for the audience to dance uninterrupted. To fight this phenomenon, it's highly relevant for an endless stream of music to occur on the dance floor. Solberg states that *mixing* music started to be more and more common throughout the 70's; a technique based on slowly fading track B's intro during track A's outro, removing the awkward pauses found in the radio hits in between tracks on a playlist. As a result, this technique has favored DJs on the night clubs to create a nonstop mix, leading the audience into an everlasting dance

experience with no awkward interruptions. Record producer Tom Moulton was one of the early pioneers of the technique and made it easier for the DJs to mix recordings on top of each other by expanding and repeat the instrumental parts of a record (Solberg, 2011: 28-30). As a result, extended and DJ-friendly versions of the radio hits began to flourish, giving the DJs the opportunity to create this constant stream of music (Solberg, 2011: 30). This endless loop of music gave the audience a non-stop dance experience on the clubs. By utilizing mixing, the DJs also gave the audience a feel of tension and uncertainty in the music (Solberg 2014, 64-78).

In this chapter, I've addressed the crucial role of the DJs in the EDM-genre, what role the DJ has in the club culture, and why a connection with an audience is necessary for the DJ-profession. Today, the role of the DJ has a highly prominent role - both in the clubs and as an artist at a concert. A huge contrast to earlier, when DJs became frowned upon, due to their lack of instruments, knowledge, and synthetic music. This is important to acknowledge as the industry today are full of questions regarding authenticity. In the later decades, the DJs have also gathered a meaningful visual role at the nightclubs or concerts. And the endless ways a DJ can play and mix music, further engaging the audience's level of excitement, is ever increasing. Last, but not least, it's essential to address the consequences of a DJs interest and awareness of the audience, as the music is being customized to the development and the energy at the dance floor. The DJ has to tailor the music based on the ever-changing mood and atmosphere of the audience.

2.4. Developments in the DJ Industry

> "I just roll up with a laptop and a MIDI controller and "select" tracks and hit a spacebar. Ableton syncs the shit up for me… so no beatmatching skill required. "beatmatching" isn't even a fucking skill as far as I'm concerned anyway. So what, you can count to 4. Cool. I had that skill down when I was 3, so don't give me that argument please".

Canadian house DJ and producer Joel Zimmerman, better known as his stage name deadmau5, suggests that DJs have become glorified button pushers (Bernardo, 2013: 20). While both the superstar- and amateur DJs of today can perform an entire set from their laptop computers, the DJ tools throughout the decades have been of constant change,

disrupted by new technologies and music formats. The mixer units have probably been the most valuable tool for DJs worldwide; with the help of knobs and faders, they have been able to control the volume and the frequencies of a track. And for the DJs, whose job it is to play music for an audience, controlling the levels and intensity of the music have been of utmost importance. The mixer technologies have been of the same principle since the 70's. Give or take a few filters, and effect units added on the commercial units. Though, the players have become disrupted quite a lot. Similar to the formats of recorded music, the DJ-friendly records have gone from vinyl to CDs, from the CDs to digital (USBs), finally arriving on the entirely laptop-controlled sets of today. To create a seamless mix throughout the night, a DJ needs to be able to control the speed (pitch) of the tracks. As a result, pitch faders are generally found on DJ hardware. This, together with build quality, is what differs the units from commercial CD players or turntables. Several manufacturers have been providing tools for DJs throughout the centuries, with companies such as Pioneer, Technics, Numark, and Denon.

The vinyl records and turntable of the pre-millennium change became the brand identity for many DJs, and the Technics 1200s became the de facto standard turntable in the clubs (Rothlein, 2013b). The DJs had to spend countless hours of browsing the record stores for the new hits and unknown *weapons*. And if you were lucky, the records would survive maybe a year or two while on duty. While the vinyl records were made out of plastic, they weren't necessarily indestructible; ruining the records took (and still takes) terribly little effort. A poorly timed record skip on the dance floor could kill the entire night, even a career. And the process of storing and transporting vinyl in significant bulk for tonight's gig became an unconventional task. Nothing would profile the musical taste of a DJ like a fully stuffed record case with exquisite records.

In 1994, Pioneer released their CDJ-500; a basic budget CD player with the option of pitch adjustments. The CD-loading technology was similar to the boom boxes of the same era; under a pop-up door on the front. The CDJ-500 also the gave the DJs tools that didn't exist outside the digital realms; the ability to seamlessly loop music with the hit of a button, and changing the speed of the track without changing the key (master tempo) (Rothlein, 2013a). The music producers were also now able to create a CD of their new song and play it the very same night. An easier task compared to the earlier process of pressing vinyl. Similarly, a full case of vinyl records could now be replaced by a much smaller folder containing a few CDs;

much easier regarding both size and weight. The CD players would continually evolve during the late 90's with longer loop times and advancements of master tempo-technology, and by 2001 and the release of Pioneers CDJ-1000 (and later its reincarnations mark II and III), CD-players overtook the popularity of turntables. The ever growing culture of piracy and affordable CD-writing technology probably didn't hurt either. The CD players now had touch sensitive platters mimicking those in turntables, animated displays providing information of time and tempo, superior speed control, and precise play- and cue triggers, severely outshining the 1200's. With this technology, the DJ's would spend less time mixing music, and more time communicating with the audience.

Technology and practicality have been the biggest factor in the evolvement of DJ hardware throughout the decades, and by 2009, most CD players also had USB functionality. The small and cramped CD folder were now replaced by even smaller USB sticks containing ten times the music. At the same time, DJ software along with the lines of Serato DJ, Ableton Live, and most importantly Native Instruments Traktor Pro became a golden gateway for DJs to enter laptop-based performances (Truss, 2016). Meanwhile, the CD players and mixers were replaced by controllers connected to the laptops by USB, which remains the most popular option of today. Second to no cable management, easily affordable hardware and the introduction of the synchronize tempo-button (or even auto mix features) have made the art of DJing idiot proof (DJ Mag Staff, 2017). There are even apps for tablets and your smartphone! As said by three-time DJ Awards-winner Richard Hawtin; "DJing is much easier than it ever was" (Tregoning, 2017). Though, the flawless practice of digital DJing has received much criticism. Many argue the boundless possibilities of today is cheating and using controllers are far from real DJing. And these controversies are easy to defend, as anyone can learn DJing and perform a set in a matter of moments, compared to the hard work of the earlier decades. Especially seeing the rise of celebrity DJs, including Paris Hilton's Ibiza residence, which has been used as an example of the authenticity of the DJs today (Makarechi, 2013).

With the rise of EDM festivals along the lines of Ultra, Tomorrowland, and EDC, the experience is no longer just about the music. The lighting, visual design, and special effects like pyrotechnics have turned the EDM industry into serious business. And the trend of having pre-recorded sets is speeding up, as synchronizing visual effects, pyro, and lighting cues, are easier with something recorded than something mixed live. Though, the act of

performing a pre-recorded set are being exploited by many others. It's an ongoing debate of today. In 2014, a video of Colombian model and DJ Natalia Paris were spread on social medias, showing her playing a pre-recorded set (Calvano, 2015). This example, along with other rumors and controversies of model and celebrity DJs, has been used as a scapegoat for people to bash the new art of DJing; where being a DJ is more reliant on a beautiful face and social status, rather than talent (Farrugia, 2012: 43-44).

The debates in DJ culture regarding all the various disruptive formats and technology have always been around. And sometimes it's hard to forget that a DJ is not someone who's creating something original that the audience consume. Rather, a DJ is an individual with a creative activity that uses pre-recorded sounds, reproducing them in a certain way in live contexts with infinitely variable patterns. The DJs weren't originally the single source of the experience, but rather one of the nodes, along with a cluster of sounds, technologies, and bodies moving throughout the night. And people seem to forget that now that DJs are considered the new rock stars. Discourses of authenticity and virtuosity on DJs will continue sparking new controversies in the coming years, as the art of DJing will become even more comfortable and convenient as both technology and formats are being disrupted.

