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Cultural mediators and the everyday making of 'digital capital' in contemporary Chile

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis studies processes of cultural mediation and the role of digital media within them. It is based on the experiences of a group of cultural mediators within a particular music scene in contemporary Chile, and focuses on actors' meaningful repertoires of action, their material arrangements and their relation with information and communication technologies (ICTs). 'Mediation' in a broader sense means processes through which human and non-human agencies produce and shape meanings, attaching them to various cultural flows such as information, images, and identities. As cultural mediators, actors define the music scene, curating and circulating through digital media various flows which they deem worthy of being considered by audiences, and distinguishing themselves across different fields.

The thesis is based on nine months of fieldwork (2011) in Santiago, following the everyday practices of the creators of eight music websites through which global and local cultural flows are mediated, organised, and circulated. It analyses how various technological devices facilitate individuals' construction of networks where cultural flows circulate, and through which their uses of taste are displayed and objectified. It proposes the concept of 'digital capital' as an assemblage of actors, practices, objects, and meanings, which is convertible into other types of capital (e.g. economic) and exchangeable in various fields. It is a mode of practice and expertise through which, using digital technologies, individuals create networks where cultural flows circulate. Through the making of websites, music fans become cultural mediators, developing their digital capital as cultural and technical expertise. This expertise is convertible into economic capital and positionality across different fields, especially the field of advertising. Digital capital can be summarised in the question: 'what are the connections and associations between technical knowledge, cultural flows, and social position, as well as conversions of capital, behind someone who is using Twitter or Facebook, or making a website about a music scene?' Against this backdrop, it is explored how actors produce and perform 'cultures of mediation', commoditising culture as consumption goods.

For my wife, friend, and life partner, Cecilia

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Chapter 1

Introduction

More than three years ago (in February, 2011), the Spanish newspaper *El País* published an article¹ about the indie music scene in Santiago, Chile. It referred to Santiago as a “paradise of pop”, and reported how interviewees were always talking about Chile’s “isolation” from the rest of the world. The article celebrated the creativity involved in that cultural production. In an attempt to understand the existence of that scene, one interviewee stated the importance of Chileans’ use of technology that contributes to its making: “the purchasing power is not even half of what it is in Europe. The other is the penetration of Internet. That 70% of the population has an account on Facebook speaks volumes”. Those words came from the creator of one of the most respected music websites in Chile, Super 45. This site was created by two journalism students who were obsessed with the “shoe-gaze” music movement in the UK during the 90’s. They started building a website for publishing music and reviews of albums by indie music bands around the world, and sometimes about Chileans bands. Last year Super 45 celebrated 15 years of activity. The creator considered that *El País* article was an important celebration of the quality and originality of Santiago’s indie music scene, even though the scene had existed for ten years. However, being part of that article was not pure coincidence for him; it was a gesture of recognition of his website, and its importance for making available the most interesting and innovative indie music that is created in the country, and connecting to local and global audiences.

This thesis begins with the practices of a group of people who create and maintain websites about music scenes, with special emphasis on Santiago’s indie music scene. In their rooms people spend lots of time in front of their computers, programming, surfing the web, uploading content on their websites, redesigning them to include new applications, as well as managing Facebook and Twitter accounts, exchanging links, pictures, and various types of content. They do the same thing using their mobile phones, communicating with the audiences they construct through their websites. Digital and communication technologies are present everywhere in the everyday lives of this group of people. It is impossible to understand how

¹ Perez, Palacios, I. “Chile, paradise of pop”. *Diario El País* (Spain); 4th of February 2011. Retrieved from: http://elPais.com/diario/2011/02/04/tentaciones/1296847374_850215.html

they structure their lives without observing the centrality that the internet, mobile phones, flows of information, and links, clicks, 'tweets' or 'likes' have in their daily activities. These technologies enable individuals to situate themselves in networks where different flows of objects and symbols (Appadurai, 1986) circulate regarding their interests, particularly around music. For instance, they have access to musical production, as well as images of bands that are part of international music scenes, and resources ranging from the latest albums to the set list of a band that played in a music festival. Similarly, they are constantly obtaining information about various international music bands from trans-local music websites that provide them with different types of information. The global environment is mediated through the set of digital technologies that these individuals use on a daily basis.

In this context the websites emerge as spaces where global and local flows are organised, mediated, and represented. Those flows are varied: from music to fashion goods and brands, as well as musicians' identities, comprising the content of those websites. Similarly, those sites and their creators have attracted the attention of different fields of cultural production, particularly the field of advertising, as spaces where brands can be promoted. In the same way, marketing agents are part of the scene's activities (advertising them, as well as organising marketing events where some of the scenes' bands play). Again, the websites and their creators are key actors connecting the scene with other fields of cultural production, as well as developing niche markets through their use of technology and cultural knowledge, collaborating in the design and promotion of those events. Thus, the activities where this group of people is involved evolve into the institutionalisation of values, music scenes, careers, lifestyles, and forms of exchange. In some ways, Santiago's indie music scene as a creative industry is produced by the practices of production, consumption and circulation of flows by the creators of websites, as well as its representation in those spaces.

These fans, explored as cultural mediators of the scene, also connect the scene they objectify on the internet with various advertising agencies and brands. Through their practices in the making of the websites, cultural mediators define the scene in terms of who is doing interesting things worthy of being considered by audiences (thus making cultural distinctions), and establishing social categories in order to make such distinctions. They are also acting as curators of the scene, giving meaning and value to its cultural goods and mediating identities, tastes, and lifestyles, converting them into valuable objects of consumption. At the same time,

they are constructing the boundaries of the scene with regard to the actors, goods, and spaces that are involved in its creation.

Tironi (2009; 2012) argues – in a critique of cluster theories and geographically fixed approaches to the study of music scenes as creative industries – that Santiago’s indie music scene has multiple spatialities, wherein its identity is being constantly redefined. One of the reasons for this is that “the ‘buzz’ of the scene, far from being enacted through the immediacy and closeness of face-to-face interactions, is performed virtually via decentered, distanced, technologically-mediated and global communications” (2012: 225). This suggests that the scene and its actors cannot be approached as a fixed entity, “autonomous” from other fields in their processes of cultural production. On the contrary, the scene exists as a result of a varied set of interactions between different entities – musicians, audiences, producers, record labels, brands, and advertising agencies. Through different practices – particularly technological uses – website creators are key agents in making the scene and connecting its cultural production with other actors (market agents such as advertising agencies or other audiences). Likewise, through the websites, these actors organise the flows of this scene (music, musicians’ identities, images, brands, amongst others) as well as mixing them with other global ones.

If we focus more closely, we will see that the websites created by these individuals have similarities. Firstly, the sites present similar content around international and local ‘indie’ music bands. Some have a special interest in mainstream rock bands, but that content is always presented alongside information about not very well known bands. These similarities are also reflected in how websites are linked to each other. For instance, some have a section called ‘friends’ with links to other, similar, local websites. Secondly, the information is presented using various interconnected technologies. For instance, an article about a music band may be complemented with a video available on YouTube. In the same way, that article can be shared with friends on Facebook or Twitter through the applications that are part of those websites. Thirdly, the websites present a list of gigs that are part of Santiago’s indie music scene, as well as reviews of music albums or gigs written by the websites’ creators and their collaborators. This information always appears to be a recommendation made by the site’s creators. However, they constantly receive information from record labels, music bands, and places where gigs take place. The same happens with music selected by website creators or provided by musicians. This music is presented on the sites and can be listened to or downloaded by audiences. In this

sense, the websites are spaces where various types of classification are objectified, but also where information and other types of flows are centralised and distributed to various audiences. Fourthly, content focused on musicians, records, and different music styles is mixed with various brand logos that are advertised there. In this context, websites are artefacts that mediate different music scenes and their corresponding flows, just as they are spaces where various cultural and taste classifications are objectified.

Alongside the practices of individuals in the making of websites, there is another process that is interrelated with those practices, which can be considered a by-product. Whilst the creation and maintenance of websites enables individuals to establish social and economic relations with the scene's actors (e.g. musicians, record labels, and club owners), those practices have also been central to connecting with other actors that are beyond the scene, such as advertising and branding agencies. These actors see the websites as spaces where different brands and products can be promoted to 'niche audiences'. For that reason, websites and the practices of their creators are incorporated in the value chains of different types of products ranging from global brands such as Nike, Puma, or Corona to local Chilean brands. Websites are spaces where products are promoted just as branding and advertising agencies are key actors inserting brands and products into the flows of Santiago's indie music scene. For instance, advertising may finance gigs or generate private music events where bands play, as part of marketing strategies that are promoted on the websites. In this context, websites emerge as spaces that make visible different economic relations based on the exchange of different types of knowledge and cultural classifications performed by its creators.

Describing the websites in terms of their content, as well as the interaction between different types of digital technologies and practices that give life to them, was the first, and easiest, step to start this journey. Regarding Chileans' relationship with information and communication technologies (ICTs), the next steps will be more difficult. They will habituate us to be part of the daily life of a group of 12 people who create and maintain six websites around Santiago's indie music scene, as well as other global scenes. This will enable us to understand and analyse, from their own words and experiences, the role they play in processes of cultural mediation, and also the role that ICTs play in those processes.

Focusing on actors' material practices of mediating global and local cultural flows, the discourses about them, and their relation with information and communication technologies, the research aims to understand how actors make sense of their practices of cultural mediation in the making of a music scene, but also with regard to other fields such as advertising. Cultural flows are defined as meanings and meaningful forms that move across different places (e.g. information, images, and identities) (Appadurai, 1990; Hannerz, 1997). Websites about the scene represent only one area within the network of actors and institutions that makes up a local creative industry. This is a network of complex categories and hierarchies composed of different actors, from musicians to fans, club owners, producers, record labels and flows, amongst others.

This thesis will examine how the group of actors under study experiences processes of cultural mediation in the making and maintenance of websites about local and global music scenes. 'Mediation' in a broader sense means the processes through which human and non-human agencies produce and shape meanings, attaching them to various flows of objects and symbols as they enter everyday life on their various journeys (Appadurai, 1986; 1996). On those journeys, meanings flow through different channels, in the form of images, identities, and information, changing as they flow. Meanwhile, processes of cultural mediation involve the experiences of individuals regarding those processes and exchanges, as well as their practices as forms of labour within a particular field. Music scenes are networks of producers and consumers where different types of flow circulate and its actors distinguish between them according to their relations to those flows. Music scenes operate as small micro-economies brought into being by processes of production and consumption (Tironi, 2012; McRobbie, 2003). My standpoint considers 'culture' as 'a description of the particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values' (Williams, 1961: 57). In this sense, the analysis aims to explain the processes behind the production and circulation of those meanings and values that represent the particular way of life of a group of actors in contemporary Chile, who also help to produce the scene as a creative industry. The second question deals with one specific issue: to what extent are processes of cultural mediation connected to the use of information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.

The collective activity of Santiago's indie music scene as a field of cultural production is characteristic of activity in music scenes generally. However, there are two intertwined processes that make Chile – and specifically Santiago's music scene as a creative industry – an interesting case study. On one hand, this is a story about gaining access to global flows as a result of a process of modernisation represented by the spread of and appropriation by Chileans of ICTs (and their rendered properties as objects and consumption goods that are essential to accessing modernity) (UNDP, 2006). This process of modernisation started in the 1970s through neoliberal policies oriented to opening up the Chilean market to global economies (UNDP, 2002). On the other hand, this is a story about a generation of people who are part of that 'new Chile', a modern country connected to the world, which is able to circulate its cultural production, as well as consuming global cultural flows. Here, ICTs are tools rendered with capabilities to achieve those ends through their various uses. In this sense, exploring and unpacking the social life and the material arrangements of a group of music fans, who create and maintain websites about Santiago's indie music scene, helps to understand a story of cultural mediation in a southern context in the age of connectivity and digital reproduction. The standpoint of this thesis is to explore cultural mediation from the bottom up, by tracing the associations between actors, meanings, and objects in the making of a creative industry. Against this backdrop, creativity, meaningful repertoires of action and material arrangements are the result of a set of associations and practices, objects and discourses which give meanings and values to flows, and forms of labour, performed by a group of cultural mediators.

As in other countries, the emergence of Santiago's indie music scene was parallel to the crisis in the music record industry at a global level, and to the increasing use of the internet as a tool for the production, distribution and consumption of music (Erlj and Ponce, 2011). Napster's breakthrough in 1999 heralded the era of the mp3 and the digitisation of music culture on a global scale. However as Leyshon et al (2005: 180-181) suggest:

"The rise of Internet piracy cannot be held solely responsible for the depth and severity of the crisis of the musical economy... the emergence of software formats and Internet distribution systems represent what can be described as a 'tipping point' (Gladwell, 2000) that has triggered a wholesale reorganisation of the music industry towards a new business model".

The more recent rise of social media, along with ever-increasing broadband speeds, has further transformed the terrain of culture into a multiple-mediated space where clashing interests, actors and objects, ideas and aesthetics, proliferate and come together in new, hybrid forms, and where the lines between structure and agency can no longer be clearly discerned. There is a tension, then, between the present configuration of cultural fields, which has been described and analysed by scholars as ‘post subcultural’ (Muggleton 2003) and which corresponds to large-scale social, economic, cultural and technological shifts known all together as ‘globalisation’, and the persistence of ‘indie’ as a mode of self-identification. In this context, the meanings of music consumers and the content and scope of their practices undergo significant changes as well. Thus, to the extent that consumers are proficient in their use of a variety of digital technologies, they come to acquire a new status and function in the field of cultural production.

The choice of a music scene as the site for this study comes from the important role of this area of the musical field in generating meaning and value for cultural flows and actors such as musicians, identities, and music. Thus, it is possible to understand how cultural flows and goods ‘are produced and disseminated in modern economies and societies’ (Hesmondhalgh, 2008: 552): in other words, how the realm of economy and culture are produced and intertwined (Du Gay and Pryke, 2002). The focus on a group of people who create and maintain websites about the scene comes from a need to better understand their role as mediators between cultural production and cultural promotion in the changing dynamics of connectivity and digital reproduction. In this sense, Chile’s combination of a massive increase in access to ICTs and the emergence of a productive and innovative indie music scene is a good case study to understand the production, circulation, and consumption of flows – local and global, especially music and identities – that give life to a field of cultural production and to a small micro-economy, considering the role that different types of agencies, both human and non-human, play in its making.

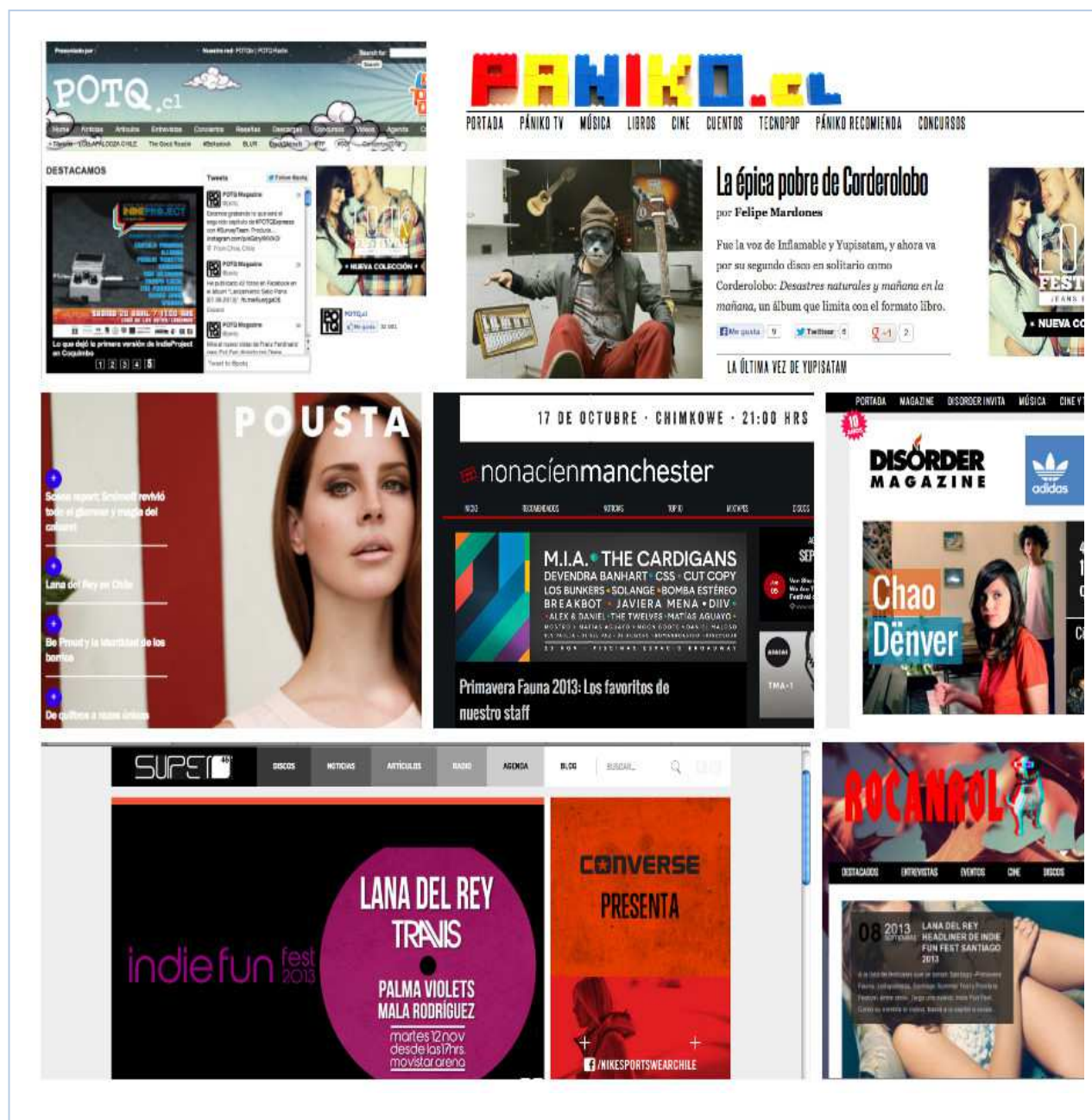
The thesis is based on an eight-month ethnography conducted in Santiago in 2011. I followed the work of a group of 12 people who create and maintain six music websites about Santiago’s indie music scene, as well as global music scenes. It proposes a bottom-up approach to exploring the dynamics of cultural mediation and the role that forms of labour have in processes of cultural production, circulation, and consumption in the operation of a creative

industry. The focus is on how these actors define what they do, organising and mediating different types of local and global flows (e.g. informational and technological) through their uses of technology. In addition, the research focuses on how these agents, by making websites, achieve positions of recognition in particular fields, as a result of their practices of assigning meaning and value to different flows, which in turn help to construct scenes and niche markets. The group of music fans included in this study can be explored as cultural mediators in the production of a music scene, through their qualifications (Callon, et. al, 2002) around its flows, as well as definitions about them, and through the material practices involved in the creation and maintenance of music websites. Websites are the result of processes where cultural flows are examined, judged, shaped, and acted on by cultural mediators. They are not mere consumers of the scene's flows; they are also involved in their transformation and circulation, producing meanings around them. As 'cultural mediators', actors categorise the scene and its flows through practices, discourses, and objects in particular places, transforming and circulating them on their websites.

Focusing on what it means to be a cultural mediator in the Chilean contemporary context, this thesis is concerned with looking at the everyday practices of mediation of cultural flows and the technological uses involved. It considers the values cultural mediators work with and generate for themselves as economic agents trying to make a living and to promote the scene, including to agents from advertising, especially through their digital and cultural knowledge. By analysing processes of mediation and qualification of flows, this research traces empirically how actors' practices, as well as the meanings around them, produce "cultures of mediation" that are valorised and exchanged as forms of labour, commodifying culture as consumer goods. In this context, I propose the concept of 'digital capital' as a form of cultural mediation, particularly of digital technologies and flows (global/local), which enable individuals to achieve positions of recognition within various fields of cultural production, as well as to situate themselves within networks of flows; in the same way, the capital is valorised and exchangeable. Drawing principally upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Bruno Latour, digital capital operates as a form of mediation, which is the result of the interplay between human and non-human agencies that can be explored and described using a bottom-up approach. It is argued that digital capital is an assemblage of actors, practices, objects, and meanings, which is convertible into other types of capital (e.g. economic) and exchangeable in different fields.

This chapter is the introduction to the thesis. The first section gives an overview of the discussion around music scenes. It begins by describing definitions of music scenes and their limitations, then goes on to give a brief account of recent approaches towards the study of music scenes as assemblages of actors, practices, and objects, as well as interconnected micro-economies where flows are produced, circulated and consumed. These accounts give special attention to the role of 'socio-technical' mediators, as a result of the classification of flows by actors, and their relations with different technologies, particularly ICTs. It then goes on to describe how music website creators can be approached as cultural mediators who construct the scene through different practices and qualifying flows, as well as through their uses ICTs. This first section finishes by situating the research questions by connecting them with the mounting body of literature around music scenes and cultural mediators. Finally, the second section presents the structure of the thesis and reviews the different arguments presented in it.

Figure 1. Pictures of music websites about Santiago's indie music scene



Source: Collected from fieldwork material

1. Exploring indie music scenes and the role of cultural mediators in their production

Previous studies of music scenes (Bennett & Peterson, 2004; Becker, 2004; Lloyd, 2005) pay special attention to the social and spatial processes through which they are configured: for instance, as a space that shapes processes of cultural production, identifying the actors that are involved in those processes – musicians, producers and fans – that share common tastes, and differentiating them from others. Similarly, they are seen as urban neighbours where networks of cultural producers co-exist (Florida, 2003; Hauge & Hracs, 2010; Lloyd, 2005). The focus of these studies is space and the networks of relations that emerge in those places, classifying the scenes as “local, global, [or] virtual” according to the spatial and socio-cultural diversity of actors and the places that constitute them (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). A local scene is a ‘social activity that takes place in a delimited space and over a specific span of time in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans realise their common musical taste’ (2004: 8). A ‘local’ scene also means that its members try to distinguish themselves from others through the performance of a particular lifestyle. Secondly, the authors define ‘translocal scenes’ as local music scenes oriented towards one style of music that has established contact and exchanges with other local scenes in different places. In this case, the locality does not restrict the exchange of flows with other actors in distant localities. Here, the role of fanzines, recordings, and digital technologies such as the internet are central to their existence. Thirdly, ‘virtual’ music scenes are the result of communications via the internet between fan clubs separated geographically. These scenes exist in chat rooms or e-mailing lists where fans control the communication and the exchange of information.

The three types of scene presented share the flow of exchanges in the form of information, knowledge, and music independently of the location of the actors. However, Bennett & Peterson’s categorisations can be criticised for their biases towards European and U.S case studies. Similarly, it does not pay attention to processes of mediation of those flows, and those categories do not necessarily apply to other cases such as cultural scenes and industries in South America. For instance, in his study of Santiago’s indie music scene, Tironi (2012) argues that the locality of the scene is produced as the result of the practices of the scene’s members. Similarly, there is an iterative process through which the practices of the

scene's actors are also 'an effect of the particular spatiality in which they set out their productive networks' (2012: 206). For him, his case study is not a new type of music scene. Nevertheless, it suggests a new approach towards the study of scenes rather than demarcating them according to the spatial forms they take. This new approach proposes to consider a 'music scene as an entity that assembles different spatialities, socio-technical mediators, productive networks and actors' (2012: 206).

Two interesting issues emerge through the comparison of the two approaches. Firstly, Bennett and Peterson's classification of music scenes assumes the existence of the 'local' as a space where the practices of fans can be situated. This fixed approach denies the possibility that actors produce their localities through different exchanges of flows and practices, as Tironi demonstrates in his study. Secondly, and independently of the scene's definition as 'local, trans-local or virtual', the role that digital technologies play in their existence is always determined by actors' practices, independently of the importance that those technologies have in fans' practices. Through their categorisations, Bennett and Peterson reveal their own interests or agendas, especially avoiding tracing the relation of digital technologies as situated within networks and localities, but most importantly in terms of the meanings actors give to the scenes' flows, as well as to ICTs. They ignore the material arrangements and symbolic production around flows involved in the making of a scene. Similarly, they assume that 'translocal' and 'virtual' music scenes rely on the fixed properties of ICTs, for instance, as tools for the circulation of flows, media and objects that facilitate communication between producers and consumers, and not as a result of the relations, exchanges, production and circulation of meanings between digital objects, musicians, audiences, amongst other actors within localities. What this theory does not address is the different mediations – of flows and digital technologies, for instance – where actors and objects are involved in the making of different music scenes?

The limitation with Bennett and Peterson's classification around processes of cultural production in music scenes also resides in the failure to consider the hybrid and non-fixed character of production and circulation of flows by musicians and fans (Tironi, 2012). In the same way, their study, as well as others (Florida, 2003; Hauge & Hraacs, 2010; Lloyd, 2005), assumes that "creativity" and "innovation" emerge as a result of the spatial conditions that stimulate networks of exchange of different resources – knowledge and economic resources –

between actors. Through those assumptions, these approaches ignore processes of classification and circulation of flows with regard to cultural production which are generated as a result of various interactions and exchanges between actors and technologies, which Tironi (2012) calls 'socio-technical mediators'. In this sense, the 'buzz' around the scene must be explained in order to be considered as a key element in the circulation and valorisation of its cultural production by consumers (either local or global audiences) interested in the scene's flows. It is in this context that, through their websites, the people considered in this research become key actors in the creation and circulation of buzz about this scene, as well as international music and scenes. Through this, the websites emerge as hubs where global and local cultural flows merge; in the same way, different economic and social relations become visible, for instance, between website creators and audiences, musicians, record labels, club owners, and people from other fields such as advertising. The scene can be explored as an achievement that results from a set of relations between people, objects, meanings, and flows, rather than as a fixed entity.

In contrast to Bennett and Peterson's (2004) view of music scenes, it is through the objectification of cultural classifications of the scene's flows – e.g. music, musicians, images, identities, places — that websites and their creators in some ways help to construct a music scene, producing buzz about it and connecting their flows with different types of audiences. It is this dimension of scene-making, as a result of social and economic exchanges between actors, in which music websites and their creators have a central position. As McRobbie (2002) suggests, creative industries such as music scenes operate as micro-economies based on the production and consumption of cultural goods. The indie character of a scene represents the creative autonomy of this musical genre from the commercial constraints of mainstream cultural industries, but it also refers to a particular commercial organisational style of cultural production, for example, "DIY" practices (Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Bennett & Patterson, 2004). DIY stands for Do-It-Yourself, an ethos that arose out of the early punk movement and that encourages 'regular' people to make culture, rather than remaining confined to commercially produced cultural goods (Spencer, 2005).

Tironi (2009; 2012) argues, in a critique of cluster theories for and geographically fixed approaches to the study of music scenes, that Santiago's indie music scene has multiple spatialities, wherein its identity is continuously redefined. One of the reasons for this is that the

buzz of the scene, ‘far from being enacted through the immediacy and closeness of face-to-face interactions, is performed virtually via de-centred, distanciated, technologically mediated and global communications’ (2012: 225). This suggests that the scene and its actors cannot be approached as a fixed entity, autonomous from other fields in their processes of cultural production. On the contrary, the scene exists as a result of a diverse set of interactions between different entities – musicians, fans/audiences, producers, record labels, advertising agencies – where, through different practices, website creators organise cultural flows through the use and appropriation of information and communications technologies, becoming key agents in making the scene and connecting its cultural production with other fields.

Particularly relevant are the material practices involved in the creation of this buzz by a group of actors who create music websites around the scene in contemporary Chile. In this context, going back to Tironi (2011; 2012), even though he is interested in the spatiality of Santiago’s indie music scene, as a social entity it becomes valorised, amongst other exchanges, as a result of the ‘buzz’ around the music, musicians, and places that make it available for consumers. This means looking at the different types of mediations involved in the making of the websites, especially at information and communication technologies and cultural flows that are available on the scene and are then represented on their websites. Similarly, the different strategies through which the circulation of flows are performed by website creators enable them to situate themselves within networks where flows circulate, connecting different fields of cultural production (e.g. the scene and the field of advertising). For instance, Molloy and Lerner, in the case of the New Zealand fashion market, argue that “mutually constitutive relationships between production, mediation and consumption are characteristic of the whole fields of creative industries” where “these activities and actors are creating the industry as much as the designers” (2010: 374).

In the case of music website creators within Santiago’s indie music scene, this story invokes Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of cultural intermediaries (1984): specifically, how these actors, through the making and maintenance of their websites, emerge as “taste-makers” with regard to the consumption side of the scene. For instance, they choose which bands are worth audiences’ consideration by making judgements about them. In the same way, these actors can be situated between the production and consumption of those flows, mediating them through different strategies of value and meaning assignment. They try to construct taste out of

different resources and based on specific practices that involve flows, discourses, and ICTs. As Entwistle suggests, cultural intermediaries are responsible for bringing “a range of cultural things to market: goods, images, tastes, aesthetics” (2009: 15). Based on Bourdieu’s definition, the ability of cultural intermediaries to be “shapers of taste” or “tastemakers” (Nixon & Du Gay, 2002: 497) has been explored in different contexts and with various purposes, for instance: in advertising agencies, when agents add meanings to goods between processes of production and consumption, participating in economic and cultural practices (Du Gay, 1997; McFall, 2002; Nixon, 2003); in the music industry as gatekeepers between bands, producers and audiences (Negus, 2002); in fashion mediating tastes and identities of designers and models (Entwistle, 2009), and with regard to indie identity formation and performance (Hesmondhalgh, 1999). These studies are interesting examples of attempts to understand the dynamics of cultural mediation in different types of market. But what kind of differences might emerge in Chile’s contemporary context? – and in particular, from the experiences of a group of actors that are part of one of the country’s newest creative industries and the role that digital technologies play in their practices. As Entwistle (2009) suggests, Bourdieu’s analysis is limited to the extent that it focuses solely on French culture, in particular the rarefied world of art criticism. The processes he describes do not map neatly onto the practices of contemporary music scenes, thoroughly postmodern (i.e. rejecting distinctions between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture; Jameson, 1992), and suffused with digital technology as they are. Similarly, the concept of ‘cultural intermediaries’ has been criticised (Nixon & Du Gay, 2002), particularly as non-novel practices regarding commercial mediation (McFall, 2002). In the same vein, other authors have argued that Bourdieu’s concept focuses only on the mediation between consumers and products, without paying attention to other regimes of ‘multiple mediations’ (Cronin, 2004) or exploring marketing activities as a ‘central mediation that contributes to assembling market encounters’ (Ariztía, 2013: 7).

In this context, this thesis argues for an approach that looks at the different mediations in which website creators are involved, particularly mediation of digital technologies and cultural flows. They do their work largely online, and this gets valorised by marketing people, as well as members of the scene, so it is obvious that we can and must treat digital media as central to a study of cultural mediation and scene construction; over the course of the investigation we can ask just how important the digital (digital media and digital skills) is to an empirical and analytical account of this scene.

Bruno Latour's concept of 'mediators' better approximates this situation: here actors and 'actants' (human and non-human, respectively) 'transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry' (Latour 2007: 39). For the purpose of this thesis, individuals who build music websites can be analysed as cultural mediators who make explicit efforts to shape the music scene in ways that are attractive to specific ('niche') audiences, as well as to increasingly important market agents, often making use of digital technologies to do so. This assemblage of actors and actants, the internet, as a set of technologies to facilitate the production, reproduction, distribution, and consumption of information about a scene, and a group of active mediators who both document the scene and make it attractive to marketing agents, thus acquires an important role in the growth and dynamism of contemporary cultural production. Empirically, this can be explored by looking at the role music websites play in making the scene visible to different audiences, and particularly as a result of intertwined mediation experiences where its creators are involved. On the one hand, in the form of classifications and representations of varied cultural flows like music, identities, images, and information objectified on their websites. On the other hand, we can see their influence as a result of different strategies through which ICTs are mediated by actors, but also as artefacts that shape individual projects.

2. Thesis Structure

This thesis will try to answer two interrelated questions. Firstly, it looks at how the group of actors under study in the making and maintenance of websites about Santiago's indie music scene and global music scenes experience processes of cultural mediation that help to construct the scene as a creative industry. Secondly, it examines to what extent processes of cultural mediation are connected to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly the Internet, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. By considering the process of making websites, the research explores the role played by several types of human and non-human agencies (actors, practices, discourses, taste classifications, digital technologies, and marketing events) in the production of a music scene. This standpoint demands a bottom-up approach to explore and analyse how the scene is produced, how its cultural production circulates and becomes valorised, not only as a result of spatial conditions that stimulate creativity, but, on the contrary, as a result of different mediations around cultural

flows – global and local – and digital technologies, as well as taste classifications that are objectified on the websites.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The next chapter discusses the main theoretical standpoints of the thesis. The theoretical discussion aims to make sense of and illuminate the fieldwork, where the complexity of processes through which actors create and maintain music websites emerges as a particular form of cultural mediation defined as 'digital capital'. The role that human and non-human agencies play in shaping actors' actions in the circulation and qualification of flows is crucial. These findings enable us to understand how actors produce fields of cultural production as a result of processes of meaning-making and their circulation. It also becomes clear that it is their relations with objects, rather than social backgrounds (e.g. class) or fixed properties of the objects and flows they are dealing with that determine their experiences of cultural mediation.

The second chapter is about the methodological stance and strategies regarding the research. It proposes a bottom-up approach to studying processes and experiences of cultural mediation, particularly the role of information and communication technologies. The choice of ethnography is the result of the theoretical approaches used in the thesis, particularly regarding the production and circulation of meanings by actors, and the material practices involved. Analysing processes of mediation and qualification of goods, this approach traces empirically how actors' practices, as well as the meanings around them, produce 'cultures of mediation' that are exchangeable and valorised in the construction of 'niche markets', merging culture and economy as intertwined dimensions of the social. The first section introduces Santiago's indie music scene in terms of its history, actors, and places. The second section describes the case study, a group of cultural mediators who create and maintain websites about music scenes. This section describes the group of actors included in the study particularly in terms of their stocks of capital (economic and cultural), but also gives a brief account of their websites within the context of the local scene. The third section reflects upon highlights of the fieldwork, describing the research strategy used for exploring three interrelated areas that determined the field site: music websites as devices through which cultural distinctions are objectified; Santiago's indie music scene as a field of cultural production; and branded music events organised by advertising agencies as bounded spaces where different mediations are performed by actors.

Drawing on these theoretical and methodological standpoints in order to make sense of the fieldwork experience, the subsequent chapters explore three key stages regarding actors' experiences and processes of cultural mediation. Each chapter analyses a particular type of mediation that converts these individuals into cultural mediators in contemporary Chile, but most importantly, how these mediations are central to the generation of digital capital.

Chapter 3 is divided into four sections. The first section discusses the role that human agencies play in processes of mediation. It focuses particularly on the work of Pierre Bourdieu with regard to the production and circulation of meanings from a human point of view. Thus the discussion focuses on Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural intermediaries' as carrying out particular forms of labour that are the result of practices of cultural mediation in varied fields of cultural production. Specifically, Bourdieu's approach is oriented to processes of meaning-making, as well as classification of flows based on actors' tastes. The problem with Bourdieu's account of processes of mediation is the rationality and economic orientation that actors assume in order to fight for positions of distinction within the fields they are part of. In this context, the role that non-human agencies play, not only as markers of distinction for cultural intermediaries, shapes actors' everyday activities and relations with cultural flows. Therefore, the second section delves into the work of Bruno Latour to expand upon the association between human and non-agencies in processes of cultural mediation, particularly from the bottom-up. Thus, the third section expounds Bourdieu and Latour's approaches, including the discussion of 'practice theory', particularly focusing on how routines and habits are central to the creation of social order as part of the processes of cultural mediation.

Based on this discussion, the fourth section of Chapter 3 delineates the main theoretical standpoints of the thesis. Digital capital is a form of mediation, particularly a result of the interaction between different types of agencies (human and non-human), which is described using a bottom-up approach. It is argued that digital capital is an assemblage of actors, practices, objects, and meanings, which is convertible into other types of capital (e.g. economic) and exchangeable in various fields. The chapter ends by suggesting that digital capital cannot be understood from a functionalist perspective as a linear system of inputs and outputs, causes and effects. It does not work as a function of individual 'knowledge of the digital' or an individual's level of 'cultural capital', both of which can be considered mutually interdependent, and, of course, central to its accumulation. By contrast, digital capital is an assemblage of

different mediations of capital and associations between actors, practices, discourses, and objects. Digital capital can be summarised in the question ‘what are the connections and associations between technical knowledge, cultural flows, and social positions, as well as conversions of capital, behind someone who is using Twitter or Facebook, or making a website about a music scene?’

Chapter 4 examines how digital technologies, particularly information and communication technologies (ICTs) are artefacts that help cultural mediators to be situated in networks of information and cultural flows. Also, it explores how music websites operate as spaces through which cultural mediators objectify their positions within those networks, as well as representations of the scene and its flows. On the one hand, they do this through a set of practices, e.g. establishing connections with others and with flows through the appropriation of different digital devices. On the other hand, it also happens through the making and maintenance of the websites and profiles in social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. They are the result of different types of knowledge, objects, emotions, and activities (Schatzki, 2001; 2002) that are stabilised and assembled on websites and social networking profiles. In the same way, these practices allow cultural mediators to establish relations and associations with other actors, configuring a social order through which they construct networks of audiences, helping them to produce and accumulate their digital capital, which is then converted and exchanged in different fields of cultural production.

It is argued that digital technologies, particularly the Internet and social networking sites, help individuals to configure and situate themselves in networks where cultural flows circulate. It is through their involvement within those networks that individuals begin to develop their digital capital as cultural and technical expertise. Thus, by a set of practices comprising maintaining their websites, developing them, and situating themselves within networks of circulation, individuals convert those forms of mediation into economic capital and positionality in various networks. Websites are also artefacts through which the field is produced: the representation of the scene and the accumulation of digital capital in the form of clicks, downloads, and metrics shape individual projects. Drawing on Riles (2001) it is described how websites are cultural mediators’ spaces for action and interaction with other actors and flows. At the same time, they are representations of those interactions in the form of cultural distinctions around flows, and their varied strategies around ICTs. This chapter explores how

cultural mediators can accumulate digital capital not only as skills, but also as a set of practices through which they occupy certain positions within a technological space.

This fourth chapter is divided into four sections. The first section describes cultural mediators' relations with ICTs in the making of their websites. Four types of practices are described: design, the site's domain, redesigning the website, and processes of updating. The second section explores how cultural mediators become 'experts' at using digital technologies in particular fields. In this process their digital capital begins to be valorised and exchanged in the form of positionality, recognition, and economic capital in particular fields, especially the field of advertising. The third section describes how social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook operate as platforms through which individuals' digital capital is shown, but also produced and accumulated. Using those platforms helps individuals to accumulate audiences by curating and circulating different types of content. Finally, the fourth section explores the role that non-human agencies, particularly website metrics, shape the cultural mediators' relations with ICTs and their everyday practices. Metrics and measurement techniques around the sites' performance shape the practices of cultural mediators. They are devices through which collective action can be traceable (Latour, 2011), and are also a by-product of connections and interactions accumulated by digital technologies (e.g. Google Analytics) (Savage, et. al 2010). Measuring audiences represents a strategy for accumulating digital capital and converting it in order to obtain prestige, recognition, and economic capital within different fields.

Chapter 5 examines the strategies displayed by cultural mediators for operating across different fields in order to distinguish themselves along multiple axes. As a result of their strategies, meanings of the 'global', the 'commercial', and the 'political' are configured and performed. Cultural mediators' uses of taste operate as judgments about the aesthetic qualities of cultural flows and activities of actors across fields, also working as a 'weapon' to demarcate boundaries between social groups (Bourdieu, 1984; Warde, 2008). It describes how cultural mediators move across three different fields: mainstream media, global websites, and the local music scene, in order to distinguish themselves across those fields, curating flows and displaying uses of taste that are objectified on their websites and social networking sites. It is argued that the ability to curate and circulate flows of tastes depends on the extent to which cultural mediators can control digital flows, and therefore accumulate and exchange their digital capital across different fields.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section looks at the dynamics and uses of taste displayed by cultural mediators, particularly with regard to music styles and bands, as well as other types of flows (e.g. information) in order to move across fields and to distinguish themselves. It explores how they curate and circulate flows – from music, to musicians' identities, and information – on their websites. In that process those flows are qualified, and in the same way the websites are shaped through different uses of taste, based on aesthetic orientations to certain flows, as well as judgments about them that are displayed and objectified on their websites. The second section looks at the strategies through which cultural mediators move across three different fields: mainstream media, global music websites, and the local music scene. During this process, different meanings of the 'global', the 'commercial', and the 'political' emerge. In the case of the mainstream media, cultural mediators criticise its inability to promote the scene and its cultural production. By doing this, cultural mediators distinguish themselves, invoking their capacity to promote the scene to different audiences through their websites, as well as their involvement with its cultural production and actors. In the case of global music websites, cultural mediators rely on their contents and references, and then they mediate those flows, mixing them with local content on their websites. Their sense of distinction emerges when global music websites include in their contents information obtained from cultural mediators' sites. Finally, in the case of the local music scene, by managing their websites and curating the scene's flows, cultural mediators feel part of the same project, yet distinguished by their abilities and criteria regarding the curation of information, images, and music, as well as their capabilities for discovering new cultural expressions (e.g. music bands, sounds, aesthetics).