2.5. Rise of Superstar DJs

By the early 90's, the electronic dance music DJ acquired the potential to develop into a modern superstar. The job, for some, developed into a capitalist architect of captivating sounds. And by the late 90's, in some cases, the DJs left the underground club scene, for the rising demand of DJs in club and festivals globally. EDM DJs and producers such as Paul van Dyk, Paul Oakenfold, Judge Jules, Sasha, Carl Cox, and Tiësto became the pioneer DJs of electronic music and pushed EDM into the mainstream recognition. Thus expanding the capabilities of electronic music globally, gaining global appreciation and reputation. The role of the DJ became a disrupted journey; no longer were the DJs faceless party starters and collectors of obscure records with niche followers. They became aesthetic professionals who vigorously created original electronic compositions aimed at their fan base.

The modern DJ have inevitably become the new rock stars of today. Those in doubt that performers with digital hardware and laptops have surpassed the fame of guitar-wielding men with long hair, can have a look at what's happening on festivals such as Tomorrowland,

Ultra, EDC, and others. Have a look at American house producer and DJ Steve Aoki, for example. His trademark of live performance has been a non-stop aesthetic journey, filled with crowd surfing in an inflatable dinghy, state-of-the-art graphic displays, pyrotechnics, 10ft dry-ice cannons, and even cream cakes (Dick, 2015). Based on this phenomenon, it's abundantly fair to call Aoki a modern rock star. And no one toured as much as Aoki in 2012, with 168 shows in 41 countries. He even got a Guinness Record for it (Scott, 2017)! And as Aoki himself explains;

> "The thought of bringing a cake into a dance music show is a bizarre one. The idea of rafting on top of people is just as bizarre as well. And I think whenever something bizarre comes into play, it immediately becomes an easy target. And for those reasons, I know that I have been the target of criticism" (Aoki, 2014).

Today, the brand and images of popular DJs are as conscientiously produced as the music they create and perform. Take Scottish DJ and superstar Calvin Harris, for example. He went from processing fish and stacking shelves in grocery stores to purchase DJ gear in the late 90's, to a $100 million career in just over a decade (Lerche, 2015). He's even modeled for Armani underwear! The money generated from his gym-sculpted body, a series of number-one singles worldwide, and Las Vegas club Hakkasan residency, have made Harris laughing all the way to the bank. In 2015, Forbes posted a list featuring the highest paid DJs, unsurprisingly topped by Harris, with a reported $63 million in earnings. That puts him in the top 10 richest people in music that year, alongside other successful artists such as Beyoncé, Dr. Dre, Jay-Z and Paul McCartney.

With the EDM market worth over $7.1 billion globally, it's safe to conclude that the DJs are people with a high cultural value (Iadarola, 2016b). Even though the industry has faced several bureaucratic major complications, including the fall of EDM Conglomerate SFX Entertainment (Iadarola, 2016a), dismantle of online music store Beatport (Kirn, 2016), and the tragedies of drug-related deaths at festivals worldwide (Codrea-Rado, 2016), the ever-growing success of EDM looks to be converting into a continual wide-scale appeal. Contrary to the assumption that the bubble will break and disperse. Compared to the late 80's and early 90's, with a few bucks spent on an app on your smartphone, or a USB controller for your laptop, the ever-increasing amount of bedroom DJs is expanding. Everybody wants to be like Aoki or Harris. And as technology allows the jobs for the DJs to be near non-existent when performing, looks, brand identities, and money in the bank are increasing as the deciding

factors for a DJ to break through. No wonders people as Natalia Paris decided to jump on the bandwagon.

2.6. The Fake Industry

What the earliest pioneers of commercial EDM along the lines of Tiësto, Paul van Dyk, Roger Sanchez, and Armin van Buuren had in common, were that they also released their own recorded music. And today, every famous DJ is in most cases a successful record producer as well. As Ryan Raddon, better known by his stage name Kaskade, puts it; "The producers and writers of dance music are becoming the stars, not so much the DJs" (Rilling, 2009). Take Calvin Harris' Guinness Record of most top 10 hits in the UK. Or David Guetta's many collaborations with Rihanna, Snoop Dogg, and Nicki Minaj. Or even Avicii's mix of country and EDM in his 2013 smash hit "Wake Me Up". Or the vast amount of club hits by Tiësto like his interpretation of Adagio For Strings (2004), which in 2013 got voted 2nd greatest dance record of all time (Mixmag, 2013). They all helped in the long run for global success on the dance floor. And similarly to all other genres of today, releasing hit singles gives you a bigger audience on the dance floor.

Though, similarly to the act of con yourself with tools like the sync button in DJing, you can also cheat the process of releasing music. The phenomenon of "ghost productions" is EDM's little secret, and has become one of the most debated subjects in electronic music. The scenario typically goes like this; artist A purchases a song from producer B. Then artist A releases the song as his or her new single. And the fans and followers automatically assume the track is created by artist A, giving him, or her, a bigger audience. As a matter of fact, a significant chunk of famous DJs has been accused of using ghost producers, thus not being responsible for the records released under their names. In fact, there's a whole industry of music producers and engineers online (presented by a quick search for "ghost producers" on Google), who's fueled careers for several DJs who fist pumped their way to fame and fortune. In other words - cheating your way to the top is possible. The only limitation is the size of your wallet.

One of the names that repeatedly pops up in discussions regarding ghost production is French house producer and superstar DJ David Guetta. On his first three albums, almost every track credit fellow Frenchman Joachim Garraud as both co-writer and co-producer. And the fact

that Garraud wasn't even mentioned by Guetta, or his management, during the marketing of said albums is very odd. Garraud even stated in an interview that Guetta was not a musician, and didn't "know how to use a computer before they met" (Ready2Move, 2007). Similarly, Dutch Dennis Waakop were until 2012 credited as the one responsible for Tiësto's music, including the remix of Delirium's 1999 "Silence," who many argue kick-started his career (Mixmag, 2013). Another perfect example is the infamous "808 Tutorial" by Carnage on YouTube, where the (arguably) most famous trap music producer and DJ at the time showed off his studio skills. Or rather, the lack thereof (Dancing Astronaut, 2015). It was almost like watching a high school kid giving a speech on a book he didn't read.

So, why is this phenomenon happening? Why do some famous DJs need ghost producers? As more and more DJs struggle for their 15 minutes of fame, the shortcut through a carefully produced single give you a higher chance to compete and execute your craft in clubs and venues. And in modern times, where the speed of social media further influences the pace of the electronic music, the need for producers to release their music at a significantly higher pace than previously is increasing. And if you're a successful DJ like Steve Aoki, who in 2012 spent 168 days on travel (Scott, 2017), it's hard to find time being in the studio. Thus, a "team" of producers are highly relevant for staying relevant in the ever-growing industry. And when faced the choice of spending countless of hours at the studio desk achieving small details of your track, or just pay some tech savvy teenager to do it, while instead hosing down semi-naked women with expensive bubbles at the club, many picks the latter. With the accessibility and affordability of modern music production equipment, it's understandable that many DJs gives the creative workload to a 3rd party. And once they remove themselves from the creative process of creating new music, they're more akin to be titled CEOs of large advertising agencies rather than artists. And as described by an anonymous ghost producer in an interview with British EDM network UKF;

> "In the world of electronic music you don't have that option; you're expected to be the composer, the drummer, the bassist, the keys, the mixing engineer, the mastering engineer. A lot of the time you're expected to be the label owner and marketing manager too. So if you're making some progress and doing a lot of gigs and you have ideas that you feel will work in your sets then why not hire someone to help you?" (UKF, 2015).

The practice of art becoming a business is a road well traveled. And as Joachim Garraud states it, "As long as the party is good, no one cares who the track is produced by." In a genre, where the commercially released music is being based on copy-and-paste synths, and the fundamental basics of each record are the same; who tells the difference between a track produced by superstar DJ "A," or teenage tech-savvy ghost producer "B"? As electronic music is essentially faceless, with rarely anything other than vocals being featured; who cares who made the track? Besides, today, the hits you see on top of the charts aren't usually made by a single artist. They're all made by big brands. That's what the majority of commercial artists and DJs have become. Brands. Thus the commercial EDM industry isn't fundamentally so different from the commercial pop industry.