Chapter 6, the final empirical chapter, deals with the strategies through which cultural mediators connect the varied cultural flows they are mediating and objectifying on their websites with the field of advertising, particularly branding and marketing agencies. The discussion is based on a 'branded music event' called 'Corona Clash' where cultural mediators exchange their digital capital with actors from the field of advertising. The argument here is that cultural mediators construct both networks and objectifications in the form of a website which constitutes exchangeable capital. That capital – particularly digital capital – is seen by marketing and advertising agencies as something valuable to be incorporated into their value chains. The capital is objectified in the form of a website where cultural mediators' distinctions and

classifications of flows are represented, and also distributed through the networks they create by using digital technologies. This process reveals a series of tensions and negotiations for cultural mediators, with and between themselves and with advertising agents, which are related to the possibility of making a living through their websites, as well as to degrees of professionalisation. This chapter explores Bourdieu's (1984) concept of 'cultural intermediaries' in which cultural mediators act as the 'transmission belt' between producers and consumers. Similarly, central to processes involved in the connection between the flows mediated by cultural mediators and the field of advertising is the role that websites and social networking sites play as an assemblage of practices, discourses, and objects in the making of niche markets.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first explores cultural mediators' definitions of 'indie' and how those definitions are represented on their websites, also operating as a form of cultural knowledge that is attractive to people from the field of advertising as a potential part of the value chains of the products they are promoting. The second section goes into the processes through which cultural mediators are related to advertising agencies by looking at two intertwined narratives. I recount how people from the field of advertising (particularly brand managers and advertising executives) evaluate the work of website creators. They consider cultural mediators to be 'trend setters' who enable them to connect their brands to niche audiences. Cultural mediators also negotiate the definitions around their practices with advertising agencies in order to work together. Both narratives, and experiences, are based on different cultural calculations and qualifications (Callon, et. al, 2002) of the websites and their audiences performed by cultural mediators in order to establish commercial and economic relations. The analysis is based on interviews with brand managers and executives of branding agencies, as well as the creators of websites, and my own observations during various meetings between them and executives. Through the establishment of economic and social relations between advertising agents and cultural mediators, brands become part of the flows of the scene represented on the websites. This also demands that cultural mediators be involved in branded music events organised by advertising agencies. The final section describes how the scene objectified by cultural mediators on their websites is assembled in a particular music event, the Corona Clash, through a set of economic and cultural calculations performed by different actors from Santiago's indie music scene, as well as from the field of advertising. I then analyse how cultural mediators qualify branded

music events in two interwoven forms: as moments where they make sense of their practices and as moments where they can analyse their position in relation to the field of advertising.

Chapter 6 concludes by exploring the relationship between cultural mediators and advertising people. Through the qualifications of the event, by converting them into economic capital and by incorporating to the value chain of a particular good – in this case Corona beer – cultural mediators are also connecting the realm of ‘culture’ (as the production of meanings around flows, in this case a brand), and the ‘economy’, specifically by exchanging their ‘digital capital’ in order to add value to a particular object of consumption.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of the thesis. The first section reviews its main empirical themes by examining the practices and experiences of a group of cultural mediators in the assembling of digital capital as a form of cultural mediation. In this light some of the main findings presented in the empirical chapters are discussed. Cultural mediators produce fields through a set of networked relations. They connect the scene with the field of advertising, mediating it, and then objectifying those mediations on their websites in the form of a set of classifications that make social and economic relations visible. Similarly, cultural mediators have also created a new field, which is a technological space where they accumulate and display their digital capital, achieving positions of distinction through digital networks. Digital capital is a form of mediation, an assemblage of actors’ discourses, practices, and relations with objects, particularly digital media. Cultural mediators construct and accumulate digital capital through classification and qualification of cultural flows where uses of taste are displayed, as well as their relations with digital technologies, and the positionality and strategies they use within fields to achieve positions of distinction. Digital capital can be accumulated, shown, and exchanged through actors’ websites, but also across different fields. Cultural mediators’ websites are the paths that trace their relations with cultural flows, digital media, and actors from different fields. At the same time, they are representations of those relations that are understood as ‘the scene’. Likewise, they make visible a set of social relations and exchanges, symbolic and monetary, between actors from different fields of cultural production. The websites produce and mediate economic and social relations, as well as categorisations of cultural distinctions that, assembled, are the result of cultural mediators’ digital capital. As a final remark, it is discussed how individuals’ digital capital, rather than generating a

democratising effect on consumers, often operates as a mechanism to reproduce inequalities between individuals.

Chapter 2

Introducing the Field Site: Background, Access, and Methods

This thesis aims to understand the social life of a group of cultural mediators by looking at two intertwined processes: 1) processes of mediation of cultural flows (global and local), and 2) practices based on the use of digital technologies that facilitate those processes in order to connect the scene's flows with audiences and economic agents from different fields. Mediation is broadly understood as the process of assigning meaning and value to cultural flows. Taste classifications and cultural distinctions are objectified in the content of the various websites that this group of actors create and maintain. In this sense, music website creators are part of the everyday making of Santiago's music scene, in that they evaluate its cultural production and connect those flows with various audiences and actors, particularly market agents, such as branding and advertising agencies. The choice of a music scene as the site for this study comes from the important role of this area of the musical field in generating meaning and value for cultural flows and actors such as musicians, identities, and music. Thus, it is possible to understand how cultural flows and goods are produced and circulated in modern societies (Hesmondhalgh, 2008), as well as how culture and economy are produced and intertwined (Du Gay and Pryke, 2002). The focus on a group of people that creates and maintains websites about the scene comes from a need to better understand their role as mediators between cultural production and cultural promotion in the changing dynamics of connectivity and digital reproduction.

This chapter will elucidate the research methodology, proposing an ethnographic approach to studying individual mediation practices and technological uses around local and global cultural flows. It discusses key aspects of an eight-month ethnographic study following the everyday practices of a group of cultural mediators in the context of Santiago's indie music scene. Thus, from a bottom-up perspective, analysing processes of mediation and qualification of flows, this approach traces empirically how actors' practices, as well as meanings around them, produce "cultures of mediation" that are exchangeable and valorised in market

conditions, commodifying culture as consumer goods.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first outlines and describes the main characteristics of Santiago's indie music scene, particularly in terms of its actors and locations. The second section is a broad description of a group of cultural mediators who create and maintain different websites and blogs about the scene. On the one hand, it will describe the histories and geographies of this group and their stocks of capital (cultural and economic), while on the other hand giving information about their websites, and the role of these sites in the generation of the scene. As cultural mediators, they give value and meaning to cultural flows that circulate in the scene, as well as internationally. The third section describes the main methodological aspects of the thesis. It focuses on access to the field and the research strategy for exploring individual practices of cultural mediation around Santiago's indie music scene's cultural flows, actors, and identities, through the making and maintenance of websites. It argues that this music scene and its proximity to the market, –facilitated by the role of cultural mediators through cultural distinctions and technological uses, –demand an ethnographic approach. In the same way, this methodology is, as a result, a comprehensive way of analysing processes of cultural mediation in regard to actors' practices that construct music scenes as creative industries.

1. The Field: Santiago's Indie Music Scene between Precariousness and Innovation

Music scenes are considered to be networks of producers that share common aesthetic dispositions with regard to a musical style (Lloyd, 2005); as social spaces that configure the music produced in them (Becker, 2004), and as “clusters of musicians, producers and fans” that share common tastes, distinguishing themselves from others (Bennett & Peterson, 2004: 3). The concept of a scene differs from definitions of sub-culture for two reasons. Firstly, a scene does not assume deviant behaviour from the mainstream. Secondly, the actions of participants in the scene are not necessarily dominated by “sub-cultural standards” (Bennett & Patterson, 2004: 3). The indie character of a scene represents the creative autonomy of this musical genre from the commercial constraints of mainstream cultural industries, but it also refers to a particular

commercial organisation of cultural production, for example, 'DIY' practices² (Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Bennett & Patterson, 2004).

Through the multiple exchanges between musicians, record labels, journalists, fans, and spaces where flows of goods circulate, indie music scenes configure small-scale micro-economies based on the production and consumption of cultural goods (e.g. music, merchandising, magazines) (McRobbie, 2002). Indie music scenes have been studied in the context of territory, such as specific urban neighbourhoods where a network of cultural producers co-exists (Florida, 2003; Hauge & Hracs, 2010; Lloyd, 2005). In the case of Santiago's indie music scene, this approach is not necessarily applicable because it does not function as a cluster. On the contrary, it is spatially dispersed in different locations; its agents change constantly and its organisational structures are liquid and contingent (Tironi, 2009).

Santiago's indie music scene presents a hybrid identity as a result of the precarious characteristics of indie cultural industries (e.g. flexible work, freelancing, unstable conditions) in the production of material and symbolic goods. This does not necessarily affect its innovative and productive character as a cultural industry. For instance, actors involved in the scene combine multiple roles as musicians, producers, and managers of record labels, alongside more stable and formal paid jobs outside the scene. In terms of its aesthetic, Santiago's indie music scene gathers different genres of music, from folk to rock and electronic; and the indie character resides in its limited access to mainstream markets and audiences (Tironi, 2009). The three main principles founding the scene are: 1) the hybridity of music creation - different styles are mixed - i.e. it is difficult to identify the musical identity with one style; 2) all musical projects expand and engage in non-conventional procedures for creation (field recordings, circuit bending, and instrument recycling), and diffusion (net labels, art performances); 3) Commercial marginalisation that is observed in the limited access to mainstream, commercial markets, and audiences (Tironi, 2009: 32).

However, in the last two years an interesting process has been affecting the configuration of the scene and its actors, particularly with regard to its marginalisation. Based

² DIY stands for do-it-yourself, an ethos that arose out of the early punk movement which encourages 'regular' people to 'make culture', rather than remaining confined to commercially produced cultural goods (see Spencer, 2005).

on the mixture of different styles and artists, the scene has drawn national and international media attention, as well as attention from other music scenes. For instance, the Spanish newspaper *El País*³ published an article that refers to the scene as a “paradise of pop”, highlighting the artistic innovation and diversity that the scene presents. Similarly, the *New York Times*⁴ wrote about Santiago as the Number 1 place to visit in 2011, arguing that the city is an interesting cultural capital because of its innovative artistic scene, especially musically. Also, as I will develop in forthcoming chapters, there has been interest generated by advertising agencies on behalf of various brands (Corona, Heineken, Puma, Adidas, amongst others) which are organising marketing events including live performances of musicians in the scene, such as those from record labels like Algo Records, Cazador and Quemasucabeza. In this sense, much of the fieldwork was concentrated on the side of the actors and places that are in transition from indie towards mainstream ways of production, circulation, and consumption⁵.

As a micro-economy, Santiago’s indie music scene has been prolific, especially in the last three years. There is consistent growth in the number of records published by independent labels, varied in styles and artistic forms. It is in this context that two actors acquire an important role in the making of the scene: 1) the internet, as a set of technologies to facilitate the production, reproduction, distribution, and consumption of different goods, particularly music and information about the scene, and 2) a group of cultural mediators who have developed different websites about the scene. Through their practices in the making of the websites, cultural mediators define the scene in terms of who is doing interesting things worthy of being considered by audiences (thus making cultural distinctions), and establishing social categories in order to make such distinctions. They are also acting as curators of the scene, giving meaning and value to its cultural goods and mediating identities, tastes, and lifestyles, converting them into valuable objects of consumption. At the same time, they are constructing the boundaries of the scene with regard to the actors, goods, and spaces that are involved in their creation. Garland (2009: 5) argues that this online platform is responsible for the denomination of this music in Chile as 'indie', establishing correlations with indie values and modes of production in the US and the UK. In the next section I will describe the group of

³ “Chile, nuevo paraíso del pop”. *El País*, February 6, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://bit.ly/zBvaZY>

⁴ “The 41 places to go in 2011”. *New York Times*, January 9, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://nyti.ms/xQ73gx>

⁵ This transition is also relevant to the group of websites that were included in the study, which involves receiving payments from various advertising agencies on behalf of those brands sponsoring the sites and the music events.

research participants, most of whom are creators of music websites focused around Santiago's indie music scene.

2. The people: cultural mediators in the making of the scene

My research focused on a group of cultural mediators who create and maintain websites about music, with a special interest in the music production of Santiago's indie music scene. I decided to choose a group of actors that are having a central role connecting the scene's flows with actors from other fields, particularly the field of advertising, through their proficiency using digital technologies, as well as their taste classifications around the scene's flows (global and local). This group of people represents a tension between being part of social, economic, cultural and technological shifts –defined as 'globalisation'– and their 'indie-ness' as a mode of self-identification. Although, their lifestyles, values, identities and forms of labour are central in the commodification of culture as shared meanings that are exchangeable in market conditions. Within this context, individuals achieve positions of recognition and functions in the field of cultural production they are part of –the scene– but at the same time they are constructing a field, which is constituted by the varied websites they create as representations the scene's varied flows.

Most of the study focused on a group of 12 people who work in the making and maintenance of seven different websites, though I also interviewed people who work in advertising agencies related to the scene in different ways, organising music events sponsored by brands, for instance. Other groups of people interviewed included musicians, music journalists, audiences of the sites and the scene, and brand managers who sponsor the websites through advertising, as well as music events with some of the scene's artists. The group of cultural mediators comprised mostly men between 25 and 35 years of age. The two women I was in contact with were aged 26 and 31. In relation to where they had lived previously, seven were raised in Santiago (Chile's capital) and the rest came from the regions. In two cases, they had lived for short periods of time in other countries in Latin America (Mexico and Ecuador, respectively) because of their parents' work. At the time of the fieldwork, nobody was married or living with a partner.

In terms of their cultural capital, all of the research participants had completed secondary school and obtained university degrees. Typical qualifications were journalist (seven),

multimedia communicator (two), translator (one), lawyer (one), and civil engineer (one). With two exceptions, they had all studied in private universities, which are the institutions responsible for the expansion of university access in the country. In Chile, private universities are institutions where most of the middle-class obtain degrees. In the case of research participants, this does not necessarily mean that they are part of a small elite; by contrast, they are part of middle-class groups, bearing in mind that the majority of universities in the country are private. Only one person had received a postgraduate degree, although not in Chile but in the UK. It is interesting that in almost half the cases, they were the first in their family to obtain a university degree. In Chile, university degrees are obtained in four to six years compared to the three years that it takes to obtain a technical degree. In comparison to levels of education among the broader Chilean population, the research participants are above average⁶.

In terms of their economic capital, most of the research participants have between one and four different paid jobs. In some cases, they have a full-time job contract in areas not related to the music scene, but most of them are working as freelancers. The average monthly income of the research participants was between 450.000 to 1.000.000 Chilean pesos (600 to 1.370 GBP). Compared to other Chileans of the same age, this group are above average incomes. It is interesting that most of the research participants said it was because of their work in the making of the websites, particularly their knowledge of technology, -that they entered the more formalised market space (e.g. advertising companies, radio). Considering their ages, not all of them live independently of their parents. In terms of their location in Santiago, they live in varying councils from the centre to the north-east of the city - Providencia (6), Vitacura (1), Santiago Centro (1), Las Condes (1), and La Reina (1) - which are upper-middle class areas. Only one person lives in San Bernardo - a middle class council.

2.1 The websites: actors, artefacts, and places in the making of the scene

As described before, considering the hybrid and fluid character of the scene in terms of the actors, places and music styles that compose it, technologies, particularly the existence of music websites with information about the local and global music scenes, operate as a virtual hub that connects the scene's flows of cultural production with consumers as well as markets.

⁶ According to the UDP's National Survey (2011), only 10% of Chileans have completed studies at university. In the case of individuals between 18 to 29 years old, the percentage is 9.1%.

Created and maintained by a group of cultural mediators, various websites contribute to the existence of the scene, representing and objectifying it on the internet. The content includes music news from local and international artists, interviews and critiques of artists' work and fashion trends, and audio-visual samples of musicians' productions. The organisational structure of the websites' production is dispersed, in the same way that Santiago's indie music scene is organised, based on collaboration between different actors and expertise. For instance, one person maintains a number of the sites, whilst others are developed by a group of collaborators (writers, photographers, designers, etc.).

As Tironi (2012) suggests, the 'buzz' that websites produce, spreading the flows of the scene to audiences through the performance of cultural distinctions and qualifications (Callon, et. al, 2002), is a key moment in the making of the scene as something valuable. That buzz becomes available for consumers, frequently young people interested in music and active users of technologies. It is in that context that websites emerge as interesting spaces for advertisement agents, particularly advertising agencies. I established four criteria with which to select the websites included in the research: 1) websites that mediate cultural goods with regard to indie music scenes whose content includes information about Santiago's indie music scene; 2) websites that are produced in Chile. This does not mean that the cultural goods that are mediated are solely local. For instance, some websites combine content and cultural goods from Santiago's indie music scene with international indie scenes (e.g. London, New York); 3) age of the website, that is, at least one year of operation, and 4) popularity measured by the number of followers that each site has on Facebook (see Figure 9 below). The next section introduces the websites, and their creators, to whom I dedicated most of the fieldwork.

Super 45

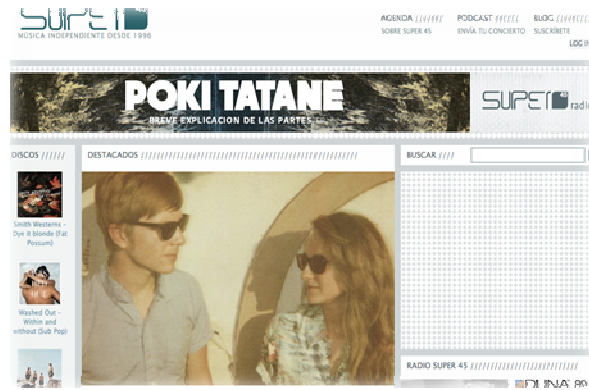
This site is the oldest in the context of the scene. It started as a university radio programme, only later evolving into a website. Two friends – Cristian and Boris - created it in 1996; at the time, they were students of journalism. Its main purpose was to talk about the music they love, particularly indie music from international music scenes, -especially Manchester and New York. The information they publish is about new music releases from Santiago's music scene, but also from other global artists, mostly Euro-American. During the fieldwork, Super 45 was updated by

a group of unpaid collaborators. They organise monthly meetings to discuss the content of the site for the future. The only collaborator who gets paid is the editor, who works part time, through the resources obtained from advertisements on the site. Most of the interviewees qualified Super 45 as the most “sophisticated” and “elitist” of the websites in this study in regard to the bands they present. Similarly, the site is always full of critical comments by audiences about the site’s content and the way it represents the scene and its actors, particularly as something ‘pretentious’. However, Super 45 is the only site that has an international relationship with other music websites from abroad (e.g. Club Fonograma from Mexico), and that attempted during the first part of the 2000s to literally create the scene by producing music festivals with indie bands from the US and Europe. In the same way, this site has been responsible for promoting new Chilean indie musicians. Through a contest, they were responsible for discovering two of the most important names of the scene, Javiera Mena and Gepe.