3. The Current State of Female DJs

Beyond the historical, developmental, and local contexts, the DJ cultures have been, and still are, vigorously dominated by males (Brewster, 1999: 73-79). The lack of female attendance and male dominance is further confirmed and discussed in this chapter. What does the overwhelmingly masculine dominance say about the electronic dance music as a genre, the DJ culture, and the existing conditions for female participating as DJs, producers, and engineers? There are, and always has been, a particular gender imbalance in music; not only in electronic dance music but across all music genres. But the inequality between the sexes is even bigger in dance music compared to rock music, in an example. This will be confirmed with the discussion of the gender roles, the approaches of masculinity in technology, and the central values in EDM culture; from the social construction of genders and technologies within the genre, to how the relationship amidst technology and society are jointly constituted (Cockburn, 1993: 16-21). Additionally, feminist sociology and cultural inspection on media provide appropriate tools for analyzing the gender-specific dynamics and representation of female DJs in scene media (Bernardo, 2013: 35). Finally, social networks in distinct stages of electronic dance music are explored, creating an association in between the DJs, producers, organizers, and promoters (Bourdieu, 1993: 29-35). Simultaneously the accretion of credibility of DJs will be addressed, further exploring the necessary requirements to gain fame.

3.1. Male Domination

Similarly, on how recording engineers and producers use the muting tool, removing unwanted signals registered below a threshold known as a noise gate, discretionary limits have silenced, almost censored, the actions and work by women in historical accounts. In most cases, every contribution to the study, development, and evolvement of electronic music, have placed women outside the process (Kahn, 1999: 13-14). The DJ and EDM-cultures have throughout the decades been defined as an unmistakably masculine industry with second to none participation by the female gender (Rodgers, 2010: 11-12). Based on observation, less than one-tenth of all DJs are women, further showing the feminine absence from the industry (Fikentscher 2000, 124). Other studies that address the issue have arrived at diminishing conclusions, unfortunately. For example, the Italian-American pianist and composer Suzanne Ciani, who found some success with innovative electronic music, was just

a woman who just wanted to have it all, in an industry revolved around men (Rodgers, 2010: 22). Not only within the borders of electronic dance music and DJ culture, but also in other genres such as hip-hop and rock music. The professions of musicians, producers, and DJs are almost purposely created as male (or female). Strictly speaking, professions such as DJs, musicians, producers, and alike, have been convoluted in methods forged by masculinity (Negus 1999, 126).

As mentioned earlier, being both a successful and popular DJ often corresponds with having released music. Thus being competent in music production, music theory, hardware and software management, synth design, and so on. Other tools of importance such as online-marketing, promotion, social media-managements have also had a significant increase the recent decade, thus leading to the scenario where the modern DJ, both male, and female, require excessive technological competence. There's always been an emblematic association with men and technology up till today in the society; that expertise in technical management is constituted within the gender identity of the men (Cockburn 1993, 16-21). And this is mirrored in the music industry, where only six women have been nominated for Producer of the Year in the GRAMMY awards since 1974 (George, 2016). And besides, it's suggested that only 5% of all music producers and engineers are women (Harauch, 2014) This has led to many women limiting themselves to only collaborations with their male counterparts in a studio setting (Farrugia, 2012: 133-138).

All the studies above gives the impression that women have played an almost non-participating role the industry; that they haven't made any contributions to the industry of significance. At least not compared to the degree of wonders created by men. Similarly, the gender roles have categorized restrictions on the survival of professions throughout the lifespan of electronic dance music and DJs. And the assertions are terribly accurate. Even though the dialogue of gender equality, both in and outside of dance music, have seen a significant rise, the industry is still highly dominated by males. The annual polls on the most popular DJs globally by British DJ Mag show the trends and popularity within the EDM industry. And even though it's voted on by the public, it's important to note that men have classically dominated the list. In the year 2000, ten percent of the DJs featured in the list were female (Loben, 2015). Though, this was before EDM music became a commercial success globally. Last year, only three women made the list; Ukrainian hardcore DJ Miss K8 and the Australian twin duo NERVO. And DJ Mag's 25-year anniversary issue addressed the 25 most

influential DJs and producers in dance music, ranging from Daft Punk, Tiësto, and Carl Cox. Unsurprisingly, with no women on the list (Cliff, 2016). When the most famous DJs from the poll were asked why the list was lacking female DJs, some replied that "[...] girls aren't as technically gifted as men, probably". Or that women "aren't that interested in dance music" (Cijffers, 2017). Thus leading to a grossly uneven candidate pool in terms of gender equality.

Similarly, of the public popularity by female DJs, electronic music festivals also have problems with gender equality. In 2016, festivals along the lines of Beyond Wonderland, BPM Festival, EDC New York, Mysteryland, and Ultra Music Festival had gender inequalities ranging from 3.2 to just above 10%. These festivals feature the commercial and popular DJs, specializing in house and techno music (Friedlander, 2016). Even though niche festivals such as CTM, RBMA NYC, and Mutek Montreal had an increased percentage of female DJs, ranging from 28,9 to 45%, their popularity and commercial success can't be matched with festivals like Ultra and EDC.

It's important to pinpoint that gender gap has become more narrow compared to the recent decades. When record stores were still around, the act of collecting physical records was typically a social practice with a masculine association (Straw, 1997: 4-15). Several characteristics of collecting records were favoring the male gender, where social values such as hipness, connoisseurship, bohemianism, and adventurism revolved around the activity. This resulted as a shelf display of authority and knowledge within music, which in addition created the idea of record stores being coded as a male space. This created a somatic norm where female DJs didn't have the indefeasible right, nor credentials, to occupy space reserved for men that were the record stores (Bernardo, 2013: 38). However, many argue that the event of digitalization and the increasing possibilities of purchasing music online has favored the female DJs. The recent decade has created the opportunity for a digital record collection, where the previous norms don't apply to the female gender. As a result, the female DJs of today don't need to interact with the potential male gatekeepers in the record store to access both music, hardware, and information.

3.2. Women in STEM-Fields

Fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM-fields) have predominantly been occupied by men, with a very low attendance by women. Ever since the

dawn of enlightenment to the present time. And this has somehow shaped the societies idea of gender-based interests. Have a look at the traditional toy store, where there are aisles of toys with a particular gender segment. Toys for the girls are Barbie dolls, pink beauty products, princesses, plastic pets, and so on. Take a walk down the boy's aisle, and you'll find action figures, construction bricks (LEGO), puzzle games et cetera. The gendered interests are already in childhood being created by the society. And these stereotypical ideas continue to carry on into adulthood. Boys are, for example, more likely to discover spatial skills outside of the classroom, due to them being encouraged by the society to create and work with their hands (Hill, 2010). Although we're starting to see changes today, cultural changes take time. Building bridges between the gender gaps take decades, even generations.

Even though making music could be labeled as a creative pursuit, one can justify placing the act under STEM-fields for several reasons. For a producer to create a song, they have to go into the studio, turn on their computers or flip open their laptops, open their digital audio workstation (DAW) of choice, followed by an endless amount of hours of the person staring at the screen, typing away at the keyboard. Not just with composing the music, but also being an engineer. Worrying about elements such as the EQ band, making sure that layers in music aren't phasing with each other, thinking about the stereo field, being sure the hi-hat elements in the track are sparkling at the outer edges of the spectrum. It's become quite the unusual combination of both art and science.

3.3. Women in the Business Side of EDM

The statistics might give the impression that only men care about the creation electronic dance music. Women have been featured in, and around, released records since the dawn of electronic music. Your stereotypical EDM-record usually revolves around a female featured artist. A quick look at the current (as of May 2017) list of the Spotify curated "House Music 2017" by Topsify, a playlist tailored for the average EDM listener, reveals that roughly 75% percent of the tracks revolves around a female singer. Artists such as Clara Mae, Kristen Marie, ROZES, and Nicole Gartz are found on the playlist, and have all made a career of being featured on released EDM-records. And for every vocal track, there's a songwriter. The Australian twin duo NERVO has written loads of commercial hits, including David Guetta's Grammy Award-winning single "When Love Takes Over" (2009).

There's also plenty of important women doing an excellent job in the EDM industry. Perfect examples of managers are Olga Heijns, who both manage Laidback Luke and are the CEO of Mixmash Records, former manager of the highly successful trio Swedish House Mafia Amy Thomson, and Lynn Cosgrave, the manager of techno DJ Carl Cox. Besides, there's also a chunk of women of great influence and power in the finest global agencies and magazines. Founder and president of Plexi PR Betty Kang, general manager of InTheMix Kerri Mason, and Biz 3 and OWSLA owner Kathryn Frazier to name a few (Complex, 2013). Women are though still heavily outshined by men in the industry.

3.4. Cynicism, Representation, and Credibility

Today, many female EDM DJs and producers not only struggles with the rejection from the networks dominated by men but also from the portrayals the culture and media portray the EDM scene. The female performers are quickly objectified by their appearances, rather than judged by skills, reputation, and perception. Thus, how they are represented are crucial for their success, as female DJs are a subject of cynicism. While the characteristic associations with men, along with the lines of aggressiveness, self-confidence, and competitiveness, are questions of general respect, feminine attributes related to affection, sensuality, and tenderness don't have the same values in EDM (Bernardo, 2013: 35-44). The consequence is female DJs have not become valued as serious performers, but rather commodities.

Throughout the history of modern music, there are three types of gendered portrayals distinct to female creators and performers, according to feminist musicologists Susan Kaye McClary and Tara Rodgers. Firstly, it's the concept of everything women create is representing a substantial feminine aesthetic (McClary, 2002: 93-98). It's not uncommon to for the cultural industries to portray female creations as more sensual with an appealing feminine finesse. Secondly, the creations and performance by women are a subject of comparison with each other, and not by the works of the male gender, termed the burden of representation (Sarayia, 2015). As a result, several patterns are created reinforcing the gender-based differences. This essentially creates the scenario of the male doing stylistic developments, leaving the women the counterpart of the master plan (Rodgers, 2010: 203-216). Lastly, there's the prevalent over-sexualisation of the female in modern contemporary culture and art, portraying women as a sensual object. The women are being undressed on the posters, album covers, flyers, in music magazines, and so on (JoJo Electro, 2015). And a quick search on the internet for the

keyword "female DJs," gives you several charts citing the "hottest female DJs of today." Another quick search for "house music," "electro house," or "deep house" on media sites such as YouTube, confronts you with a veritable deluge of semi-naked women in kittenish poses, further emphasizing that the target audience are all males. This gives the society the impression that the performing women are worth seeing, not taken seriously, and creates the illusion that the performer is a woman first, DJ second. A scenario where tits overlook their talent. At the same time, these values have spawned the idea of tokenism in the industry. As a female DJs are not as active as their male counterpart in the industry, novelty themes such as an "all girl DJ night" isn't uncommon to see at the local club now and then (Bernardo, 2013: 41).

4. Methodology

In this chapter, I will address the methods used in research. Several questions around the social and practical issues around female DJs are being raised as a result of the theoretical data of the thesis. Questions regarding the issues female DJs face in their line of work is addressed in the research, finally discussing any possible clarifications on the issues. Further on, the research will be depicted so it will provide a fundamental understanding of the process, and how the data and research were collected. The legitimacy of the methods will also be addressed.

4.1. Choice of Research

This thesis, and the included research, falls within the field of social research with an interpretive approach. The approach of my study has been to acquire a small selection of qualitative data. Even though the amount of research provided in the thesis have been just a sample of the industry, it gives the idea on how the industry, society, and culture treats, and have treated, female DJs.

The fundamental ideas behind this exist a desire to both understand, appreciate, and possibly help the currently existing problems female DJs face, as well as any future complications. Several questions are created in the light of qualitative data. The Existing qualitative data have been used as a theoretical framework in the thesis, but they are a bit outdated. Especially considering the importance and accessibility of social media, and the importance of an internet persona in the industry of today. Similarly, technology and developments in the recording industry allow everyone to both be a DJ and a music producer. This is facts and issues that the theoretical framework doesn't address thoroughly, hence my method of qualitative interviews have been of importance. The topics discussed in the interviews ranged from examples of sexism experienced by female DJs, thoughts on the current power struggle and gender gap, the issues of tits overlooking talent, thoughts on women in STEM-fields, music production, engineers, and on ghost production. I also encouraged the interviewees to come with follow-up questions, which several did.

There are tons of various ways conduct qualitative interviews. The most common ones are observation, surveys, in depth-interviews, and case studies. The reasoning behind the in-

depth interviews being executed as a way of collecting data in this thesis, has to do with the demand for examples and thoughts on both existing and pre-existing social issues, the power struggle with the gender gap, and possible clarifications. Even though every interview was done through the internet, some of the questions were open-ended, which gave the interviewees the possibility to emphasize their thoughts and problems, further providing the opportunities for follow-up questions. Hence my interviews were "[...] characterized by increasing levels of flexibility and lack of structure" (Crow, 2013: 3). Another argument and core value of deducting qualitative interviews is that "both interviewers and interviewees can learn more about certain aspects of themselves and the other" (Crow, 2013: 4). Thus, my very first interview with a female DJ was different from the last one, as my questions regarding their problems evolved thoroughly in the process of interviews. Further on, my interviews may be categorized as feminist research, as the data collected is from mostly women, on women, and for women. This gives the data an active link to several phenomenological approaches, as it gives a voice to the women's accounts of their understandings.

4.2. Form, Tools, and Practice

The extensive amount of qualitative data research is presented through both semi-structured and unstructured interviews. In the exemplary semi-structured interview, the researcher has an agenda of several questions and themes they wish to cover throughout the interview. The questions are flexible open for discussion. In comparison, the unstructured interview aims for the topic of the study but allows the interviewee to talk freely from their perspectives. Thus, an informal interview is more flexible, both regarding subject and length. For this thesis, I found it suitable to use ethnographic interviews, which "[...] includes participant observation and incorporation of the collection of demographic and other statistical data about the research as appropriate" (Crow, 2013: 30). This particular type of research is also akin to the qualitative, unstructured interview.

As demographical values and differences often play a significant role in the psychosocial issues addressed in this thesis, the interviews have been implemented over the internet, known as the e-interview (Crow, 2013: 49). In an email interview, there are no restraints on locations, and exchanges happen rapidly. Similarly, there are other advantages to this method; as the responses are in the written format, the replies are not as prone to misunderstandings, as well as the need for transcription is removed, saving both time and

resources for the diligent researcher. And even though the process leads to less spontaneous impulses compared to other interview methods, the likelihood of follow-up questions being created, with immediate online responses, arise. Also, written email responses often "[...] encourages more descriptive and well thought out replies" (Crow, 2013: 49).

Several descriptive-type questions, along with the lines of "do you feel," "what are your thoughts," and "what do you think," (Crow, 2013: 55) were included in the interviews. These allow the interviewee to give specific examples of both situations, thoughts, and clarifications. Similarly, the follow-up questions often had verification questions, along with the lines of "where," "when," and "what do you mean by." This led to a wide arrange of thoughts on the matters by the interviewees, further giving me necessary research data.

Qualitative empirical research is prone to one question; how many interviews should be done? In phenomenological studies, such as this thesis is all about, the recommended sample size is six (Crow, 2013: 65-68). In my case, the number of interviewees surpasses this figure, as the internet provides easy access to interview people around the world with the click of a few buttons. As a result, I've highlighted a few and used the rest as statistical research for the statements in the thesis.

4.3. Implementation

I did my best to get in touch with booking managers on global festivals for their thoughts on the issue, which initially was my plan for this thesis. But those who replied didn't want to express themselves. My solution became to interview several DJs and music producers. As I've been a member of the EDM community for quite a while, my network of interviewees had a wide range. And many subjects were happy to help, even though I couldn't offer anything in return. And as the interviews were written and exchanged through emails, both time nor place wasn't an issue. In addition to candidates in my network, both in Norway and internationally, I got in touch with several others by posting requests on theme-related groups on social media. With posts on groups like "DJ Kollektivet" (Scandinavia's biggest Facebook group on DJs), "Freshly Squeezed Samples" (A group on music production), and "Support female DJs" (An international group dedicated to promoting female DJs), I got in touch with a lot of candidates. All with their unique thoughts and stories to tell. Each person was in the age group of 20 - 40, and due to this being a thesis about gender issues, most were female.