POTQ

“Part of the Queue” (POTQ) was created in 2005 by Felipe Arriagada, a civil engineering student. Originally, the site uploaded music albums by international bands, and then began uploading music concerts by recognised bands like Oasis, Radiohead, and Foo Fighters. Later, POTQ evolved into a music website posting news about bands and musicians that are part of Santiago’s indie music scene, but also international scenes, mostly Euro-American. POTQ has other online channels, for example, POTQ TV, which is run by a group of collaborators who organise live performances of local bands that are video recorded and then broadcast on the website. Similarly, POTQ Radio is an online station playing local and international bands. Today, POTQ has around 10 collaborators, of which five are paid for their music reviews, recording live performances, and the maintenance of the website. This site is the most popular in terms of audiences (see Figure 9), and it has been responsible, according to musicians and branding agents, for connecting the scene with market agents, giving space to promote music events as part of its daily content.

Figure 2. Super 45 Website



Source: www.super45.net

Figure 3. POTQ Website



Source: www.potq.cl

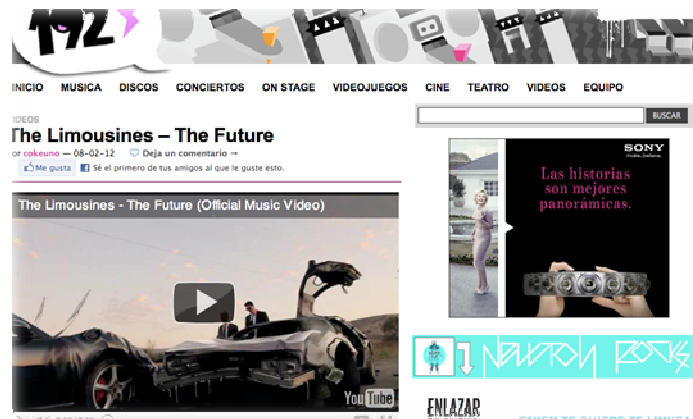
192

Cristian and Juan Pablo were two college friends who re-encountered each other on Fotolog, a very popular site for uploading pictures and text in mid- 2000. They shared similar musical tastes and in 2005 decided to create their own website called 192, inspired by a song of a mutual friend's music band Drogatones, the first three numbers of the IP's address code URL⁷

⁷ According to Wikipedia a URL is: "A uniform resource locator, abbreviated URL (also known as web address, particularly when used with HTTP), is a specific character string that constitutes a reference to a resource". Retrieved from: <http://bit.ly/1bRprKY>

to connect to the Internet. Today, 192 has more than 7,000 posts about the scene, and has seven unpaid collaborators. This site is oriented to present foreign hip-hop and rock bands, not necessary involved in indie global circuits. As a result of this site, today its creators are part of two digital advertising agencies.

Figure 4. 192 Website

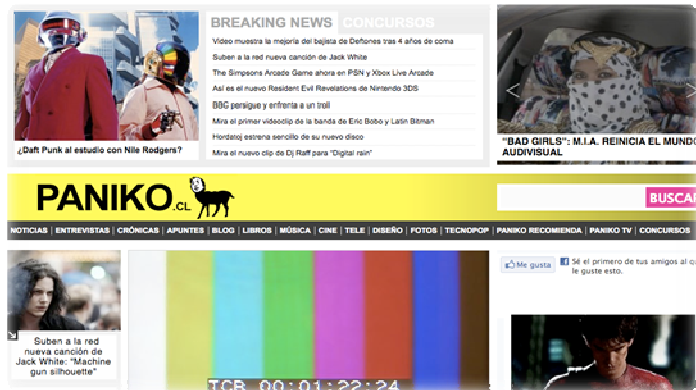


Source: www.192.cl

Paniko

Created in 2003 by Alejandro, a journalism student, and two friends (Alvaro and Daniel), Paniko is one of the most popular music websites in Chile. According to their online description, they are “the most influential blog for young people and one of the most visited in the country”. Paniko receives revenue from various brand sponsorships and also produces a television serial, which is streamed online. They have a team of five collaborators who are occasionally paid. But the income obtained from advertising is divided between the three creators of the site. Paniko has been referred to by the mainstream press as one of the first and most successful websites oriented towards music and pop-culture in Chile. With POTQ, Paniko is the most important in terms of size of audience. In particular, in regard to its importance within the scene; this site has been responsible for discovering two of the most well recognised indie bands of the scene “Fother Muckers” and “Protistas”.

Figure 5. Paniko Website



Source: www.paniko.cl

Pousta

Max and Francisco created this site in 2005. At that time they were studying multimedia communication and began working in an advertising agency. The owner of the agency saw that both friends spent more time on their personal website than the job. Their boss then offered to buy a percentage stake in the site's property so they could work on it full-time. Pousta is about fashion trends, music, design, and advertising in Chile, the USA and Europe. The site receives revenue from advertising. The content of Pousta is not totally oriented towards the indie music scene, however it is considered by branding agents as an important source of knowledge about global trends in fashion, music, and advertising. For that reason, Pousta is always part of advertising campaigns to promote music events organised by market agents.

Figure 6. Pousta Website



Source: www.pousta.com

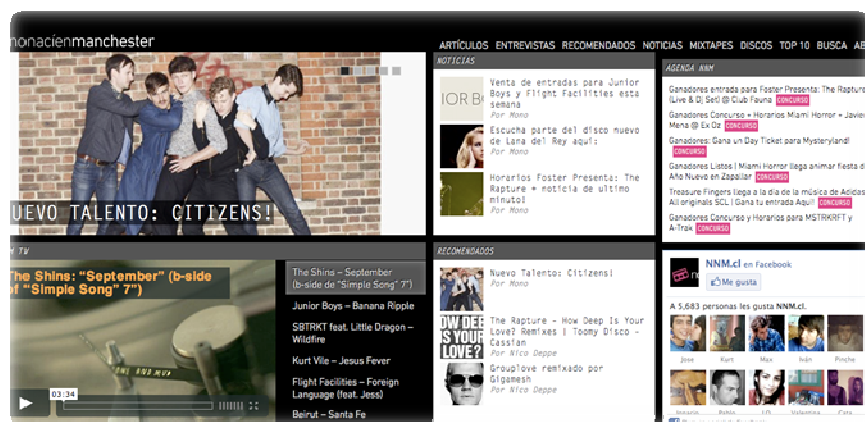
NNM

Nicolas and Roberto created “Not born in Manchester” (No Naci en Manchester) in 2005, inspired by their love for Britpop in the mid-1990s. Their main purpose was to talk about dance music, the music they love (their slogan is “music for the dance floor”). This site is more oriented towards music created in Europe, particularly electronica and dance. And it is unique in its weekly international track recommendations, combined with information about the scene in Santiago. This site is in association with Fauna, a music management company owned by Roberto which organises gigs and festivals in Santiago. Fauna and NNM are regarded by some of the research participants as responsible for connecting the scene and its artists with brands through their music festivals and parties.

Disorder

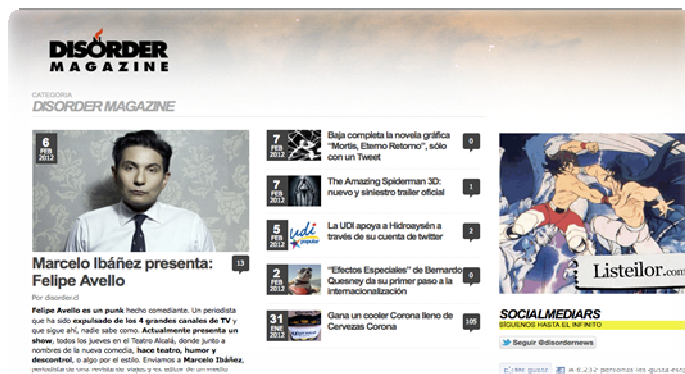
Three friends from Coyhaique (Southern Chile) created this site in 2005. Today, Camilo maintains the site, which includes music reviews and information about the scene in Santiago and global artists, film reviews, and ironic articles about quotidian life in Chile. Camilo is now dedicated full-time to the website, trying to make a living from it through advertising. Compared to the others, Disorder is the most provocative and controversial site in terms of the content and during the fieldwork period was the only site, aside from Paniko, that talked about student protests in Chile. Also, Camilo, with Nicolas from NNM, has been part of a partnership with the British magazine Dazed and Confused to report on current developments in Santiago's cultural life, particularly with regard to the indie music scene. Disorder and Paniko have been responsible for discovering new bands, promoting them, and connecting their music with new audiences.

Figure 7. NNM website



Source: www.nnm.cl

Figure 8. Disorder Website

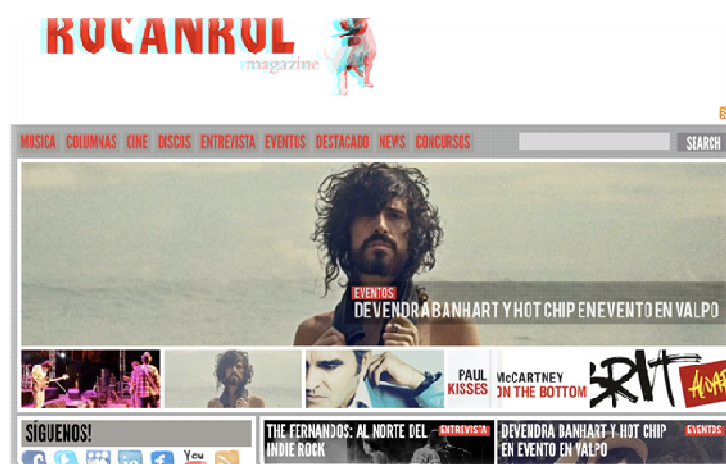


Source: www.disorder.cl

Rocanrol

Created in 2009 by Maria, a music fan and journalist, Rocanrol is unique for being the only site maintained by women. It is characterised by its interest in Santiago's indie music scene, but also for other scenes in Latin America, especially Argentina's. The site includes music reviews, interviews, and videos from different artists. This site was included during the fieldwork as it gained attention from the creators of other sites following a very critical article about the music festival Lollapalooza in Santiago (April, 2011). Today they have 10 collaborators of which eight are women.

Figure 9. Rocanrol Website



Source: www.rocانrol.cl

All of these websites have been aggregating considerable audiences; most of them young people between 16 and 30 years old. It is in this context that the websites become a valorised object that helps to connect the flows of the scene with market agents, particularly branding agencies. As Figure 10 shows, apart from one website, all carry advertising. This means that the sites are included in the marketing plans of different brands to promote their products. In the same way, those numbers reflect how cultural mediators extend their qualifications about the scene and the flows they mediate through various social networking sites (e.g. Facebook or Twitter). This increases audience volume and increases the ability to valorise their work in regard to market agents. It is also interesting to observe that those numbers do not represent a sizeable number of followers overall, which exemplifies the precariousness of the scene as a creative industry.

Figure 10. Music website audiences in Santiago's indie music scene measured by presence on social networking sites

Website	Year Created	Twitter followers	Facebook followers	Presence of advertising
Super 45	1996	11.900	15.942	Yes
POTQ	2005	47.300	46.882	Yes
192	2005	9.052	6.857	Yes
Paniko	2003	39.900	22.021	Yes
Pousta	2009	13.100	24.152	Yes
NNM	2006	5.052	8.938	Yes
Disorder	2003	8.324	13.703	Yes
Rocanrol	2009	2.598	1.901	No

Source: Compiled by the author based on websites' "about us" section, Facebook and Twitter profiles (March, 2014).

3. Researching cultural mediators and their technological uses using a bottom-up approach

The main objects of the fieldwork were eight websites and their creators. This included observing and mapping processes of creation and maintenance of the websites, the content and flows of goods mediated in those places, as well as interviewing and following the social life of their creators. However, this does not mean that the research was limited to the analysis of sites and their creators. It also involved mapping and observing the social relations between creators of the scene (musicians, audiences, advertisers, record labels), and in different locations, particularly where music events took place. An ethnographic approach enables the observation of contrasting everyday practices, that is, value and meaning assignment to flows of goods and technologies. This involves an “intensive engagement with the everyday life of the inhabitants of the field site” (Hine, 2000: 63). Similarly, through long-term observation it is possible to contextualise individual relationships with objects and their mutual constitution through their reflexivity and practices. Specifically, regarding the use of information and communication technologies in the making of websites, as Coleman suggests, an ethnographic approach helps to explore how ‘cultural identities, representations and imaginaries... are remade, subverted, communicated and circulated through individual and collective engagement with digital technologies’ (Coleman, 2010: 488).

The websites represent a key moment in the social trajectories of their creators. For instance, they are objects through which individuals initially become part of the labour market, as well as spaces where individuals make cultural distinctions and practice taste definitions. Similarly, they are objects through which individuals achieve different social positions in the scene as a field of cultural production: 1) as actors; 2) as objects, and 3) as places (Hine, 2000). In the making of the websites, the creators become actors who are part of the scene, constructing it, and organising the flows of goods that circulate there. In that process, they achieve social positions in the scene. The relationship between subjects (creators) and objects (websites) gives life to an actor of the scene; websites and their creators emerge as cultural mediators that organise, giving value and meaning to flows of goods, which circulate in the scene and beyond it. These flows are music, musicians’ identities, brands that are related to the scene through advertising on sites, and technologies (e.g. music reproducers, software, and social networking sites). In the same way, websites and their creators are actors who connect

different agents that are central to the making of the scene: musicians, audiences, places, and advertisers (brands). As objects, the sites are the result of a process of cultural creation where its creators and the scene are defined mutually. The websites mediate and configure social relations between different actors of the scene (musicians, fans, brands, for instance), as well as the individuals who create them. As objects, the sites, and their materiality, are assemblages of meanings and practices that mediate the social (Miller & Slater, 2000). Finally, the sites are places where different types of mediation occur: the scene is represented in a particular way, as are all the aspirations, tastes, and cultural distinctions performed by their creators.

For analytical purposes, these three different approaches can be individually identified, but empirically they are interrelated. It was difficult to analyse the sites without separately considering the social life of their creators and vice versa. This means not assuming that the websites are virtual spaces disconnected from the real life of their creators (Miller & Slater, 2000; Hine, 2009; Slater 2002). For instance, this was evident in the music events sponsored by brands. On the one hand, during those events there were opportunities to establish economic relations between actors, brand managers and cultural mediators as well as other audiences - that were mediated by the websites. Through those sites as places, brands such as Corona, Heineken, and Puma, amongst others, were framed in such a way that they circulate, as part of the scene's flow of goods, at the same time in the sites and in the place where the event took place. On the other hand, through their sites as objects, during the events it was possible for its creators to establish relations with brands and the executives of those companies.

Even if the research had considered only the relationship between individuals and their websites, during the fieldwork I realised that most of the research participants worked in three or four jobs simultaneously and that these were interrelated. Placed in industries like advertising, particularly in digital advertising (full-time jobs) or freelance online marketing activities (e.g. community managers), these jobs are similar in that they all demand knowledge of digital tools such as Twitter and Facebook.

Following this example, the research participants are related to brands and branded events as a result of their different jobs, including their work on the websites. It was common for brands to advertise their sponsored music events on these same websites. Similarly, the fieldwork also included exploring individual relationships in other contexts like branded music

events as social spaces where individuals perform different types of mediation and cultural distinction, particularly through technological uses (e.g. uses of Twitter and Facebook during the events). Again, relationships and practices in those spaces are separated here for empirical purposes. However, in reality it is not as clear-cut, for instance, from individuals' creation and maintenance of the websites and their technological uses during those events. This is what different authors have defined as a "networked or connective approach" to virtual ethnography (Hine, 2009). That requires combining the study of a bounded online space and its participants, contrasting the actions of the actors there with their meanings and reflections about it. However, in this study the focus is on actors, more than the communities they create through the websites, and the meanings they give to the flows that are mediated through the websites⁸.

The eight websites included in this study were selected from a total of 25 I found online by searching using different keywords on Google Chile. The search terms included 'indie', 'Santiago', 'Santiago's indie music scene', the names of various local bands, and the names of places where gigs happen. The difference between the sites selected and the rest was firstly how frequently they were updated, and then the size of the audiences they had accumulated on Facebook and Twitter (as presented in Table I). It was only after I started the fieldwork that I realised that the sites selected were those most linked to advertisement agencies, and considered suitable for inclusion in advertising campaigns. However, the website Rocanrol was an exception, especially because it is developed by a group of women (the rest are all produced by men). Even though Rocanrol has no relationship with marketing agencies, they have a considerable number of followers on Facebook and Twitter. After searching for a six-month period before starting the research, the main criteria for selecting the group of 8 websites were the updating frequency and audience size.

3.1 Approaching cultural mediators and their websites in the scene's context

I approached the cultural mediators in three different and interconnected ways early in January 2011. Firstly, I began mapping the names of the people available on the websites in order to have an idea of the number of people involved in the creation of each website.

⁸ I used the open-source software Journler (<http://journler.com>) to organise the content and images of research participants' websites, and to take field notes about these observations. I collected a total of 400 post (notes) and images of the main page of the sites.

Secondly, I followed those individuals on Twitter in order to begin mapping their conversations with actors in the scene. All of their accounts were public and it was not necessary to contact them before following them. My Twitter and Facebook accounts clearly show my name and I uploaded a picture of my face in order to be transparent about my identity. Thirdly, after mapping various conversations, I realised that a friend of mine, Ana, used to talk to them on Twitter. I then contacted Ana and we met to talk about my project and the possibility of establishing contact with these website creators through her. In those meetings, Ana gave me information about the history of each site, and her relationship with its creators. As a journalist who has promoted indie musicians by promoting their gigs, Ana began contacting the creators of music websites, informing them about my project and me. With some information about website creators, Ana suggested I go to gigs in order to approach these people through her in an informal way. At that time, I realised that Ana was very technologically inclined, using her mobile phone during our encounters to write on Twitter, Facebook, and text friends. This was the first opportunity to reflect on the research participants' practices during our encounters. In that context, Ana suggested I buy a smartphone, to have access to online messaging (e.g. What's app⁹), Twitter, and to record videos and take pictures during gigs. After initial meetings with Ana, I also contacted a couple of friends who were interested in my research and knew a couple of website creators whom I was able to contact directly.

After informal meetings with some of the website creators at gigs, particularly at a location called Bar Loreto, I began contacting them by e-mail to explain my project and organise formal interviews. I introduced myself at the outset as a sociologist studying music websites around Santiago's music scene. I also told them that I was interested in their use of technology in the creation of the sites and their role in the scene. There was an immediate affinity within the group for two reasons. First of which was their optimism about the state of the scene in Santiago, represented by a considerable number of gigs and the release of new music albums by artists in the last year. Secondly, they were proud that someone was interested in studying their input, and not necessarily the scene from the perspective of musicians and their cultural production. Thus they were very open and interested in talking about their everyday lives. Also, as some of the research participants later explained, it was easy to contact people after meeting

⁹ "What's app" is a "proprietary, cross-platform instant messaging application for smartphones. In addition to basic messaging, its users can send each other images, video and audio media messages". Retrieved from Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WhatsApp>

them. For instance, most of the websites are linked to each other through banners. Therefore, they know each other through the websites, but also through social networking sites, and most importantly, they socialise at the same parties and music events. This does not mean that they are close friends, but they know who is who.

After the first round of contact with the websites' creators, I began interviewing them formally at the beginning of March. The interviews were organised by e-mail and Twitter. It was the only way to meet them with time to talk about different topics in an informal manner. After each interview I asked them to suggest one important person they considered relevant to be interviewed. Through their responses to this question, I was able to contact people from different sites, musicians, and individuals related to advertising agencies, and other music fans. Each week I scheduled one or two interviews, spending the rest of the day exploring the websites or following its creators on Twitter and Facebook. I organised four interviews with each website creator. I was also able to interview four musicians, and two directors of an independent record label. Similarly, I interviewed two of the most respected music journalists from the 2000s in order to contextualise the evolution of the indie music scene in Santiago and the role of these websites in it. Between March and August, I compiled approximately 65 interviews (see Table 2). On the weekends, I went to music gigs or parties, especially at Bar Loreto, where the websites' creators participated. In some cases, I found out about the gigs and parties on Twitter. My presence there was important for developing a relationship with the participants, considering that their activities were always related to enjoying themselves.

It was common at the beginning of the research to meet interviewees near their residence, especially in cafe or restaurants in Providencia. The topics of those interviews varied from their definitions of the scene and the history of their websites to their decisions around the content of the sites, and particularly the meanings attributed to them. During those interviews I pointed out that I was following them on Twitter, and crucially, it was an opportunity to ask them if I could spend a couple of days with them watching and talking about website maintenance. After that, it became common to meet them in their flats; often while they were still working in front of their laptops. Twitter was very important in my access to informal meetings, especially because it was common for the websites' creators to meet each other socially, organising their encounters online. In those situations I usually asked those I was close to on Twitter whether I could join them. It was interesting that at these meetings they talked about different

conversations happening on Twitter, as well as about music, bands, and their websites. Commonly, they used to 'tweet' about their encounters, including me in them. That action was a signal of proximity to continue doing my research and maintain access to their practices. In those encounters it was also common to meet more people involved with the sites and the scene. Often after the first meeting they contacted me on Facebook in order to be 'friends'. This was important in order to gain consent to access their Facebook profiles.