Some were DJs, some were producers, and some were both. Many were Norwegian, several were Europeans, some were from the US, and one was from Australia. Additionally, I interviewed a successful Dutch ghost producer, Michael de Kooker, who had his own experiences and reflections to share.

4.4. Challenges

Many participants might feel uncomfortable writing about their thoughts and experiences. And the case of me personally knowing a few of the interviewees from beforehand, could have contributed to a lesser understanding of the seriousness of the matter. It's highly likely that they could have delivered a more personal reflection on the issues if it wasn't for the fact that I'm one of their many accomplices. In addition, this led to me assuming some of their aspects and thoughts on the matters already in advance. And my skills as an interviewer can be questioned, as it's the very first time I've ever interviewed anyone in an academic setting. I had some problems creating the questions in an open way, as well as deciding which ones were of value, and which ones had no beneficial profit. Another flip-side of the method of research, are the dangers of oversimplifying the explanations and answers (Denscombe, 2010: 305). Also, having several written interviews with several persons at the same time can lead to confusion on who said what. Lastly, any questions regarding the interview (along with the lines of "what do you mean by that?") can not be answered directly, and can only be resolved with sending new slightly rephrased or amplified questions to avoid confusion (Crow, 2013: 50).

4.5. Ethical Concerns

In this research, where social values and traditions are being addressed, the importance of confidentiality and anonymity are of significant value. Some interviewees might deliver some controversial statements on the matter, potentially harming their reputation. Especially because they pretty much open up with their thoughts and stories, thus being in a vulnerable position. In addition to the EDM community being close and upfront with their opinions on social media, this became a great concern of mine. As a result, I decided to give my interview partners the possibility to remain anonymous throughout the process. Though hardly anyone decided to stay anonymous and were more than happy to open up and tell their stories.

4.6. The Interviews

The theoretical background as well as past and current events, as described in previous chapters, became the fundamental idea of the interview. A total of eight questions were made, divided into four categories; demographic differences, the sexism and gender gap in EDM, women in STEM-fields and music production, and finally suggestions for a clarification. All which I found necessary for the research to be of value. Firstly, I believed that demographic differences, and how they were introduced to the EDM genre were of value. If they were introduced to the genre by male counterparts, or on their own. Secondly, I came with several examples portraying the existing gender gap and sexism in EDM, asking for their thoughts on the matters. Thirdly, I wanted their stance on female music producers and their opinions on controversies on ghost production. Finally, I requested their ideas on a possible clarification, and their idea of a perfect future without the gender imbalance. In addition, I encouraged my interview partners to discuss anything that wasn't addressed throughout the interview, which several did. The core questions of the interviews were along the lines of this:

1. Who are you, and how did you get into the electronic music scene? What draws you to the dance music-scene?
2. What are your thoughts on the gender gap in the ranking of popular DJs in DJ Mag's top 100?
3. What is your thought around the matter of the low percentage of women being booked on EDM festivals?
4. Do you feel there's an issue with sexism in the industry, and have you encountered any? If so, what's the worst example you've faced?
5. Do you feel appearance are the most important factor for a female DJ? That tits overlook talent?
6. What issues do you feel the semi-naked women portrayed in, and around, EDM emphasizes for the gender gap in dance music if any?
7. What do you think of the problems associated with women releasing music?
8. Do you think of a clarification? Are there any solutions to the current gender gap in electronic music?

4.7. The Interviewees

For the research of this thesis, several written interviews were conducted. And as I openly requested interviewees on social media, I made the following criteria to accept each candidate suitably:

1. They should have been working as DJ or music producer (or both) for a few years, or have some knowledge and / or experience for the professions.
2. They had to acknowledge the current gender gap in EDM.
3. They had to be capable of sharing their honest thoughts on the matter, preferably sharing their opinions on the gender imbalance.

As mentioned earlier, the number of interviewees surpassed the recommended amount of maximum six. Of the above qualifications, I narrowed the number of replies down to the following candidates;

1. Line Camilla Engstrøm. Norwegian DJ who's been playing music since the age of 15. As the winner of the BPM DJ Competition in 2013, as well as a 3rd place in the Movida Corona DJ Competition in 2011, Engstrøm has become one of Norway's' most popular female DJs in trance, techno, house, and commercial music.
2. Michael de Kooker. Dutch de Kooker has created several successful tracks that have been destroying dance floors far across the border of his home country, ever since he began as a producer in 2005. Furthermore, de Kooker has worked full time as a professional ghost producer since 2015.
3. Katie Kory. Female music producer and DJ under the alias Tarvali. She's produced electronic music since 2013 and hosted her online radio show since January 2017. Furthermore, Kory has a Bachelors of Science degree in computer information technology, specializing in web development.
4. Victoria Braiman. Alter ego Victoriya. Victoria's produced electronic music since 2007, in genres ranging from Chillout, Drum & Bass, Trance, and everything in between. In addition, she's a self-taught pianist. And even though she's been a New York resident DJ, Victoria is more comfortable behind the studio desk creating her own music. Braiman also recently gave up the 9 to 5 job to focus on her music career.
5. Daniela Schmidt. EDM producer from Germany, who's been active since 2008 under her alter ego Danyella. In addition to electronic music, Schmidt is also specializing in

both film and game music. She's also made her name in the industry as a sound designer, creating sound banks for digital synths available at online distributors.

6. Lars Nyheim. Nyheim is ½ of the successful Norwegian EDM duo The Blizzard, who's released several successful singles, remixes, and an album in the span of over a decade, with performances in the United States, Colombia, Russia, and South Korea to mention few. In addition, Nyheim studied sociology at UC Berkeley.

4.8. Presentation

Most of the findings in all interviews are based on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 and 3. Several questions addressed the continuing gender gap in the popularity contest of DJ Mag, the small percentage of female DJs in the clubs and on the lineups of global EDM festivals, women in STEM-fields, the portrayals of women by the *keyboard warriors* on the internet, and controversies regarding ghost production. Hence, the presented discussions and conclusions based on the interviews needs to be acknowledged in the light of the given theory and history. Extracts of the interviews in the subsequent discussion are presented in context with the theme, with fair judgment and discretion. The credibility of the answers has also been judged with validity, reliability, external validity (generalizability), and objectivity. And even though I approached the analysis of the data with an open mind, I avoided neglecting data that did not fit the theme of this thesis. In addition, I always had the backing theory in mind to refine the hypotheses.

5. Findings

The main goal of my research, through the interviews, was to substantiate the theoretical frameworks in chapter 2 and 3. In addition, any possible clarifications to the issues women are currently facing in the EDM industry. The latter will be discussed in the next chapter, leaving this chapter to address the interviewees' thoughts, experiences, and stories regarding how they got interested in EDM, sexism, their professions, and their suggestions for any possible clarifications. I acknowledge, though, that their responses don't necessary reflect others opinions, whether being a man or a woman. Nor does it present a holistic view of the EDM scene, as all of the perspectives were from DJs and music producers, and not from the audiences, booking agents, or label spokespersons.

5.1. Why Did They End Up in the Industry?

In the light of the commercial success of EDM, one central question for the interviewees was how they were introduced to the scene. Did the women I interviewed differ from how I personally developed the interest? Or did they just jump on the bandwagon once they saw EDM disrupted the modern music scene? Do their backstories create an authentic persona as a female DJ? Of those questioned, many discovered electronic music through the commercial hits of the late 90's and early 00's, similar to how I did. Braiman recalls "[...] hearing "Eiffel 65 – Blue" one day when I was about 8 or 9 and became amazed by it for some reason". The same goes for Nyheim, who "[...] liked different bands like Scooter, Sash and E-Type". And they're both credible EDM producers today. Schmidt loved the synth pop of Pet Shop Boys, which made her discover electronic music, and Kory were exposed to electronic music through a suggested video on YouTube, which made her start creating music on the amateur music production software GarageBand. Engstrøm, however, never started producing music. She got introduced to the electronic scene as a dancer, that eventually kick started her interest for DJing. One thing they all have in common, though, is that they were all attracted to the EDM scene with the connections they got with electronic music, and further on exploring the vast amount of genres through the limitless possibilities of the internet.

5.2 The Gender Gap and Sexism in EDM

Every interview candidate acknowledged the current gender gap in electronic music. The theories of the industry being dominated by males, thus creating a sexist industry towards women are fairly proved in the data from the interviews. And a pattern in the replies suggested that many female DJs are prone to be booked due to their appearance and presence, rather than their qualities behind the DJ booth. As Kory explains "[...] Many women have gotten used to being rejected or can see that other female acts struggle to gain traction against the men and either give up or don't try to change the status quo". And the struggle with female DJs not being taken as seriously as their male counterparts, is an everlasting issue, which has led to episodes were their appearance have been the deciding factor. Engstrøm explains how she's experienced male club guests to grab and touch her during her gigs. "Male guests feel they have the liberty to grab and touch as much as they want to just because we are an object on display in their mind". In addition, Engstrøm recalls one time when she was requested to return to the northern parts of Norway for a night, after a successful gig in advance:

> "[...] Then I went home and later got asked for a new booking and I said of course! But then it suddenly got canceled before everything was in order. And I didn't hear until later that the boss had made remarks that since I was a female DJ I should've been a lot less dressed than I was for that price! Like I was some kind of object to be standing in a DJ booth for guests to look at".

Female DJs are heavily outshined by males in popularity contests, along with the lines of the annual DJ Mag Top 100 poll. When faced with the question of the gender gap in the ranking of popular DJs, all the interviewees agree upon females not being prone to music production are the leading cause. And as de Kooker explains, the voters on such contests recognize the fact that female DJs are often marketed because of their looks and skills, rather than their potential talent. Thus developed a prejudice against all female DJs. And it's not just a scapegoat, as it's too easy for women to be drawn to the profession these days for a quick buck. As Braiman states:

> "It would be nice to see more women producers and DJs, but too many are trying to market their appearance without the talent to back it up. Even though it's true that "sex sells", there's something extremely off-putting about seeing a pair of bouncing boobs behind a DJ booth and knowing the person isn't really doing anything".

Not only are women inferior in the popularity contests, but also in the big festivals specializing in electronic music. As stated in the theoretical framework, male DJs are far more superior than women in popular festivals along the lines of Beyond Wonderland, BPM, Ultra, and Mysteryland. Nyheim even suggests that the average percentage female DJs of 7.3, from the above festivals, are much higher than the actual average. Discussions on gender equality are more prominent now than ever before, but the trend is not reflected in the live industry. Is it because "there's a shortage of female artists to book", as Braiman suggests? There's also a possibility that women feel intimidated, with few being valiant enough to pursue a career in the male-dominated industry, as Schmidt suggests. Even though there's a lot of female DJs, many being vastly superior to their male competitors, there seems to be no room for them on the festival lineups. As Kory suggests:

> "At least in the US, festivals should have to live up to the same standards as workplaces with a non-discrimination, equal-opportunity, high diversity policy so that they have to give women a chance to shine. Sadly, we are seeing status quo and a deeply-rooted history staying in control".

Today, many argue that female DJs are just getting attention due to their looks and appearances, rather than their actual talent. That the tits overlook their talent. And it's an ongoing trend emphasized by the industry. De Kooker explains that the decisions the key players in the industry make about which artists to promote, and why, often begins with the looks. Particularly in the commercial and more popular styles. And it's not only native to the music industry. Today, women in today's society are expected to look a certain way. In fashion, for example, the women need to be thin, long, and the radiance to sell products. And considering this, some women have a huge advantage if they're able to couple looks with talent, thus becoming almost twice as entertaining for the majority of their audience, Braiman suggests. Sadly, most of the female performers are reduced to their looks, even though they might be just as musically and technically gifted as their male counterparts, Schmidt states. She further says:

> "A lot of female DJ's feel as if they have to look 'hot' to even be considered, and that it matters more than their actual skills. To be fair, guys face the same problem when it comes to mainstream gigs where a lot of exposure and revenue is involved. Looks do count to some degree for an act to be considered. We all know that. But it's much tougher for women as if they have to make up for a lack of skill that doesn't exist, to

make up for a stereotype that doesn't even apply to them. It's as if in order to deserve taking a guy's spot one needs to look hot".

Additionally, when looking at how electronic is marketed and pictured in the modern society, it's easy to acknowledge that electronic music is made for men. As any searches on media sites such as YouTube for "house music," confronts you with lots and lots of semi-naked women. "Sex sells. And apparently semi-naked women still manage to attract the attention of men, even after decades of commercials", de Kooker explains. Due to the development and accessibility, social media has become a limitless playground for marketing, entertainment, and discovery. So there are no wonders images appealing to the male demographic are being used as click-bait on said platforms. Thus yielding income. This has resulted in the human body, in most cases, the female, have been used as a tool to market electronic music. As Nyheim points out:

> "If naked flesh wins over the heart of music, it doesn't make it easy for those motivated by a true passion for music. If so, "What's the point?" might be an understandable conclusion. Although it shouldn't. Real passion should trump the obstacle of fake passion any day. And men have to help them do that".

5.3. Women as Music Producers

As the theories regarding women in STEM-fields have been discussed earlier in this thesis, the discussion about whether or not women are as interested as men in music production is an ongoing theme in the interviews. Today, women are yet a minority in the act of producing music. Both in electronic music and in other genres. Schmidt states that "the lack of women makes me feel weird for being interested in this stuff". And who can blame her, as women regularly face the question of legitimacy, as Braiman clarifies. She also adds:

> "The fact is that statistically, women are just not drawn to the technical aspects of producing as much as men are, for whatever reason. Whether the reason is cultural or biological, it's just a statistic. We see tons more male producers than female producers. That is not to say that I think women are less capable of being producers, I think women can contribute amazing things to the producing scene if they put their time and energy into it, it just so happens that they tend not to".

Back in the late 90's, when the costs of production electronic music went down due to the technical developments of the computer, electronic dance music was more a thing for the *nerds* and the *geeks*, than anything else. Through the cultural values the last decades, we were fed the thought that being in the basement all night working on the computer belonged to the male demographic. "And one can argue that the male artists in electronic music have gotten a head start because of that" as de Kooker points out. Being a popular DJ today equals having a few successful releases under your belt. And all of the interviewees argued that the lack of superstar female DJs might be due to their lack of records released. This might be a reason many, across the genders, decide to take the shortcut to fame and fortune through ghost production - a view shared by Braiman:

> "Even when I hear about a female artist, I find myself wondering whether they are genuine or ghost produced, just because of what I have heard in the past. As a female producer myself, I hate even having to think like that about other women, but after hearing that many female artists are in fact ghost produced, it's hard not to wonder".

The theories of ghost production are full of controversies, further questioning the authenticity and integrity of music in the EDM-scene. In particular, those released by women. Schmidt explains she "[...] owe sort of some proof that she's the one producing her work". Braiman, as an established music producer, also points out that she's personally encountered people on her various social media accounts, making comments such as "you must have a boyfriend who makes your music for you". Simply because in their minds "women are not capable of possessing any technical talent". It's come this far, that the question of authenticity quickly arises regarding a released song, only because a woman produces it. In addition, minority groups, such as female music producers, are facing the heat. Even outside of music. As described by Kory:

> "If you are in the minority political party and try to speak your mind you are told you are wrong and those in the majority will rarely listen to what the minority has to say. In the same way, female producers have the same issues. There is again the issue of marketing. Will a female producer's music sell? Will it gain traction in the market? In many cases, record labels just look for more success and traction before accepting a track from a woman".