Originally, my fieldwork consisted of 12 individuals who have created and maintain eight music websites around Santiago's indie music scene. In the case of some websites, I maintained contact with two creators, whilst in others I focused on the person most involved in the maintenance of the website. However, the corpus increased when I realised after the first interview that four people used to work in more formal jobs, mostly related to the advertising sector (e.g. digital advertising agencies or marketing areas of companies). In those cases, I began following their professional lives in order to observe their relationship with technologies, considering that their jobs used Facebook and Twitter to promote brands or to implement digital strategies for various brands. Spending time in those agencies, which feature brands interested in being related to the music scene, was important to situate digital and musical knowledge applied in the websites, or in other contexts, which was the case for digital advertising. For instance, after a month of visits it was common to talk to the website creators and their colleagues about the scene and its relationship with the market, but also about the role of technologies such as Facebook or Twitter in their everyday lives. Through the contacts I made in those agencies, I conducted a total of nine different interviews with branding consultants that were in charge of designing marketing strategies there. Those strategies involved the organisation of music events, hiring artists and bands from the indie music scene, and advertising the events on the websites. In the interviews we talked about the role of the websites in the context of the scene, the emphasis brands placed on being related to the scene and the websites. I participated in the music festival Lollapalooza, and two music events sponsored by two brands: Corona (beer), Puma (clothes).

As explained previously, the bulk of this research was constituted by three different activities: 1) mapping cultural mediators' practices and their technological uses in the making of the websites; 2) exploring the websites as artefacts and places in the context of the scene, where the scene and cultural flows, as well as social relations, are mediated, and 3) exploring

mediation practices in outdoor places such as music events. These three activities are intertwined and were all discussed in the interviews with the website creators. For instance, it was common during music events for cultural mediators to use technologies like Twitter or Facebook to comment or have informal conversations with brand managers about the scene and their websites. Similarly, the research participants are used to spending a considerable amount of time on the internet daily, using technologies such as Twitter to talk about music from the bands of Santiago's indie scene to others in New York or London, while simultaneously organising their websites and their content. In the next section they will be analysed separately in order to discuss the issues, tensions, and limitations of my fieldwork.

3.2 Making and mediating the scene: researching cultural mediators' practices and their technological uses

In order to explore individuals' mediation practices and their technological uses, I spent 8 months in Santiago going to marketing events and gigs. I followed their websites, their Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as interviewing them. The first step was to set up interviews and establish a long-term relationship. In terms of access, interviews were organised by e-mail following an informal meeting at music gigs or through Ana's recommendation. As a person involved in the scene and its actors, Ana was fundamental in gaining initial contact with the website creators. The first interview broadly focused upon the individuals' definition of the scene and its actors. I always presented myself as a Sociology PhD student studying Santiago's indie music scene, with particular focus on a group of websites and their creators. This clear definition of my academic purpose bred an honesty and structure that was necessary for them to understand my work as part of a serious project, based on a meaningful interest as a student. For instance, some of the questions we talked about in the first encounter were what is the scene for you? What is it to be indie? What does being indie mean to you? How do you define your role in the scene?

In preliminary meetings with these people, I realised that while their reflections were interesting, they were also sometimes affected by my condition of being a PhD student living in London, but also being an individual without any preconceptions and knowledge about the scene and its actors. In some cases the interviewees tried to impress me, -talking about the sites and their relevance from a 'sociological perspective' and its importance in the making of the scene. At the same time, they asked questions about my life in London and voiced their

impressions about living in a 'global city'. At the beginning, I tried to talk about my life in London in order to start building ties with the research participants, but after our second encounter I tried not to talk about my personal life. I then realised that those informal conversations were part of the research, especially with regard to topics around the local and global, as well as individuals' reflections upon their aspirations.

After the first interview, informal contact with the group through Facebook and Twitter was very useful in organising second interviews, but more importantly to gain access to the moment when they worked on their websites. In order to explore how individuals live with technology, how they mediate it and what the role of technology is in their practices, I was oriented by Morley's concept of "intimate histories" (2005). During the second round of interviews, we talked about their use of technology. I always had between six to 10 questions, but was open to talk about other issues. Those questions focused upon their relationship with technology and the position of technology in their everyday lives, particularly in the making of their websites. For instance, questions such as which media do you use every day? Why or for what purposes? How much time do you spend using technology in making the websites? During the interviews, it was common for the individuals to check their phones, giving me the chance to ask them to reflect on their use of Twitter and Facebook, for instance. Observing this usage during interviews was relevant in order to begin contrasting their narratives around technological usage with their everyday practices online. In this sense, it was common for individuals to be critical about the utility of technologies such as Facebook or Twitter, but at the same time to spend a considerable amount of time using them to talk about their tastes and musical preferences, amongst other issues. It was during these conversations that I told them I was following them online on Facebook and Twitter. They never had a problem with this.

In the third round of interviews, we talked about their routines in the making of the websites, as well as the sites' history. This included the role of technology and their interconnections in the making of the websites, such as Word Press, the software commonly used to create and upload content to websites. It was common for the participants to enjoy talking about their relationship with technology, particularly with regard to their websites. By this time I had already asked them about the possibility of following them during the maintenance of the websites. They expressed discomfort. For instance, some said that the process was boring because it was in front of the computer writing and checking other

websites. I insisted, explaining that it was relevant for me to look at them, especially because it would present the opportunity to talk about the sites in their making, and to do so in an informal context compared with the formality around interviews. In the next section I will explain the topics explored in the last round of interviews made while I observed them going about the maintenance of the websites.

It was during these interviews and observations that I realised that some of the individuals worked in advertising agencies focused on the design of marketing strategies to be implemented online (e.g. through Facebook and Twitter). In that context, I followed three individuals from different websites at three different advertising agencies in a two-month period: Noise Media, Los Contenidos, and Los Estupendos. I considered this important in order to be able to situate and contrast their mediation practices and technological uses in other contexts, apart from the music scene. The interesting thing was that the owners of those agencies were related in one way or another to the music scene. For instance, Andres -the owner of the digital advertisement agency Noise Media-, is a musician who used to hire people who work on music websites to create campaigns for his clients. Also, one of the research participants, -Juan Pablo, the creator of the website 192, previously worked as a full-time employee of Noise Media. In the case of Los Estupendos, its owners are close collaborators of Super 45, and occasional DJs in parties organised by that music website. Rodrigo, a research participant involved in Super 45, works in that agency as a project manager. I talked to the owners of each agency about their employees and the connections between individuals' work on their websites and their roles in the agencies.

Similarly, it was important in the understanding of mediator's social relations with other actors in the scene to explore the exchanges they had with different brand managers, artists, indie record label directors, and website audiences. For this reason, I had one formal interview with three different brand managers¹⁰ who advertised their brands on the websites and sponsored music events. I had both formal and informal encounters with musicians, record label directors, and audiences at music gigs and events where we conversed about the role of the websites in the scene. Those interviews and conversations were also useful to situate and contextualise cultural mediators' practices in the scene's context.

¹⁰ I interviewed the brand manager of Corona, Puma, Mistral (a Chilean manufacturer of Pisco, Chile's traditional alcohol beverage).

With regard to exploring the research participants' uses of Facebook and Twitter, which they used frequently in the making and maintenance of the websites and as a tool in their mediation practices, I began to employ a daily routine. I first created a list of their accounts and interactions with each other on Twitter, which I checked three times a day – morning, after lunch, and at night, after a gig, for example. This was necessary not only in order to systematically record content they considered relevant, but also to identify and contextualise later conversations regarding their conversations online. I similarly mapped their Facebook accounts, but only once a day in order to see the differences between the content they uploaded and the kind of distinctions that were visible there. I looked at individuals' uses of Facebook and Twitter in order to understand their mediation practices around global flows of goods. For instance, what kind of content were they uploading and sharing online? What kind of flows were they mediating online (brands, artists' identities, etc.)? Which sources, e.g. other websites, were they looking at? What kind of cultural distinctions was it possible to track through their use of Facebook and Twitter? It was with these questions in mind that I took field notes and pictures¹¹ during daily observations of their profiles and accounts. These observations and images were useful in preparation for the next two rounds of interviews, particularly in confronting their reflections around uses of technology and mediation with my fieldwork experience. Also, it was relevant exposure to the range of goods being mediated through different technologies that included, but was not limited to, conversation about new musical releases, information about local gigs, and comments on reviews from international websites, and uploading photos and videos of their favourite artists.

As a researcher exploring individual uses of technology and their reflections around it, I was also given the opportunity to expand on the methods of observation and interviewing by engaging more practically, through the research participants' activities. For instance, one day, Rossana, a journalist who works at the net label Cazador, asked me to comment on the label's Twitter account about a Denver concert, one of the most popular bands in the scene. That task was an interesting opportunity to talk about technology with Rossana and other website creators who were part of the gig. For instance, they humoured me because my phone was not

¹¹ I used the open-source software Journler (<http://journler.com>) to organise the content and images of research participants' Facebook and Twitter profiles, and to take field notes about those observations during the fieldwork. I collected a total of 350 notes and images of those profiles, and around 1.100 tweets.

a smartphone. They also thought my attitude towards the task was funny, as I was very nervous using the label's Twitter account to make comments about the concert.

To summarise, mapping these uses of Twitter and Facebook was useful to contrast their narratives about technological uses with their practices. Also, they were both tools to establish informal conversations about gigs, music events, or music. In the same way, following them on Twitter was useful for seeing which gigs they would be attending. Similarly, it was common for them during the interviews to talk about things that happened on Twitter. For instance, individuals commonly cite discussions between people from different websites around music taste or about people who used talking and promoting brands on Twitter, etc. I used that information during our formal interviews to facilitate individuals' reflections about technology, their distinctions around flows of goods, and the scene's actors. Consonant with Murthy (2008: 845), following actors on Facebook and Twitter, combined with face-to-face interviews and field observations, enabled me to "immerse myself in the home, work, and leisure lives of my respondents".

3.3 Researching websites as artefacts and spaces where mediation and representation happen

Approaching websites as objects involved assuming a material culture perspective in order to analyse the sites as artefacts that mediate social relationships, but also to understand "how the things that people make, make people" (Miller, 2005: 38). For this purpose, the third formal interview with website creators, which was divided into separate long visits between their houses and offices in order to observe practices of websites maintenance, was to talk about issues of material culture and consumption, particularly with regard to processes of website making. I visited each research participant between two to four times, spending the day together, observing the processes of website maintenance. During those encounters, we talked about the sites as we observed them. Firstly, we talked about the stories of the websites, individuals' motivations to create them, when and why they started doing this, the role of technology in their making, and processes of professionalisation around practices in the scene's context.

Secondly, we tackled issues about qualifications (Callon, Meadel, et. al, 2002) with regard to the site's design, but also about the artists, music, and brands that were included as

part of the site's content. It was thus common to talk about personal musical taste, particularly with regard to the bands on the scene. We also talked again about their definitions of the scene focusing on its representations on the site, and their role in these representations through their practices. During that time I was more explicit about my findings and reflections with regard to their practices. I usually recorded these conversations with video on my mobile phone.

Thirdly, in those meetings we talked about their foreign musical taste, as well as international sources of information about music and global scenes. Commonly, they showed me international websites about other music scenes, telling me why they liked the music, artists, and the sites' designs. Other issues were also tackled with regard to the meanings around their websites, the importance of them in the achievement of social positions in the scene, and their relationship with brands that sponsored the sites. It was common for them to relate stories of tensions with brand managers, about payment issues, but also to evaluate the brands as consumers. Those meetings were important in terms of the research participants' reflections around their practices and the objects they used for them. They described their relationship with the trajectories of the goods they represent on the sites. It was initially difficult for them to talk about things and practices they considered part of the everyday (e.g. the internet, their sites, and the tasks involved in its making), though this eased as they showed me their favourite websites.

Another limitation at the beginning of the observations was that their reflections were often oriented towards the commercial viability of the site. For instance, they commonly evaluated their work as fans or journalists in the making of the sites by talking about their interest in their audiences, treating the sites as a kind of news media, counting the number of visits, their followers on Twitter and Facebook, and thinking of me as an evaluator. This was interesting because it was an example of how actors were talking about their sites oriented towards its commercial success. It was also common for the meetings to end in a discussion of the website footfall, where the visits come from, and the value of those metrics in establishing relationships with brands. This information was, however, useful to connect issues on the importance of metrics as social categories related to value and status, fundamental to their communication with brand managers or advertising agencies.

Approaching websites as places where mediation and representation of cultural flows, as well as cultural distinctions occur involved exploring them on a daily basis in order to map the flows that were mediated there and the distinctions that were performed around them. To be precise, the bands and musicians that frequently appeared on the sites; their music, as well as the brands included as part of the site's content. I visited each site once a day, taking a snapshot to map the goods and identities that were mediated and represented. Some sites updated the content daily, uploading music and news from national and international bands. This content was occasionally sponsored by brands. With that data it was possible to discuss its content and the history behind its making with actors. In order to talk about representations and taste on the websites as spaces demanded exploring their content as texts or discourses about Santiago's indie music scene. Considering that a large portion of data of the websites consisted of text, I analysed the content of those sites to contrast them with my interviews with website creators. As Hine argues "texts are an important part of life in many of the settings which ethnographers now address, and to ignore them would be to produce a highly partial account of cultural practices" (2000: 51). Those texts were an important input to understand the kind of flows and the criteria used to mediate and represent those practices in the websites, considering that I was also looking at the cultural context in which those representations and texts were produced. Thus it was doubly necessary in order to contrast those distinctions with individuals' meanings and reflections about their mediation practices. Finally, it was in the fourth interview with the research participants that we talked about their social trajectories (e.g. educational background) to gain information about their cultural and economic capital.

3.4 Researching 'music events' as spaces of mediation

In a strategy to gain access to the participants, particularly the website creators, I began attending gigs. At these events, the majority of the conversations were informal, and bearing in mind that they were there to listen to music, it was difficult to engage for prolonged periods of time. After my initial meetings with them in formal interviews, it was common to talk about "music events" or "brand events". These events were private parties or public music performances sponsored by different brands and mainly organised by advertising agencies. I participated in four music events: Corona Clash, Puma Social, Social Media Day, and Lollapalooza Festival.

I gained access to these events through a variety of sources. If a research participant informed me or published something online about a forthcoming event, I usually enquired about the possibility of obtaining an invitation. In other cases, I contacted the advertising agency in charge of the organisation of the event, explaining my research, presenting myself as a PhD student, and asked for an invitation. Events were as interesting opportunity to observe different kinds of mediation. On the one hand, it was during the organisation of an event that music websites were often part of its promotion, participating in meetings and offering ideas for the campaign. On the other hand, as some of the research participants related, events were opportunities to do business. In this vein, it is common for advertisers, brand managers, and website creators to meet there, having informal conversations about their jobs and projects. These events were also instances of the performance of cultural distinctions. For instance, it is common for the event organisers to choose the people that participate with them, according to class and taste distinctions.

Website creators' uses of Twitter during the events to comment upon the people and music bands participating were evidence of the performance of cultural distinctions through their technological uses. Most importantly, events were opportunities to collect interesting reflections from website creators about the scene, and their relations with and within the market, represented by their role of connecting brands and marketing strategies with the site's audiences. After participating in a couple of events, I began to gain interesting insights into the social positions of website creators within the scene, and with regard to the market. Similarly, it was possible to analyse the dynamics of mediation on a different level, in outdoor spaces that were not necessarily disconnected from those on the websites. In this way, the websites and music events were places where mediation and the representation of flows of goods occur. On the one hand, the scene is mediated through the websites, in a way which is attractive to market agents. Thus music events are part of website content which illustrates the scene's flows. On the other hand, music events are spaces where cultural mediators' practices are valorised by market agents, as well as where the scene and the market are connected through exchanges between cultural mediators and market agents. In this sense, music events were opportunities to observe in practice and in a social context the performance of cultural distinctions, but most importantly, the connections between the scene's actors (musicians, fans, places, producers, advertisers) through their specific practices in a social context where the boundaries between the scene and the market are blurred.

4. Ethical Issues

I conducted my fieldwork in different places and using different strategies. Firstly, the websites were spaces I could explore anonymously (Flick, 2009). Accessing websites to conduct field research presented no problems. I had to ask nobody's permission to be there. Accessing people on Facebook and Twitter was different. In the first case, I used my Facebook account (with my personal information on the profile, e.g. name, age, activity, photograph) to contact research informants. Sometimes they accepted my 'friend' invitation after I had interviewed them; in other cases they contacted me on Facebook after the first or the second interview. In the case of Twitter, they had public accounts so I followed them, and then after we had met in person they started following me. Similarly to Facebook, my Twitter account included a photograph and personal information, and I had always presented myself as a PhD student in sociology.

Secondly, at interviews I told everyone who I was and what I was doing. I explained generally my interests as a researcher, and then I asked for their consent to interview them through various meetings in either public and private places. Also, in the case of website creators, I told them I was studying their websites and their social networking profiles. They had no problem with that. I also gave the informants my contact details (telephone number and e-mail address) saying that they could come back to me to ask for pictures or recordings, or if they wanted to add information after the interviews, or to discuss or complain about something regarding the study. I did not give them consent forms because it can be considered too formal in the Chilean context, and it could have broken the fluency of the encounter. I always asked them if they objected to me using their real names. They did not, and in some cases they were even looking forward to seeing their names in the thesis. They were proud of being part of a study related to their websites. Anonymity is difficult in the case of website creators, considering their names appear on their websites, as well as their Facebook and Twitter accounts. Website creators know each other so it would have been difficult to refer to them in the interviews and then use pseudonyms in the thesis. Also, the issues they were talking about during interviews and on Twitter or Facebook were not necessarily risky for their careers. On the other hand, issues related to the tensions between marketing and advertising agencies and website creators were treated carefully in the thesis so as not to expose informants to any kind of difficulties with their peers or counterparts in the field of advertising. The branding

consultants and advertising executives had no objections and their names were included in the thesis. However, some of them preferred not to discuss information they considered private regarding their brands and marketing strategies, especially related to the amount of money spent on advertising or how much they paid to website creators.

In summary, this study attempts to explore and analyse how a music scene is produced, and how its cultural production circulates and becomes valorised. This valorisation does not just occur as a result of spatial conditions that stimulate creativity. On the contrary, it can also be caused by various mediations around global and local cultural flows, digital technologies, and also uses of taste which are objectified on different websites created and maintained by a group of cultural mediators. This study proposes a bottom-up approach to understand two intertwined processes: processes of mediation of cultural flows (global and local), and practices based on the use of digital technologies that facilitate those processes in order to connect the scene's flows with audiences and economic agents from different fields.

Figure 11. Research participants, interviews and themes discussed during fieldwork

Research participants

Age: at the time of the interview

At the time of the interview all residents were resident in Santiago. All interviews were treated without confidentiality; they consented to the interviews. Names are non-pseudonymous.

Website Creators

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Cristian (Super 45) | 35, Chilean, Journalist |
| 2. Rodrigo (Super 45) | 30, Chilean, Lawyer |
| 3. Macarena (Super 45) | 28, Chilean, Journalist |
| 4. Felipe (POTQ) | 29, Civil Engineer |
| 5. Juan Pablo (192) | 26, English Translator |
| 6. Alejandro (Paniko) | 27, Journalist |
| 7. Alvaro (Paniko) | 27, Journalist |
| 8. Max (Pousta) | 26, Multimedia Communication |

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 9. Pancho (Pousta) | 26, Multimedia Communication |
| 10. Nicolas (NNM) | 27, Journalist |
| 11. Camilo (Disorder) | 27, Journalist |
| 12. Maria (Rocanol) | 27, Journalist |

Advertising Executives and Branding Consultants

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 2. Andres | (Noise Media) |
| 3. Alejandro | (Noise Media) |
| 4. Juan Pablo | (Bowl) |
| 5. Javier | (Los Contenidos) |
| 6. Gonzalo | (Dos Alas) |
| 7. Pablo | (Alta) |
| 8. Raul | (Alta) |
| 9. Javiera | (Alta) |
| 10. Felipe | (Alta) |
| 11. Michel | (Estupendos) |

Brand Managers

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| 1. Gonzalo | (Corona) |
| 2. Hernan | (Puma) |
| 3. Andrés | (Mistral) |

Musicians and record label owners

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. Fakuta | Musician |
| 2. Gepe | Musician |
| 3. Gustavo | Musician |
| 4. Cristobal | Musician (from the band Fother Muckers) |
| 5. Diego | Co-owner of Cazador (Record Label) |
| 6. Rossana | Co-owner of Cazador (Record Label) |

Mainstream Music Journalists

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1. Marisol | 38, Music Journalist, creator of the website Musica Popular |
| 2. David | 38, Music Journalist in El Mercurio newspaper |

Others

1. Jose 27, Journalist. Well recognised technology writer
2. Paty 35, Designer. Owner of Zancada, the most important women's blog in Chile.