De Kooker, who's been ghost producing for years now, also shared his thoughts on the matter. He argued that the majority of popular female DJs with music released gets some sort

of help with their track. "Before reaching a certain quality in the productions, one would have the need to spent quite a few years in the studio". And as everybody wants to be the new superstar DJ, thanks to the commercial success in the US and worldwide, it's entirely reasonable that the tech-savvy nerds and geeks of yesterday become the business partners of tomorrow. De Kooker also adds that of the female DJs he's ghost produced, in the "majority of the cases the artist was still managed by a male and he made most of the creative decisions". It's become quite the musical puppetry. Many of the interviewees agree upon the act of ghost producing is hurting everyone in the scene, with women continually having to prove themselves. There's also a lack of potential female role models, further giving female DJs and producers in the industry the confidence boosts they much need. And as Braiman states:

> "It seems women like to stick to being vocalists or stage acts alone, not to mention some are ghost produced yet still act as though they make the music, and that ruins it for the rest of us. Because of this, when a real female producer does pop up, people question the legitimacy. [...] Ghost production should stop completely. The goal to market people who don't really do what they claim to do should also stop completely because those two things are ruining it for the true artists. Women should continue to release music but only do so with integrity".

5.4. Any Possible Clarifications?

With the data above in mind, how can we create a better future for the women in the commercial EDM scene? "[...] If only people could be more open minded and support instead of being jealous and negative, there will be a lot of progress" Engstrøm suggests. And when the cultural capital of the world, the United States, elect a sexist president "things have changed for the worse" she points out. The majority of the modern society still believe men are inferior to women in everything STEM-related. And as a result, the expectations of women in such industries skyrocket. In addition, women have to prioritize their looks and online persona, rather than their actual skills of DJing, to get gigs. The industry "[...] will always be somewhat male-dominated" Schmidt points out. "But females who wish to pursue a career in EDM should face no stereotypes and receive the same amount of respect as guys do from record labels, venues, other DJ's, producers, the media, and listeners" she adds. In addition, Braiman clarifies that more women should be encouraged to showcase their talent. She also adds:

"Women do have great potential in the scene if only more of them would be into it for the music alone and not the fame or the attention. If most women just naturally don't want to be producers, that's fine, we shouldn't force it, we should let the ones we do have to be completely real and genuine. The scene should never glorify or market anyone that hasn't been proven genuine. Genuine female artists should just keep on doing what they do, share their creations with the world and feel proud of being part of a minority, never intimidated or discouraged".

Kory agrees and suggests further actions to even out the gender gap. She recommends the labels to start taking risks releasing tracks from female producers, not holding them to the current high standards. She also proposes clubs and festivals to make an effort to add women to their lineups. Finally, Kory recommends all producers and DJs to make an effort to support the female talents in whatever way they're capable of to reduce the current gender gap. "Share others tracks to their fan base, play tracks on their shows [...] you have to take risks in order to reap the reward". It's a joint co-operation, Nyheim points out. "If we leave this responsibility to men alone, we will never get anywhere". Which is perfectly true. If only women speak out, who are already a minority within the scene, no one will hear their message. Though, many argue that there's tons of work creating a fair and even industry. Braiman clarifies that doesn't have to be seen as a problem that there are fewer women in the EDM scene. Though, "the ones that do exist can be appreciated even more so when they're discovered [...] as the scene is so over-saturated as of now" she adds. And as de Kooker explains:

"The difference in interest between males and females is everywhere, and it all comes down to the cultural and nature vs. nurture discussions. Does there really need to be an equal amount of female waste collectors? Or male childcare workers?".

6. Discussion

There's an apparent imbalance in the EDM industry. Women simply aren't getting the same kind of recognition or visibility as their male colleagues. It's not even close. And even though the audience of EDM festivals are split somewhat evenly between the genders, the performing artists on said festivals display an uneven percentage. So who's responsible? Is it up to the booking agents or the audience to dictate who gets to be on stage? The findings of the interviews above pretty much conclude that the industry suffers a gender gap, sexism, and controversies of women's abilities in music production. This section of the thesis features a discussion that acknowledges the ongoing issues in the industry, debating whether or not women belong in the industry, as well as addressing any necessary cultural changes for any positive outcome for both genders.

6.1. Dance Music is Sexist

Women, throughout the ages, have always been underrepresented in lots of professions. Though, one would suggest that both arts and music are supposed are both areas where there's at least an ounce of quality. In genres such as rock music, several battles have been fought – and won. Bands featuring, and fronted by women along the lines of Blondie, No Doubt, Eurhythmics, and The Cranberries have proved that women can rock just as well as men. Sadly, this is not the case for the electronic music industry. While there are a high amount of much respected female DJs in the underground scene, the commercial scene still favors men. This is proven in the polls, such as DJ Mag's annual list, in the live industry, as well as in the music charts.

The modern society in general, still often value women more than men. And there are countless of sexual stereotypes on everything STEM-related, saying that a man can do it better, somehow. Even though it's subtle in today's society, it's very systematic. And such an issue can't be solved from the top down. Many of the interviewees argued that if women only were praised for what they created, rather than how they dress or how they look, a lot of the existing problems would be very different. The legacy was established decades ago when the record labels started putting female bodies in tight bikinis on the covers of their mix compilations. Similarly, today, the channels on YouTube promoting house music, use ladies in questionable poses to attract the men. And in all the commercial festivals, most of the

women on stage are performing as exotic go-go dancers, not DJs. This has resulted in women being objectified in the EDM industry. Besides, if you Google "female DJ", there's not a lot of results suggesting actual female DJs. Rather, you'll see a disturbing number of women with headphones, usually dressed down to revealing clothes. When you Google "male DJ", you will never see guys with their t-shirts off. As Engstrøm states it; "[...] the DJ-scene is still very sexist. If you want to get somewhere, you need to have the looks, the charm and a way of getting to know people".

Consequently, female performers are a subject of cynicism. Is the performing woman a credible DJ, or is she only performing due to her looks? The idea that tits are worth more than talent have spawned plenty of half-naked performers, capitalizing on the sexualized culture of women in EDM. Thus, serious performers regularly need to disassociate themselves from the *fake* DJs who market themselves as sexual objects, rather than musical skills. Particularly in the current internet age, where platforms along the lines of Instagram further enables these 'model' DJs to promote themselves purely based on their looks. And who's to judge? Sex sells. Period. The discussion on authenticity of female DJs arises, further emphasizes men as the only 'good' DJs. Additionally, the rumors of a female DJ using ghost producers quickly emerge on discussion boards and alike if they release a record, due their representation in STEM-related fields in modern society are heavily outshined by a vast amount of men.

Women are still valued as a commodity as DJs. Not as performers. One step in the right direction would be to remove the gender stereotypes in the industry. With the current sexist industry, you need to have the looks, the charm, and a way of getting to know people to get anywhere in the industry. And as long as the managers and booking agents sell *their looks*, rather than *their talent,* we're not going anywhere. The clubs or festivals don't want to take the risk having a female DJ on stage, which is proven with the lack of women headlining, or even performing, at commercial EDM-events and festivals.

6.2. How can the EDM Industry Become More Attractive for Women?

With the technology being evolved rapidly throughout the recent decades, the act of DJing is easier than ever. It's almost come down to "just pressing a button. Practicing with vinyl, counting beats per minute, doing the calculations in your head on how much you should decrease or increase the speed of the record to match the other track - it's all things of the

past, as it's presented towards the end of chapter 2. It might as well explain the recent increase of DJs globally, as it's become almost an idiot proof profession. And as discussed throughout this thesis, it's clear that most of the popular DJs have benefited releasing music. Thus having the technological knowledge of producing music are favoring the DJs. It's convenient, though not a necessary skill to have when entering the DJ scene. And you could always take the easy way out, paying another producer to create a track in your name, even though it destroys the integrity of the EDM scene. In other words, both pieces of knowledge of both DJing and producing music are not necessary for a person to reach success. Yet, the EDM industry is still considered a "boys club". Do women really belong in the EDM industry? And how do we make the EDM industry more attractive for women?

Both the producers and DJs within the EDM industry are subject of nepotism, meaning that people are more likely to help friends and acquaintances before others). When the industry is already struggling with a majority of men, it's self-explanatory that they help each other. The act of nepotism is thus not beneficial to the women, as the discussions with their authenticity and integrity are ongoing. Women regularly face huge barriers in the industry. The interviewees argued that these barriers weren't necessarily obstacles, but part of the everyday challenges that had to be dealt with. This has led to many being rejected, or struggle to gain traction against the men. As a result, they're prone to "giving up or not trying to change the status quo," as Kory suggests.

The gap between men and women in the EDM industry is still large, even though discussions of equality are ongoing in today's culture. For addressing and fixing it, a step in the right direction would be to make the industry more attractive for the women. Removing the sexual stereotypes, creating equal opportunities. Another option is to turn away the focus from the DJs, but rather the whole audiovisual experience. Women aren't just go-go dancers. They're just not puppets exploiting their looks to reach fame. As Braiman proposes, "[...] the solution would be to encourage more genuine female artists to showcase their talent".

As American DJ and producer Diplo states, "Dance music is so interchangeable, and there's not a lot of face to it" (Makarechi, 2013b). Yet, EDM music by women is a subject of stereotypes. They're often characterized as something feminine, with fluffy, light, or even happy elements. And this is in addition to the controversies regarding ghost production once female EDM producers release her record. As electronic music is essentially created on the

computers, you shouldn't tell if it's produced by a woman, nor a man, just by listening to the music.

6.3. Fairness in Giving Women Advantages?

The playground of EDM is currently uneven, due to the nepotistic values among the men. They all got a head start before the whole commercialization of EDM the recent decade. As Kory suggested in her interview, giving female DJs and producers a head start could solve some of the issues with the current gender gap. If the booking agents and label managers lowered their standards and stopped comparing the works of women by those of the men, more women would release music. Thus more women would appear in the live industry worldwide. It's a theory worth backing. But is it fair to give such an advantage only because they're a minority in the industry because some of the men have spent countless years achieving the same?

It's also suggested that a female DJ-only night at the local club helps promote the profession for women. Also, events such as these further distance the stereotypical issues regarding women, thus boosting the authenticity of female DJs. The same goes for records produced by women; if more were released and promoted, for example on social media, relevant news outlets, blogs, and in radio shows, more women would show interest in producing music and eventually be further encouraged to showcase their talent. "It doesn't have to be seen as a problem that there are fewer women in the electronic music scene, it just means the ones that do exist can be appreciated even more so when they're discovered" as Braiman points out in her interview.

6.4. Role models

Having role models is an important tool for struggling women in the EDM industry. Having someone who illustrates what female DJs can achieve if they only work hard. Female DJs today shouldn't be afraid to speak out on their issues, to reach a solution. You're always aiming to achieve the same as your role model. And currently, there are no female Avicii's, Tiësto's, or Armin van Buuren's in the industry. No one in the commercial EDM scene is speaking out, discussing the gender gap. Thus, finding a role model is harder for the female DJs, than their male counterparts. Engstrøm states that she's trying to be a role model in

everything she does. Whether performing as DJ or speaking out about women in EDM. Similarly, Kory explains she wants to become a role model, even though she only "[...] think that comes with fame". A statement which I find true.

It's hard to find a role model when the pool of role models is so limited. It's obvious that if only the female DJs and music producers of today speak out and act as role models, only they will motivate other women. All the biggest names in today's industry are a subject of men sharing nepotistic values. They've also become the gatekeepers of the gender gap. If women don't see other women perform as DJs or release records, they will never believe any females can be as big as the superstars mentioned above. However, none of the interviewees explicitly said they would find it impossible.

6.5. Raising Awareness

The society today is full of gender stereotypes, both in and outside of the music industry. Women are those responsible staying home and raising the kids. Not being the ones out partying. "That's a man's job" as Engstrøm suggests in her interview. Stereotypes along the lines of these acts as a gatekeeper for women in the EDM industry. But how can we raise awareness for women in the industry?

Social media is a platform that is currently dominating the internet usage of all teens globally. It's where they get their news, where they meet people, where they discuss culture, and where they discover. Raising awareness can come in so many forms of the almost unlimited amount of social playgrounds on the internet. EDM news outlets, along with the lines of www.EDM.com and DJ Mag, could spend more time focusing on how far the female DJs and music producers have come, and how we all can collaborate on removing the gender imbalance. EDM Record labels with female producers on their artist roster, could emphasize that they have something unique. Also, groups on social media and radio DJs can all pitch in and announce once a track is actually made by a female music producer. As Kory states, she "[...] personally has been mistaken as a man on some occasions because I have an alias that doesn't stick out as one gender or the other". Finally, all the venues of festivals worldwide could help raising awareness for women in EDM. Once the audience starts seeing more women on stage performing, and not dancing in a sparkling bikinis, the women in the audience would get the idea that it's socially acceptable for them to become DJs as well. It's

all a part of the bigger picture where everyone helps out giving everyone a fair treatment in the industry.

Also, more people in the industry, both women, and men, should discuss the gender gap in an open arena. As Kory suggests, "you have to fight for what you think is right and fair". In addition, Engstrøm points out that it's a joint effort by both men and women. She clarifies that if only women speak out, they'll just be "[...] portrayed as nagging bitches".

7.0. Conclusion

The research set throughout this thesis has been to investigate the psychosocial values, experiences, and stories for female DJ and music producers in the male-dominated industry. The presented theories from the methodology have in many ways confirmed the theories and discussions around the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 and 3. They all shared the same values of EDM, and became DJs and / or music producers because they were passionate about the music. And as the research question states; how can we narrow the gender gap in the EDM industry? The results of this research have proved that women are struggling to get recognized in the EDM industry of today. Although they stay positive, they often face gender-related issues. They also agree that it's hard to earn respect by others, as women in EDM are often portrayed as a woman first, and a DJ or producer second. In other words, that their tits in most cases overlook their talent.

Though, many agreed that being the gender minority had some advantages. As the competition are mostly the men, being either female DJs or music producers, are something unique for the audience from the very get-go. Yet, gender stereotypes are still flourishing in the scene. Many don't believe women share the same talent as the men who pioneered the genre, for the sole reason that the modern society has told us that women don't belong in STEM-fields. As a result, female DJs are portrayed as inferior to their male counterparts. Similarly, music produced and released by women are quickly prone to discussions of authenticity by the countless amount of *keyboard warriors* in the various message boards and on social media online.

The issues of gender equality are bigger than ever in the music industry, both within and outside of EDM. And it's about time the gender gap of the industry become narrow. Firstly, there's the action of narrowing down the current sexism in the industry. As clarified in the previous chapter, there are several measures you and I can execute today, to make a better tomorrow for the women in the EDM industry. Women are perfectly qualified of contributing to STEM-fields. They're not only capable of playing the same records as men, but they're also adequate to produce and release music. There's though several challenges in solving this, as they're often not taken seriously from the beginning due to a number of female DJs with the looks and ghost producers. Though, once women overcome this barrier, the gender should no longer become an issue. It's up to the women to not conform to gender stereotypes. It's up

to the society to not conform to gender stereotypes. There won't be more female artists and DJs participating in this arena until there are more female artists and DJs participating in the arena. It seems redundant and obvious, but the numbers all add up. There needs to be more people involved from the get-go. So, how do we do that? How do we get more women involved in the EDM industry? For this to happen, the industry needs more capable role models for the vast amount of struggling female DJs and music producers. And once the awareness is raised, with the help of said role models, more and more will enter the scene, thus inspiring the very next generation of women in EDM.

I acknowledge that this research has several limitations. The results discussed in this thesis from the presented research might differ from the many females in EDM out there. Also, it does not offer a holistic view of the DJ industry, as only the stories and perspectives from male and female DJs and music producers are presented and discussed. Label spokespersons, booking agents for clubs and festival, and the audience as a whole might have different opinions regarding the gender gap in EDM. Based on this, it's safe to say that more research is needed to perfectly understand the events of today, in order to create a better tomorrow.

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