Chapter 3

The Conceptual Framework

This thesis aims to explore the role of digital media in processes of cultural mediation, based on the experiences of a group of cultural mediators within a particular music scene. The approach presented in this chapter focuses on the role that different types of agencies (human and non-human) play in processes of meaning-making and its circulation, but particularly in the relations between a group of cultural mediators and their use of digital technology (ICTs) in the making of Santiago's indie music scene. 'Mediation' in a broader sense means the processes through which human and non-human agencies produce meanings, attaching them to various cultural flows (e.g. meanings and meaningful forms that move across different places, for instance, information, images, and identities) (Appadurai, 1990; Hannerz, 1997), and putting them into circulation in different journeys. In those journeys meanings flow through different channels – in the form of actors and objects— varying as they progress. In this sense, the analysis aims to define the processes behind the production and circulation of those meanings and values that represent a particular way of life of a group of actors in contemporary Chile.

Considering Santiago's indie music scene, and particularly the role of cultural mediators within it as a social setting for exploring those experiences, this chapter discusses different bodies of theory in order to make sense of the fieldwork in cultural mediation, particularly from a bottom-up perspective. As Negus (1997: 69) suggests, rather than exploring the 'organizational structures and economic relationships' that determine the existence of Santiago's indie music scene as a creative industry, the focus will be on 'everyday' agencies and their relations in the production and circulation of flows of meaning performed by a group of actors that create and maintain websites focusing on the scene.

Focusing on the way actors mediate global and local cultural flows through material practices, the discourses around such practices, and their relation to technology, the research aims to understand how actors make sense of their practices in the generation of a music scene, but also in regard to such fields as advertising. Through an ethnographic approach, the focus is on how these actors define what they do, organising and mediating different types of

local flows (e.g. informational and technological), as well as their global counterparts. In addition, this chapter will focus on how these agents, through the making of websites, achieve positions of recognition in particular fields, as a result of their practices of meaning and value assignment, which in turn help to construct scenes and markets. The group of music fans included in this study can be explored as cultural mediators in the production of a music scene through their qualifications around its flows, and through the material practices involved in the creation and maintenance of music websites. They are not mere consumers of the scene's flows; they are also involved in their transformation and circulation, producing meanings around them. As 'cultural mediators', actors categorise the scene and its flows through practices, discourses, and objects in particular places, transforming and circulating them on their websites.

This chapter aims to analyse processes of cultural mediation as a result of the exchanges between human and non-human agencies, by looking at the experiences of a group of cultural mediators within Santiago's indie music scene. What happens to individuals who are constantly involved in the circulation of local and global cultural flows? How are those flows rendered with meaning in a particular social context? Through which practices do they circulate in social spaces? How is it possible to understand processes of cultural mediation by looking at the role that human and non-human agencies play within a particular social context? What is the role of different types of agencies in those processes, especially regarding the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs)?

This chapter has three sections. The first reviews the theoretical discussion of the role that human agencies play in processes of mediation. It focuses particularly on Pierre Bourdieu's work and the concept of 'cultural intermediaries' (1984) as particular forms of labour related to mediation practices in different fields of cultural production. The focus here is on the relation between processes of meaning and value assignment in regard to different types of flow, as well as taste classifications performed by human actors. Bourdieu's approach allows understanding of the role of human actors in processes of mediation as competition in a field to obtain and convert different types of capital (e.g. cultural, symbolic) into economic capital. The section then discusses some of Bourdieu's flaws in terms of how his concepts are rationally oriented towards economic profits. Non-human agencies (e.g. information and communication technologies) act only as markers of distinction in the practices of cultural intermediaries and

avoid a bottom-up approach to understanding the common patterns regarding the role that other types of agencies play in shaping cultural intermediaries' projects. The second section analyses the role that material and non-human agencies play in processes of cultural mediation. It focuses particularly on the work of Bruno Latour (2005) and Actor Network Theory (ANT) as a methodological tool kit for expanding the study of processes and experiences of cultural mediation from a bottom-up perspective. By paying attention to the associations between different types of agencies, it is possible to explore how music scenes are configured, particularly through the production and circulation of meanings by actors. The section goes on to analyse in detail the role that information and communication technologies, as different types of mediation and assemblage, play in the configuration of individuals' experiences and practices of cultural mediation. The third section expands Bourdieu and Latour's approaches, including the discussion of 'practice theory', which focuses on the habits and routines of cultural mediators that create social order, stabilising their practices as forms of labour. Practice theory helps to 'black box' cultural mediators' regularities in their activities of symbolic production and the material arrangements involved in processes of cultural mediation.

The fourth section develops the concept of 'digital capital' as a means of theorising 'mediation' from Bourdieu's and Latour's perspectives, exploring the experiences and material connections between actors in different fields. Thus, 'digital capital' operates as a form of mediation, which is the result of the interplay between human and non-human agencies that can be explored and described using a bottom-up approach. It is argued that 'digital capital' is an assemblage of actors, practices, objects, and meanings, which is convertible into other types of capital (e.g. economic) and exchangeable in different fields. The chapter ends by proposing a way of resolving the dichotomy between Bourdieu's 'cultural intermediaries' and Latour's 'mediators' through the notion of 'cultural mediators' in order to trace experiences of mediation from the perspective of human and non-human agencies. As a concept, 'digital capital' moves between Bourdieu and Latour. It is similar to Bourdieu's idea of accumulation and positionality. However, it is not about meanings (they are part of it) but rather about positionality itself.

Cultural mediators can accumulate 'digital capital' not only as skills in combining material arrangements for the production and circulation of meanings. They also manage a set of strategies as a result of those processes to occupy certain positions within fields and through

the technological space they create by managing websites. Through their websites cultural mediators accumulate big audiences, many downloads, clicks, and likes as a result of their abilities to make cultural distinctions around the scene's flows, and then put them into circulation through digital technologies. Then, the websites and the digital positions these people occupy can be objectified and converted into economic capital within different fields – e.g. advertising and music - but they are also direct representations of those fields. In this sense, they are spaces for action and interaction for cultural mediators in association with other actors (e.g. musicians, people from the field of advertising), as well as flows and information and communication technologies (ICTs). In that field, cultural mediators deploy a set of strategies and practices regarding ICTs, deploying a 'digital habitus' in order to accumulate and display their digital capital.

The network that constitutes the scene as a field consists of many actors – people from different fields, cultural mediators, ICTs, local and global flows, discourses, practices, and places. The associations between them are objectified in websites as representations of that field. Websites are representations of cultural mediators' practices in the form of cultural distinctions around flows, as well as different uses and strategies around ICTs. Thus, digital capital cannot be understood from a functionalist perspective as a linear system of inputs and outputs, causes and effects. It does not work as a function of individual 'knowledge of the digital' and an individual's level of 'cultural capital', both of which can be considered mutually interdependent, and, of course, central to its accumulation. By contrast, digital capital is an assemblage of different mediations of capital and associations between actors, practices, discourses, and objects. Digital capital can be summarised in the question, 'What are the connections and associations between technical knowledge, cultural flows, and social positions, as well as conversions of capital, behind someone who is using Twitter or Facebook, or making a website about a music scene?'

1. Cultural intermediaries as human agents that embody processes of 'cultural mediation'

In the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984; 1990; 1996) a central place is given to the role of individuals in processes of production and circulation of meanings in a particular social place. Bourdieu's approach to understanding processes of cultural mediation is materialised in the role that a group of professionals have in the production and circulation of meanings around flows, especially as a form of labour. In 'Distinction' (1984), Bourdieu pays attention to a group of workers who are active players as promoters of consumption through different practices related to the assignment of meanings and uses to goods, as well as promoting particular 'lifestyles' that are also objects of consumption for consumers. This group of professionals were labelled as 'cultural intermediaries' and can be found in different industries such as the media, music, fashion, and advertising. The term refers to those workers engaged in "occupations involving presentation and representation [...] providing symbolic goods and services [...] in the context of a new economy [...] whose functioning depends as much on the production of needs and consumers as on the production of goods" (1984: 359, 310). Cultural intermediaries are part of the 'new' petit bourgeoisie, where its 'newness' resides in individual practices that define their "class identity". For instance, through their working habits this group of people blur "a number of conventional distinctions. Most notable here is the division between high art/popular culture, and the divide between personal taste and professional judgement (or leisure and work)" (Negus, 2002: 503). According to Bourdieu, cultural intermediaries have a significant role in the reproduction of consumer economies, particularly because they are between the production and consumption of goods, acting as "shapers of taste and the inculcators of new consumerist dispositions" (Nixon & Du Gay, 2002: 497). In this sense, Bourdieu's conceptualisation remarks on the relevant social positions that different professions which are related to the endowment of symbolic meaning to goods achieve in processes of cultural production.

Numerous case studies have traced these processes of meaning assignment to goods, particularly in the context of different creative industries, from advertising (McFall, 2002; Nixon and du Gay, 2002; Nixon, 2003; Cronin, 2004), to the music industry (Negus, 2002), and fashion (Entwistle, 2009; Entwistle and Rocamora, 2006; Entwistle, 2010). In all of these cases, cultural intermediaries are in charge of "bringing a range of cultural things to market: goods, images,

taste, aesthetics” (Entwistle, 2009: 15). These cultural things add value to the market, in the same way that cultural intermediaries become valuable for those markets. Tracing processes of meaning assignment and circulation, as well as knowledge or capital through which those cultural goods are brought to markets, is a key aspect of the micro-economies that exist in the music scene (McRobbie, 2002a). These raise the question as to who cultural intermediaries are and what kind of identities and values define their practices. Bourdieu (1984) attributes the ability to bring cultural goods to markets to cultural intermediaries’ class position, the result of their educational level, which can be observed empirically in the form of dispositions and taste classifications. This enables them to “frame particular cultural products as legitimate and, thus, as valuable” (Smith and Mathews, 2010).

One of Bourdieu’s arguments, which is relevant to understanding processes of meaning-making and circulation in the context of the music scene and its indie character, is the “canonization of the non-legitimate” (Bourdieu, 1984: 326). This means that cultural intermediaries legitimate a kind of cultural production that is not yet “monopolized by the dominant class” (Smith and Mathews, 2010: 408). For example, it is common to find on the websites included in this study a space of promotion for unknown bands. By doing this, their work is validated before wider audiences, beyond the immediate environs of Santiago. On the one hand, website creators put into circulation among a range of audiences flows such as new music, but also in the act of recommending this music they are also validating those flows before a group of potential consumers. Bourdieu considers that the practices of cultural intermediaries reproduce the “mediocre” character of legitimate culture (Smith and Mathews, 2010: 408). One problem that emerges from this judgement is that it assumes the existence of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture as relatively static ideas, with actors seldom moving between them or liking both, as a process that can reproduce class differences between individuals. Bourdieu is intrinsically against the commodification of culture based on the creation of consumer needs by cultural intermediaries. Bourdieu’s definition also brings together processes of cultural and economic production with some limitations. For him, cultural intermediaries are “the transmission belt” for the “ethical retooling” of the new economy, embodying and promoting an ethos of fun and pleasure in order to produce the need for their product and, by extension, themselves (quoted in Smith and Mathews, 2010: 408). However, as Entwistle (2009) suggests, through his descriptions of the work of art critics as one field of cultural production, that

statement does not take into account processes of mediation in a broader sense, neither as forms of labour nor as professional activities.

Bourdieu's definition of 'cultural intermediaries' identifies the work of a group of actors in the sphere of everyday consumption, and how the distinctions they make in the form of assigning meaning to flows of goods and classifying taste, represent an instance of power through which individuals can achieve positions of prestige within a particular field. This is especially the case when we consider taste as a contested terrain where battles for legitimacy, power, and distinction exist. It is in this context, and as a result of this line of argument, that critiques of Bourdieu's work have been raised. For instance, Benzecry (2012), following the trajectories of opera fans in Argentina, contests Bourdieu's linear relation between cultural distinction and power in the form of class differences. Particularly, Benzecry relates individuals' attachment to that kind of music as a result of different social interactions in a wider context than family. It is a continuous process that takes place in different spaces, as well as with objects and other people, rather than something determined by or achieved as a result of family ties and class positions.

Three central concepts are needed to understand Bourdieu's approach to mediation practices and the role that cultural intermediaries as forms of labour play in them: field; habitus, and capital. Fields are "bounded spaces of action and interaction" (1990: 72) where the social world is conceived as a "game". In this game, fields operate according to forces, players, different types of capital (economic, symbolic, cultural), and strategies. In this sense, as Bourdieu proposes, "to existing fields there have to be people prepared to play the game, endowed with a habitus that implies knowledge and recognition of the imminent laws of the field, the stakes and so on" (ibid: 72). The social space emerges as a number of overlapping fields. When people enter fields, they are establishing power relations in order to accumulate different types of capital (economic, symbolic, cultural, and social), which will enable them to achieve a position in the field. Fields and various types of capital are the result of individuals' practices; they are not conceived as pre-existing categories. Practices are bodily performances that are not based on rational calculation, but on a practical and embodied rationality (ibid, 1990).

In order to resolve the dichotomy between structure and agency as a way to understand the existence of the social, Bourdieu connects fields, capital and practices through the concept of 'habitus'. Habitus, as a system of durable dispositions, enables recognition of the rules of the field and the practices that sustain its existence. For Bourdieu (1990), the habitus structures individual practices, but it is also structured by fields, operating as:

'Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them' (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

Bourdieu's conceptualisation suggests that 'habitus' is an essential condition of a social setting, a field where individuals can relate to each other as in a music scene. In this sense, "the habitus structures ways of being and doing" (Entwistle, 2008: 135). Bourdieu's 'habitus' considers social life as a game oriented by power exchanges between 'players' in order to achieve certain positions in the field. Thus, those positions are also achieved as the result of actors' accumulation and exchanges of capital in fields. Bourdieu (1986: 46) defines capital as "accumulated labour (in its materialised form or its incorporated embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour". The social emerges as the result of different exchanges of capital between individuals, and the correspondent power relations related to those exchanges, within particular fields. In the form of 'cultural capital', which can be 'embodied' through individual dispositions of the mind and the body, and 'objectified' through material objects such as books, paintings or 'websites', individuals can gain power positions within a field of cultural production or social classes, being recognised by others as 'experts' in some area, or for their ability to understand and de-codify cultural flows. In the embodied form, the acquisition of cultural capital presupposes a process of 'cultivation' (Bourdieu, 1986) through which individuals develop their habitus as a set of dispositions towards, for instance, artistic work such as music. This cultivation is the result of the investment of time in order to develop the dispositions required to understand the rules and values within a particular field, as in a music scene. In the case of research participants, that means time invested listening to music, sharing music online with others, reading different websites about

global music scenes, as well as going to gigs, but most importantly, spending a considerable amount of time in front of the computer. In the objectified form, as books or paintings, cultural capital can be transmitted through the material forms. However, as Bourdieu explains, it depends on its appropriation by an individual. Buying a book can be the result of an individual level of economic capital, but it does not guarantee that having the money to buy that book will enable that person to understand its content and appropriate the symbols within it.

Cultural capital is the result of historical action, for instance, in the form of family socialisation, which operates as a context where it can be transmitted and acquired, and it also has its own laws. This is especially if actors use it as a 'weapon' to deal with the conflicts involved in achieving a social position within a field of cultural production, 'and beyond them, in the field of social classes' (Bourdieu, 1986: 50). The 'weapon' metaphor is central to Bourdieu's definition because he understands the social as the result of struggles between actors in order to achieve positions of power within particular fields. It is in that context that the conversion of cultural capital into economic capital by individuals allows them, in a Marxist sense to possess the means of production, but also to hold a position in the field where they can determine, for instance, in the case of art or musical taste, what music is good and what does not deserve to be listened to or consumed. Similarly, the performance of actors' cultural capital in a particular field, in embodied or objectified forms, operates as a way of distinguishing themselves from others. That sense of distinction in the form of cultural capital is a powerful resource for individuals to achieve a social position within a particular field.

The work of Bourdieu offers useful insights into the role that human agencies and their relations with objects play in processes of cultural mediation. On the one hand, individual practices related to the production and circulation of meaning are materialised in objects as a result of their habitus in a particular field. Music websites can be considered as objects where individual taste classifications, as well as cultural distinctions, take a material form. On the other hand, those classifications are a result of individual dispositions towards flows of goods and meanings that are produced by the website owners. These meanings are re-circulated on their websites as markers of distinction in the field where those actors are involved. Like their relations with digital communication technologies in the making of the websites, their dispositions towards those flows are 'weapons' to differentiate themselves from other actors in particular fields. In this case, the scene is a field where actors can "play" the game, and the

ability to create websites about the scene represents a form of cultural and symbolic capital that can be converted into economic capital. It is actors' abilities to produce and exchange social categories related to flows of goods and meanings that establishes differences between them and other actors within the scene. Bourdieu's concept of cultural intermediaries explains how actors convert, through different strategies, their abilities to produce and circulate meanings into economic capital as a form of labour, bringing together the realm of culture and economy; merging meanings and goods for consumption in markets.

Just as Bourdieu's concepts illuminate the understanding of processes of cultural mediation, there are some flaws that devalue his approach in terms of this thesis. The first one is related to how the work of cultural intermediaries, in terms of agency and social change, is oriented towards the maximisation and conversion of different forms of capital into economic capital –profits — as the final goal of their practices. Similarly, Bourdieu's focus is always on the competition between actors to achieve positions of recognition in a particular field. This can be contested empirically, unpacking the motivations behind actors' practices, rather than assuming it to be the case a priori. However, in the case of this thesis, individuals are ambivalent about defining their practices and reflecting upon them in terms of competition. On the contrary, to justify and explain their practices actors constantly use terms like 'fun' and 'self-fulfilment', while not all of their actions are oriented towards the achievement of a position of recognition in a field. Bourdieu's attention is oriented towards the strategies individuals develop in order to achieve social positions in a field as a result of their ability to circulate and attach meanings to objects, instead of their strategies and creativity associated with the making of those meanings. In this regard, Bourdieu's focus on objects as carriers of meanings, as well as artefacts onto which actors inscribe meanings, are always understood as markers of distinction, and instruments of social strategy (Miller, 1987), that enable individuals to achieve powerful positions in a particular field in order to maximise them or convert them into economic capital. Knowledge about digital technologies and music websites operates as a marker of distinction in the field. Those objects allow individuals to achieve positions of distinction within fields: in the case of research participants, the scene and the field of advertisement. Similarly, they represent battles and competition over scarce symbolic and material resources (flows, cultural distinctions, economic capital).

In this sense, by looking at their material practices, we see that actors are not always oriented towards economic accumulation as a final goal. Sometimes the goal is affective pleasure (Baym and Burnett, 2009). However, this description does not minimise Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital, especially for understanding how the dispositions and knowledge used to create the websites by actors, through the practices involved in the making of those artefacts, rather than something pre-existing, structure, but are also structured by the music scene as a field of cultural production. It is that knowledge which orientates individuals' distinctions within the cultural production of a scene, such as music, musicians' performances, and music events reviews.

In the next section, another body of literature will be analysed in order to complement Bourdieu's approach to processes of mediation in a broader sense. If Bourdieu's conceptualisation is oriented towards the position of human agents in processes of cultural mediation, there is also the need to explore how experiences of cultural mediation - described by Bourdieu in the work and practices of 'cultural intermediaries' - are related to the role that non-human agencies play in mediation experiences and practices, particularly the role of digital media. Websites are not only representations of the scene's flows, they are objects that emerge as the result of a set of associations between actors and objects, but not merely as markers of distinctions and weapons to convert cultural and symbolic capital into economic capital. In this sense, the work of Bruno Latour and the perspective of Actor Network Theory developed in the work of different authors illuminate how processes of mediation in a broader sense, such as the production, circulation, and transformation of flows of meanings and goods, work as the result of the role of non-human agencies in wider networks of social relations.

2. Beyond Bourdieu: The role of non-human agencies in processes of cultural mediation

Bourdieu's (1984) attitude to objects as a form of distinction and a 'weapon' to differentiate against others in the scene as a field of cultural production ignores the processes behind the relations individuals establish with objects such as digital technologies. Bourdieu only considers objects such as consumer goods or digital technologies as useful tools insofar as they can be used as converters of cultural capital into economic capital. How do music fans capitalise on their use of technology in order to get economic resources to make a living, or how, through those weapons, can they gain recognition by actors within different fields such as advertising? Digital technologies assembled on a website are useful 'weapons' for moving within a particular field, and between different fields, in order to gain social positions. Actors design strategies of action to achieve those positions. In that sense, Bourdieu's perspective vis-à-vis individuals' relations with digital technology functions as a mean to achieve particular goals. Just as they are distinction markers, they make a difference. In that context, Bourdieu's definition of capital, particularly cultural capital in a material form such as a music website or a Twitter account, does not pay too much attention to the processes behind those objectifications and the role those objects have in the production of a category like the 'scene'. Drawing on his definition, the website is useful to differentiate from others in a particular field such as Santiago's indie music scene, but there is no detailed account of the processes related to how that website was created.

Through Actor Network Theory (ANT), the work of Bruno Latour (2005) suggests key concepts, as well as methodological distinctions, for understanding the production, circulation, and transformation of meaning in processes of cultural mediation and the production of social categories. Particularly, those categories are the result of a set of associations between different types of agencies, human and non-human, where an entity like a 'website' or a 'music scene' is the consequence of multiple relations and connections. In this context, how those categories – the scene, and websites as objectifications of it – are empirically created and performed, considering the centrality that digital technologies have in the practices of a group of cultural mediators.

In ANT the idea of the 'social' and 'society' are questioned as categories that are based on the dichotomies against the 'natural world'. For Latour (2005: 5), those categories obscure processes and associations rather than describe them; the social is assumed to operate like a 'glue' helping to maintain things, rather than something that needs to be closely observed in order to understand 'what is glued together'. Latour (2005: 65) explains the position of ANT as regards the category of the 'social' using the example of a supermarket as a metaphor. There, what we call a 'supermarket' is not the specific shelves within the hall; it is the result of a set of relations and modifications 'in the organisation of all the goods – their packaging, their pricing, their labelling — which new combinations are explored and which paths will be taken (what later will be defined as a 'network')'. Thus, social, for ANT, is the name of a type of momentary association, which is characterised by the way it gathers together into new shapes. The 'network' metaphor suggests the constant movement and connections between different types of flow that sometimes achieve, or fail to achieve, those associations.

From this standpoint, through the websites the scene is assembled empirically as a result of discourses, objects, processes, and actors existing for as long as they are performed. If the last section described Bourdieu's approach towards the role human agents play in the form of 'cultural intermediaries', regarding certain forms of labour as processes of cultural mediation, Latour's perspective is oriented towards the associations that are involved in processes of mediation in a broader sense. Paying attention to associations and assemblages means observing and following the relations between objects and subjects as actors that constitute networks.

Another distinction that is relevant for ANT relates to the role that agencies have in the making of the 'social'. Latour (2005: 71-72) suggests that, owing to the definitions used by sociologists, particularly concepts like agency and structure, objects are not central to understanding the making of the social world. Actors are 'always considered as "human agents" and "agency" to be the property of such actors' (Entwistle, 2009: 32). For Latour, that is the main way to understand how the role objects play is always limited to the intentions and meanings that humans attach to them. Objects in ANT are central in the existence of assemblages, helping to make them durable. In that context, ANT suggests that it is necessary to follow the associations between actors, that is, to look at 'anything that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference — or, if it has no figuration yet, an actant' (Latour, 2005: 71). This

can be achieved by looking at the participants involved in different actions, independently of whether they are human or non-human. In that sense, objects are 'transports of meaning' 'expressing power relations', for instance, when they are at the 'origin of social activity' (Latour, 2005: 72). In ANT actors do not have predefined or fixed characteristics. On the contrary, they emerge and exist in how actors are interrelated, associated, and networked.

Latour's standpoint is to follow the actors and their associations in order to understand the social categories that emerge from them, rather than to put those associations under the umbrella of concepts that sometimes obscure the character of those exchanges. In this sense, in the case of processes and experiences of mediation, the sociologist has to explain the associations that assemble those experiences, between discourses, practices, things, and actors, observing them empirically. Thus in ANT, social categories – e.g. the scene and websites - are the output of a set of associations between actors who cannot be assumed to be intermediaries. To explore processes and experiences of mediation, the distinction between mediators and intermediaries is methodological. For Latour, mediators are actors who "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (2005: 39). Meanwhile, intermediaries transport meanings without distorting them. For Latour, attention must be paid to mediators and the elements that help to constitute and shape their associations:

'The sociologists of the social believe in one type of social aggregates, few mediators, and many intermediaries; for ANT, there is no preferable type of social aggregates; there exist endless numbers of mediators' (Latour, 2005: 40).

Processes of mediation of the scene's flows performed by a group of music fans are inseparable from digital objects, particularly ICTs. For ANT, digital technologies can be considered as heterogeneous assemblages of different mediations and associations (Miller and Slater, 2000), for instance, in the form of taste classifications, global and local flows of information, and technical possibilities. Websites are objects through which different associations are established, for instance, between their creators and people from the field of advertising, between producers and consumers of the scene's flows, and also between their creators and a varied set of digital technologies that facilitate processes of mediation, as well as being themselves mediated (e.g. the internet, Facebook, Twitter, Word Press, mailing lists). The

scene objectified in the websites is the result of varied exchanges – between ICTs and music fans, flows of information, taste classifications and categorisations around those flows. These were considered by Bourdieu only in terms of markers of distinction and possibilities for the accumulation of economic capital. Latour's approach helps explore the everyday making of the websites created by research participants, where the scene emerges as a consequence of various exchanges and associations. They emerge as hubs for the circulation of flows, facilitating connections between different actors through specific practices that achieve the existence of the scene, as well as artefacts through which actors articulate virtual and actual worlds. The task for the sociologist is tracing those connections empirically.

In this sense, websites are relational objects and technical possibilities through which processes of cultural mediation are achieved and assembled. ANT helps trace the connections behind the making of the website and the set of relations that emerges from those processes. As an 'assemblage' (*agencement* (McFall, 2009)) the website is the result of a set of activities and technical skills that facilitate processes of cultural mediation. As assemblages, the properties of websites as objects where processes of cultural mediation are materialised in a broader sense emerge from the interconnection between the scene's flows, music fans, advertising agencies, musicians, categorisations and taste classifications around those flows, amongst others. From the perspective of website creators, what type of individual emerges from this assemblage is an open and empirical question. Similarly, on a higher level, this argument applies to the making of the music scene as a result of a set of associations where music websites and cultural mediators have a central role in the production, circulation and consumption of meanings around its flows.

The assemblage metaphor moves further from Bourdieu's approach to cultural mediation as processes that result from practices performed by a group of professionals who legitimate taste classifications (e.g. art critics) attaching meanings to flows, connecting the realm of production and consumption. For Bourdieu cultural mediation is conceived as a form of labour performed by 'cultural intermediaries' in order to operate within a field, attaching meanings to flows as strategies and dispositions to achieve positions of distinction and possibilities for accumulating economic capital. Objects like music websites are artefacts where meanings are attached, as much as they are representations of those meanings in order to achieve those goals in the field. Latour and the conceptual framework of ANT help to render

accurately the role of cultural intermediaries in the production of culture, as well as the 'networks' involved in the commodification of meanings produced and circulated by individuals. Specifically, the assemblage of websites as objectifications of processes of cultural mediation is a key object in the making of the scene. In this sense, cultural mediation is the result of the association between actors and objects that produces the scene itself as an entity. This means not only following the role of human agents but also exploring the role of non-humans (digital technologies, discourses, places) as part of the network that constitutes the scene. As Slater (2013: 37) states 'agency is not about the efficacy of given objects achieving ends that have already been defined by an actor, but rather it is a story about the way in which connection works'. Processes of cultural mediation are the result of the connections between, for instance, a group of cultural mediators and a set of technologies that constitute the websites, the scene's flows, and actors such as musicians, audiences, record labels, and trans-local music websites. In this context, there are new approaches in the study of cultural mediation that, using the framework of Bourdieu and ANT, look to the role that material and non-human agencies have in those processes, but also in specific social settings, particularly regarding ICTs in the making of music websites.

The work of Liz Moor (2012) is an example of an approach oriented to understanding how human, but also non-human, agencies shape different programmes of action. Her focus is on how the work of social marketers as cultural intermediaries in Bourdieu's sense rests on material and non-human agencies in varied ways. In the case of social marketing, Moor (2012: 571) argues that by explaining the role that non-human actors have in its existence, in the form of policy documents, measurement techniques, and information and communication technologies, it is possible to understand them in terms of Latour's concepts of 'mediators' and 'intermediaries'. From the standpoint of this thesis, measurement techniques such as website metrics (e.g. Google Analytics, which traces visitors' profiles and the size of website's audiences) and ICTs such as social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are central to processes of cultural mediation in the making of music websites:

'Some of these simply support the project – they may be essential to getting things done, but they do not substantially change them – while others decisively shape (and limit) the way that projects unfold, how they are understood and so forth' (Moor, 2012: 571).

Specifically, Moor analyses how the measuring techniques of social marketing, and the concepts they embody, defines that programme just as they circulate through different networks. For her, Latour's conceptualisation and his focus on the role that material and non-human agencies have in processes of cultural mediation, particularly in the practices of a group of cultural intermediaries, enables a detailed account of their "influence with greater precision" (Moor, 2012: 576). That influence operates to reproduce or transport meanings, even though it could shape 'the outcomes', sometimes distorting them; articulating actions, making others act in particular ways. For instance, in the case of website metrics they orientate and shape the work of cultural mediators, particularly regarding the social and economic relations they establish with other actors, e.g. people from the field of advertising. On the one hand, website metrics are entities that transfer shared meanings, but also they are transformed depending on the associations between different actors and how they are mediated. On the other hand, they make visible a set of exchanges – of meanings, money and prestige - between different actors regarding the making of the scene, as well as niche markets. Moor criticises Bourdieu's approach to the work of 'cultural intermediaries', seeing them as social marketers, and the impact of their practices as not only resulting from their professional backgrounds or class 'habitus', but also being affected in a way by a series of material devices:

'(Similarly) how intermediaries perform these functions depends not only on their own dispositions and competences, but also on concepts, tools and techniques, some of which they may have developed themselves, but also which may have been devised elsewhere and which they must be able to recognise, adopt and perform if they are able to function as market actors at all. In this respect I have claimed that in some cases it may in fact be the devices – concepts, metrics, guideline criteria and so forth – that are the most influential intermediaries, at least in the sense that it is they, not human agents, that decisively shape outcomes' (Moor, 2012: 577).

Drawing upon Moor's (2012) approach towards 'measurement techniques' as 'mediators' and its impact on 'social marketers' as cultural intermediaries, is the role that information and communication technologies (ICTs) play in individuals' practices of cultural mediation. To what extent are their experiences of cultural mediation and values related to those practices shaped by, for instance, their definitions of and relations with digital

communication technologies such as Facebook, Twitter, and the set of technologies involved in the making of websites? In what ways can they be incorporated into the analysis of research participants' practices as material and non-human agencies in the form of 'mediators' or 'intermediaries'? (Latour, 2005; Moor, 2012).

In order to bring together the 'cultural' and the 'technological' to explore the role that different ICTs have shaping the outcomes of cultural mediators' projects, the metaphor of 'assemblages' is useful. There, issues of agency are considered as processes of distribution between 'people, objects, technologies, and texts', where individuals are the centres of different connections performed by entities that are related to them (Bennett and Healy, 2009). As assemblages, ICTs (e.g. websites and social networking sites) are the result of different mediations in the form of associations between actors, objects, meanings, and practices. Empirically, for instance, in the case of mobile phones, these devices are the result of different associations and practices between human and non-human agents in particular contexts. Goggin (2009) considers that mobile media, particularly the iPhone, represent an example of an issue which is under-theorised in order to understand the construction of culture and the social. The relations and meanings performed by different actors around an object like the iPhone (e.g. Apple marketers, politicians who regulate communications, users), represent different associations between actors which make the iPhone a symbolic and material object. The properties attached to that object by its creators - in this case Apple - differ through various processes of negotiation between users, regulators, and distributors, in order to stabilise what the iPhone is as a result of those associations. If we change the word 'iPhone' to 'website' there are similar processes of meaning-making as assemblages of practices, objects, discourses, actors, and places. In the case of music websites they are stabilised through the associations and negotiations between its creators, audiences, and marketing agents where meanings are imagined, produced, shared and circulated within that assemblage called a 'website'.

In this sense, ICTs must be empirically traced as a set of different associations in order to understand 'how the emergent forms of contemporary mobile media are working hand-in-hand with the production of quite different logics of assembling culture' (Goggin, 2009: 163-164). Similarly, Chesher (2007), through ethnographic observation of the circulation of mobile phones within a music concert, concludes that those artefacts in the context of particular places (a music concert in a stadium) are mutually constituted. A music concert performed by the rock

band U2 is the result of different associations between actors where mobile media mediates that experience, for instance, in the form of music videos recorded and circulating on such websites as YouTube, as well as lights used in the show. In this sense, the values, functions, and uses of mobile phones vary at different times as part of the music concert. Thus, ICTs help to establish connections between actors according to the different uses or projects they are developing.

As socio-technical assemblages, 'websites' are considered an achievement as regards the properties and associations where different actors are involved with various objects. As assemblages, websites are achieved by cultural mediators in particular contexts as the result of their expectations, uses, and a different set of relations between producers and consumers of those objects (e.g. audiences, people from the field of advertisement). Their properties emerge as a result of different associations, as well as discourses about them. Websites are 'made up' in the same way as it is performed and exercised by actors (Bennett and Healy, 2009). They can be explored as something achieved by various actors (human and non-human) where, for instance, they are one part of that network of connections in processes of cultural mediation that is central in the making of Santiago's indie music scene.

If ANT helps to explain processes of mediation in a broader sense as being the result of the associations between human and non-human agencies, there is a lack of affect and feelings in that approach. This is particularly related to the relations and meanings that actors – human and non-human – establish and share with each other within a social context (e.g. objects, music, people, musicians). As with Bourdieu and his economics-based approach to competition between actors in a field, in ANT there is a rationalisation in relation to how actors relate in order to achieve associations. If those associations do not work or are not achieved, actors, meanings, and knowledge that are involved in the construction of their social worlds are not objects of attention for the researcher. The rationality that is implicit in Bourdieu's and Latour's approaches obscures actors' regularities in their 'doings' and 'sayings' about processes of cultural mediation, as well as in relation to objects and flows in processes of symbolic production and the material arrangements related to their circulation.

Latour critiques the 'semiotic' approach towards cultural objects, such as like a website about a music scene, as things through which meaningful texts are inscribed and have to be de-

codified by researchers. Through a 'strategy of deflation' (Latour, 1986), they can be analysed as 'assembled entities' (Entwistle and Slater, 2013: 7) that are produced and circulated, from which values and meanings come and are part of the world of the music scene, as well as other worlds such as marketing and advertising (or, following Bourdieu, they are part of different fields of cultural production). However, for Entwistle and Slater (2013: 7), the problem with Latour's 'strategy of deflation' emerges when 'culture' empirically appears as a category or explanation in actors' calculations, as well as the configuration of their actions. They call for 'reassembling the cultural' through ANT, arguing that its approach reduces culture to 'deflated materialities':

'A thing (a look, a fashion element, a brand) is never just a thing, but a thing that is happening and made to happen against a wider backdrop or context. And this wider context is often understood and performed as 'culture', particularly – unsurprisingly - in cultural industries' (Entwistle and Slater, 2013: 14).

In the case of research participants this is relevant, especially in relation to their practices and the ways they invoke 'culture' as a shared concept that explains their constructions of social categories such as the 'scene' as a result of taste classifications around flows. Similarly relevant is their interest in following certain types of flows in the form of information about particular global music scenes. They are self-consciously arbiters of cultural tastes, moving between cultural categories like 'indie' and 'mainstream' as concepts through which they justify their actions within the social worlds they construct and the connections or associations they establish with actors and objects in different fields, such as the scene and advertising. Similarly, this happens when they define their 'websites' as objectifications of 'cultural classifications and categories', as well as the different types of capital, whether 'cultural, economic, and symbolic' (in Bourdieu's sense) that go into making them. By doing this, cultural mediators operate in 'economies of qualities' (Callon, et. al, 2002) where the 'qualifications' of the scene's flows – e.g. musicians, identities, and music —involve the permanent promotion and manipulation of attributes that are both intrinsic and extrinsic to, for instance, the websites, as well as the scene's flows. This is also applicable to the role of website metrics and 'website media kits' as scripts that promote and highlight the sites' attributes (e.g. audience size, audiences' characteristics as consumers of the scene's flows, websites as spaces with specific attributes for the promotion of brands) for people from the field of advertising and

companies interested in promoting their products on the sites. But also, through their uses of websites and social networking sites, cultural mediators are constructing, promoting and manipulating their identities as mediators to achieve legitimacy and distinction in the field.

In the next section, another body of theory will be discussed in order to enrich a view of actors' experiences of mediation as a result of the interaction between human and non-human agencies, where issues of 'culture' emerge, especially regarding the role information and communication technologies play in processes of cultural mediation. 'Practice' theory applied to the use of ICTs as 'media' for the circulation of meanings attached to flows is an approach to testing and expanding Bourdieu's and Latour's theories in order to empirically explore the relation between different types of agencies in processes of cultural mediation. This is particularly true of the regular actions where ICTs are artefacts through which individuals establish connections and exchanges, getting involved in the production and circulation of flows of meanings, but also as things where meanings and cultural categories are objectified. Practice theory is not oriented to understanding the social as a tension between structure and agency. Its focus is on the symbolic structures that give life to social experience (Reckwitz, 2002) in order to make sense of the regularities related to social experiences such as processes of cultural mediation. It focuses particularly on how these processes are stabilised, routinised, and institutionalised in the form of 'cultural intermediaries' as forms of labour, but also contemplates a set of objects – particularly ICTs - that shapes actors' projects resulting from different types of associations.

3. Assembling ‘cultural mediation’: actors, relations, and practices

In terms of this thesis, a practice approach helps to observe and understand the making and maintenance of music websites by actors as interconnected processes of doings and sayings regarding different types of flows, where ICTs mediate those cultural categories and the social order created by individuals. In the same way, exploring the making of music websites as social practices enables us to understand individual actions not only as rational activities. On the contrary, they are the result of different types of knowledge, objects, emotions, and activities that define practices and are stabilised, and those practices also define individuals’ social order. The concept of social practices offers us a way to explore experiences of cultural mediation performed by individuals and their relationships with different material objects, such as ICTs, through a set of practices. Practice theory is connected to the standpoint of this thesis in order to explore and understand processes of cultural mediation and its relations with digital technologies from the bottom up, especially because cultural mediation is not a result of mental dispositions or discourse interactions. On the contrary, it is a continuum process that happens through the reproduction and enactment of practice (Reckwitz, 2002) connecting the material arrangements of a group of cultural mediators with processes of symbolic production and circulation. Practice theory helps to “black box” cultural mediators’ regularities in their activities and the objects related to them, particularly websites. Cultural mediators’ practices can be seen as forms of labour where different strategies are deployed to achieve positions in the field, but also as regular activities where creativity, pleasure and fun are also central for cultural mediators’ activities. Thus, processes and experiences of cultural mediation are embedded in habits and routines that create social order. As Reckwitz (2002: 246) points out, practice is:

‘A routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge’. (Reckwitz, 2002: 249)

In order to understand the interconnections between processes of cultural mediation and digital media, Schatzki (2001) distinguishes between ‘dispersed’ and ‘integrative’ practices. The first is related to knowledge, particularly about how to do something based on shared collective practices and common understandings. The second involves ‘complex entities joining

multiple actions, projects, ends and emotions' (Schatzki, 2002: 88). Schatzki's most important point is 'the socially achieved patterning of practices that enables the flux of everyday activity to be intelligible between actors' (Couldry, 2012: 40). Practice theory pays special attention to the role that objects play in the making of the social through the reproduction of practices. Music websites are objects through which different types of flows are put into circulation, as well as produced through the practices of their creators. Similarly, they are the result of different types of mediations. The associations involved in the making of websites – between cultural mediators and digital technologies, cultural flows, identities, people from the field of advertising, and others - involves a set of actions and meanings in the form of habits that help to create a social order.

As practices, websites and processes of cultural mediation are the result of the interconnection between different elements, including mental activities, objects, emotions, and knowledge. Drawing on ANT and practice theory, Shove et. al (2007: 23) place emphasis on the way individuals, objects, and practices are mutually constitutive. Through fieldwork data about individual experiences of kitchen renovation, the authors consider how different things, such as kitchen objects and appliances, can be associated with different expectations and standards, but also how, for instance, the physical architecture of the kitchen 'affords or encourages particular ways of doing, and restricts or discourages others' (Shove, et. al, 2007: 23). This 'materiality' regarding everyday life practices, such as cooking or renewing the kitchen, considers a socio-technical dimension in which objects, individuals, and practices are co-configured. If we substitute the word 'kitchen' with 'website', it is possible to confront the same issues regarding agency and the mutual configuration of human (creators, users), and non-human actors (e.g. ICTs, program codes, and software).

This co-configuration is exemplified clearly in the form of 'distributed competence' (Shove, et. al, 2007: 54) that emerges in practices related to 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) projects. Competence is defined as an attribute of the human being doing something, for instance, creating a website. There, knowledge and know-how are involved in creating an artefact through human action and a set of objects or things. It is in this process, and through the practices involved in the making of something called a 'website' that competence embodied in humans and non-humans takes form. To explain this, the authors use as an example an individual who is part of a DIY project remodelling a room in a house. This process can be

understood as a network based on the combination of multiple elements and actions involving, for instance, tools (e.g. paint, a hammer, paint brush), DIY manuals, conversations with other people, and the internet. Based on Latour's (1993) 'hybrid' referring to, for instance, the combination of a person (the individual who wants to repair the room), and a hand-tool (the hammer), the actions involved in repairing the room constitute an example of competence distributed across human and non-human actors. This means that DIY practices such as repairing a room are the result of embedded and distributed competence between tools and individuals.

The idea that competence 'is embodied in humans and in things' (Shove, et. al, 2007: 56) goes against the idea that the relation between human and technological is the result only of individual agency, for instance, in the form of a type of capital (e.g. economic, cultural) that is reflected in the knowledge required to achieve something. Competence, and its distribution amongst technologies and humans (e.g. ICTs and users), is an example that diminishes the potential of concepts like 'media literacy' (Livingstone, 2004), or 'media practice' (Couldry, 2012). This is the case because it converts different associations through which knowledge, actions and communications circulate between individuals and objects. ANT considers something called 'the internet' as an ICT owing to the interactions and associations between actors and objects that assist in the achievement and stabilisation of communication. Thus, 'agency' is not a property of objects and individuals to achieve particular ends. On the contrary, it is a characteristic or the result, of the connections between them and how these connections work. For instance, creating a webpage can be seen as an act in which competence is distributed between a person and a set of technologies (e.g. the computer, the software, such as WordPress, used to create the website, the connections to different flows of information, the interactions with friends to obtain knowledge and advice, the data available on other music websites, and the instructions attached to those devices in order to use them). All of those processes as practice are permanent constructions that are sometimes stabilised and sometimes not, and it is the role of the researcher, based on actors' discourses and actions, to map that stabilisation.

4. 'Digital capital' as a form of cultural mediation in the making of Santiago's indie music scene

In this chapter different bodies of theory have been discussed in order to explore processes of cultural mediation and the role that digital technologies play in them from the perspective of human and non-human agencies. On the one hand, the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984; 1990) sheds light on processes of cultural mediation as forms of labour in the form of 'cultural intermediaries'. Through different professions and practices, cultural intermediaries produce and circulate meanings, giving value to products, acting as promoters of consumption and legitimating taste classifications (Smith and Mathews, 2010). Bourdieu's approach is oriented to understanding the role of human actors in processes of mediation as competition in a field to obtain different types of capital (e.g. symbolic, cultural) or convert them into economic capital. For Bourdieu, objects like ICTs and websites operate as markers of distinction for actors to be legitimated in the field. By contrast, the work of Bruno Latour (2005) helps to explore mediation as the result of different types of agency (human and non-human). Thus objects like information and communication technologies can shape the result of individual mediation practices. Or, as Moor (2012) suggests, they can play a central role in the practices of 'cultural intermediaries'. In the case of processes of 'cultural mediation' as forms of labour experienced by individuals in specific social contexts, the focus is on the perspective of human agents, where Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural intermediaries' helps to explain individual points of view in particular fields (e.g. art critics). By looking at broader processes of 'mediation' in which objects and humans are interrelated, Latour's focus on non-human agents helps us to understand how different technical possibilities are configured in a 'network' through different practices and processes of co-configuration between human and non-human actors (Shove, et. al, 2007). In relation to those processes of co-configuration, practice theory gives attention to the regularities, such as mental activities, objects, emotions, and knowledge, that bring together the symbolic production and the material arrangements involved in cultural mediation. Practice theory helps to 'black box' cultural mediators' regularities in their activities and the objects related to them are stabilised, particularly websites. This section presents the concept of 'digital capital' in order to explore, from a bottom-up perspective, individual experiences of cultural mediation and the material practices involved in those experiences, focusing particularly on how certain kinds of technology and skills become valorised, becoming convertible or important for people in a particular field such as Santiago's indie music scene.

'Digital capital' is a way of resolving how it is possible to theorise 'mediation' from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu and Bruno Latour through the experiences and material connections of a group of actors within a field. It is about how skills and digital communications technology become valorised through a different set of practices where actors identify networks of value within a field such as a music scene. On the one hand, the concept refers to individual involvement in networks of flows of meaning and goods that are connected to the use of digital communication technologies. On the other hand, the idea of digital capital captures a sense of positionality of individuals in a field where they are competing against others to gain positions of power and recognition. In that context, processes of commodification (conversions of capital) and material connections (through the use of digital technologies) are assembled into digital capital as a form of mediation, production and circulation of meaning through flows and objects that are commercialised, in a particular field. Digital capital aims to look not only at the material connections involved in mediation processes, but also at how forms of capital are stabilised around those objects, particularly digital technologies. By looking at the role of human and non-human agencies in experiences and processes of mediation, the idea of digital capital is identified as an assemblage of those associations, something empirically observable in the case study given a bottom-up approach.

In Bourdieu's sense of the term 'capital' (1986), digital capital is a form of labour that can be appropriated by other agents. However, even though its appropriation can operate as the final stage in the making of the social, it also involves knowledge and use of digital technologies, and, in particular, the ability to move and circulate meanings through digital technologies and knowledge about how flows circulate; this means that it is the result of individual mediation practices of those artefacts, as well as processes of qualification (Callon, et. al, 2002) performed by actors where those objects are involved. These processes involve the permanent promotion and manipulation of attributes that are both intrinsic and extrinsic to, for instance, the websites, as well as the scene's flows. These attributes are also relevant to cultural mediators' use of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to achieve legitimacy and distinction in the scene and the field of advertising. By doing this, digital capital is acquired through the mediation of cultural flows using digital technologies. It then takes a material form, as objectifications in digital artefacts (e.g. websites, Facebook profiles, Twitter accounts), but also operates as 'symbolic capital' in the form of social recognition of the individuals who possess such capital in a particular field. Knowledge of the digital world and the circulation of

technical and cultural flows are markers of distinction for such individuals. As a form of capital, the symbolic form can also be converted into economic capital through practices where the use and exchange of digital technologies and cultural flows are involved and mediated, even though those processes of conversion are not always the final goal for individuals who possess symbolic capital.

Bourdieu's conceptualisation of different forms of capital is complemented and reoriented towards being a useful tool kit to analyse other contexts such as youth culture. Drawing on Bourdieu, Thornton (1995) proposes the concept of 'subcultural capital' as a form of capital constituted by 'hipness', which can be represented as being up-to-date with the latest trends, for instance, regarding indie music, in the same way as it is related to the latest digital technologies. Even though Thornton's conceptualisation was oriented to a particular case study (club cultures in the context of dance music), it makes sense with the data collected during fieldwork presented in this thesis. Subcultural capital can be objectified or embodied (Thornton, 1995: 11), like 'digital capital'. It can take a material form as 'websites' where cultural classifications and distinctions are put into circulation. It can also be embodied through discourses about cultural classifications, as well as related to digital technologies in the practices of cultural mediators. But most importantly, as Thornton states, subcultural capital differs from Bourdieu's cultural capital in the media's dual role as a resource for the former, but also as a source for its circulation. For Thornton, it is impossible to understand the distinctions of youth culture 'without some systematic investigation of their media consumption' (1995: 13). In fact, subcultural capital differs from 'digital capital', particularly because the former relies on traditional media sources (e.g. magazines, radio, or television programmes). By contrast, 'digital capital' is produced and reproduced by using digital tools and having access to the online circulation of cultural flows – discourses, information, images, and goods - available on the Internet. In the same way, 'digital capital' is produced and exchanged when cultural mediators' subcultural capital, in the form of being 'hip' and up-to-date regarding music and technological trends, is objectified by using digital technologies, producing a field where those distinctions are valorised by people within it or beyond it. Hence it can be exchanged and converted into economic capital. It is in that conversion that digital technologies take a central role. Digital technologies are devices through which cultural mediators' subcultural capital is visible in the form of digital capital, not only as markers of distinction, but also as a source of knowledge to make cultural distinctions. They are constitutive of the field as a technological space that

objectifies distinctions around Santiago's indie music scene, as well as global music scenes and other global trends (e.g. fashion, consumption, digital technologies), in the same way as it includes flows from other fields like advertising (e.g. brands that are part of the sites' content).

However, moving away from Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital, digital capital involves practices and experiences with those technologies as part of material connections and associations between actors and objects that are stabilised. From a Latourian perspective, cultural mediators' digital capital operates as a set of relations that can be traced in different networks, meaning that those networks of connections are part of its existence. It is not simply a mere marker of distinction in Bourdieu's sense of the term: it is the result of material and social connections that are assembled. The focus is on the quality of the associations and how they help the production, circulation and exchange of meanings. For that reason, digital capital cannot be understood from a functionalist perspective as a linear system of inputs and outputs, causes and effects. It does not work as a function of individual 'knowledge of the digital' or an individual's level of 'cultural capital', both of which can be considered mutually interdependent, and, of course, central to its accumulation. By contrast, digital capital is an assemblage of different mediations of capital and associations between actors, practices, discourses, and objects. Digital capital can be summarised in the question, 'what are the connections and associations between technical knowledge, cultural flows, and social positions, as well as conversions of capital, behind someone who is using Twitter, Facebook or making a website about a music scene?'

Drawing on Bourdieu, individual knowledge about using social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter makes a difference in the context of Santiago's indie music scene as a field of cultural production. These people emerge as specialised music fans, a particular group of consumers who distinguish themselves in the field as promoters of gigs, music bands, and 'being technological' fans before their audiences. Thus they are continually attracting the attention of actors from other fields (e.g. marketing agencies). However, within the scene as a field, actors' 'digital capital' is not recognised in the same way as in the field of advertising, where marketing agencies are interested in relating to them in order to increase the circulation of their products and brands amongst audiences. This means that, in different fields, actors' digital capital is recognised and negotiated in varied forms that are central for their positionality

within fields. Those negotiations are issues related to individual experiences in the acquisition and exchange of their 'digital capital' that are ignored by Bourdieu's conceptualisation.

In this sense, experiences and practices with objects, particularly ICTs, is relevant for the acquisition of digital capital by individuals. It is in this dimension that Latour's work (2005) becomes relevant, regarding actors' experiences with these artefacts as the result of connections and relations between different types of agencies. Here, digital capital is the result of connections between individuals and objects, as well as different exchanges that maintain a circuit of connection and association between agents in order to generate that capital. That can be translated as the associations between research participants and other actors, people from music record labels, musicians, marketing executives, audiences, and objects such as social networking sites. In this sense, the concept is based on an ethnographic approach and observation of individual practices of meaning-making and circulation. For instance, what are the associations behind actors' posts on Facebook or their tweets about certain brands or music bands? Those tweets and Facebook posts are the result of individual experiences and associations with other actors and objects as part of a network of exchanges of different resources (e.g. information, capital and cultural flows) that are performed at various times. Similarly, individuals' digital capital, from a Latourian perspective, also helps us to understand the role that non-human agencies have regarding individual practices, which are also related to the construction of such capital. Websites' statistics and metrics (e.g. number of visits, number of posts, socio-economic information concerning website audiences) have a role in the movements of actors across different fields as part of their practices. A good example of this is when individuals analyse their practices and the relations involved in them, based on and having in mind the consequences of the metrics of their websites. In a similar way, website metrics are also central to individuals' capacity and confidence to influence other fields such as advertising. They are scripts that transfer meanings, as well as being distorted through different journeys between fields and networks. Following Moor (2012), metrics as a type of non-human agency help to structure different connections of mediators with, for instance, the content they present on the websites. They are a form of self-presentation when website creators interact with marketing agents, as well as validating their work before their audiences. For instance, it is common for actors to record in their Twitter biographies the number of visits and posts their sites have.

As part of the processes of maintenance related to the websites - for instance, content uploading and dissemination through different platforms like Facebook or Twitter - the sites operate as devices that concentrate flows of information. In the same way, from another perspective, they operate as hubs where the local music scene is materialised and assembled, particularly through information about gigs, the circulation of music and videos of different bands. Actors — record labels, musicians, and fans — congregate around the websites, thus the websites accumulate and put into circulation the scene's flows in the form of music, information, classifications about the bands, music, and the sites' contents. Empirically, there is no difference between a website as a space where the scene's actors congregate, and the localities where gigs or music events happen. In the same way, musicians, audiences, record label executives, and marketing agents, as well as mediators, have access to cultural flows and social exchanges. These associations behind the existence of the website represent a relevant dimension of mediators' digital capital. Processes around the making and maintenance of the websites are part of the symbolic capital that is converted by mediators into something exchangeable in different fields. By contrast with Bourdieu's notion of the website and the knowledge related to its creation and maintenance as a form of distinction, from a Latourian perspective the website is an object where individual digital capital takes a material form as a result of a series of associations between actors and objects such as digital technologies and/or different types of metrics regarding the websites or social networking accounts on Facebook or Twitter. Thus, digital capital is assembled as the result of the relations and associations between different types of agencies, as well as mediators' practices of following different types of flows, particularly meanings, aggregating them, and being able to put them into circulation.

Bourdieu's and Latour's views complement each other in regard to the fieldwork. As a form of distinction, the websites allow individuals to achieve relevant positions in different fields, while being associated with particular lifestyles that are attractive for marketing agents in order to be part of that network of flows of meaning where mediators are involved. However, Bourdieu ignores the process behind the creation and maintenance of the websites where that network of meanings is created, something central to Latour's theory. Thus, the associations between different types of agencies and how they are objectified in the website is relevant. Similarly, complemented with other theoretical approaches, such as practice theory which was presented in the last sections, it is possible to understand processes and experiences of cultural

mediation as regularities in terms of practices, as well as assemblages between actors, practices, objects, and meanings that are mutually interdependent.

Considering the role that non-human agencies have in the production, circulation, and exchange of digital capital as a form of mediation, this notion also expands Bourdieu's cultural intermediaries as particular forms of labour. In the field of Santiago's indie music scene, 'digital capital' operates as a form of capital, exchangeable and valorised by different actors. Individuals with that type of capital as the result of their relation with ICTs are distinguished actors in different fields; such knowledge is valorised, convertible, and exchangeable. However, digital capital is also the result of a series of practices and associations between human and non-human agencies that shape the way actors establish different positions within the scene, as well as in other fields such as advertising. In this sense, individuals with certain levels of digital capital, such as the group of research participants, construct it not only as a result of inherited dispositions, but as a result of their involvement in different types of associations (with objects such as ICTs, actors in different fields, and practices as routines through which they make sense and develop their levels of knowledge and activity).

In that context, the notion of digital capital helps to avoid the dichotomy between Bourdieu's concept of cultural intermediaries and Latour's definition of mediators. Drawing on Bourdieu, digital capital is a resource for the legitimation of cultural intermediaries' activities and their different forms of cultural capital within fields, bringing together the realm of production and consumption regarding the scene's flows. By making websites about Santiago's indie music scene and being proficient in the use of digital technologies, as cultural intermediaries, actors legitimate certain forms of taste within fields. In the same way, they display a set of dispositions that structures their ways of doing and moving within different fields, legitimating their practices in the accumulation and exchange of digital capital. The idea of cultural mediators such as actors, whose forms of labour are shaped by different types of non-human agencies, includes the making of digital capital; its exchange in different fields is the result of assemblages between actors, practices, objects, and meanings. Similarly, cultural mediators are the result of different associations between actors (human and non-human) that can be treated empirically as mediators of different types of flows, shaping its outcomes, and giving them different trajectories.

Chapter 4

Cultural Mediators and Digital Technologies

This chapter examines how digital technologies, particularly information and communication technologies (ICTs) are artefacts that help cultural mediators to be situated in networks of information and cultural flows. Also, it explores how music websites operate as spaces through which cultural mediators objectify their positions within those networks, as well as representations of the scene and its flows. On the one hand, they do this through a set of practices, e.g. establishing connections with others and with flows through the appropriation of different digital devices. On the other hand, it also happens through the making and maintenance of the websites and profiles in social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. These practices are either ‘dispersed’ and ‘integrative’ (Schatzki, 2001; 2002). They are the result of different types of knowledge, objects, emotions, and activities that are stabilised and assembled on websites and social networking profiles. In the same way, these practices allow cultural mediators to establish relations and associations with other actors, configuring a social order through which they construct networks of audiences, helping them to produce and accumulate their digital capital, which is then converted and exchanged in different fields of cultural production. In this chapter I trace empirically how, through their practices in the making of websites, cultural mediators configure and display a ‘digital habitus’ – a disposition that structures ways of being and doing towards digital objects within fields – through the exchange of information in practice with ICTs (Bourdieu, 1990; Entwistle, 2009) in order to accumulate and display their digital capital. In the making of music websites ICTs are mediated and assembled through a set of practices and discourses. Thereby cultural mediators become part of networks where flows circulate, positioning themselves within them, in the same way as they represent those positions and their involvement on their websites and in other technological spaces such as Facebook or Twitter profiles.

The argument presented here is that digital technologies, particularly the Internet and social networking sites, help individuals to configure and situate themselves in networks where cultural flows circulate. It is through their involvement within those networks that individuals begin to develop their digital capital as cultural and technical expertise. Thus, by a set of

practices comprising maintaining their websites, developing them, and situating themselves within networks of circulation, individuals convert those forms of mediation into economic capital and positionality in various networks. Websites are also artefacts through which the field is produced: the representation of the scene and the accumulation of digital capital in the form of clicks, downloads, and metrics shape individual projects. This chapter describes the process of professionalisation that affects cultural mediators' practices with digital technologies, in particular as a result of their involvement with technologies, actors from other fields, and networks where cultural flows circulate. In this sense, this chapter explores how the concept of digital capital as a form of mediation of ICTs and cultural flows operates not only as the skills to combine material arrangements for the production and circulation of meanings. Cultural mediators also deploy a set of strategies as a result of those processes to occupy certain positions within fields and through the technological space they create by building websites.

Websites simultaneously constitute the field, and represent it. As Riles (2001) suggests they are the 'inside-out' of cultural mediators' practices in the making of websites. That means websites are the paths of cultural mediators that trace their relations with cultural flows, objects, and actors from other fields; in addition they are representations of those relations that are understood as 'the scene'. Websites are a space for action and interaction for cultural mediators in association with other actors (e.g. musicians, audiences, people from the field of advertising), as well as information, cultural flows and ICTs. Yet websites are also representations of those practices in the form of cultural distinctions around flows, as well as different uses and strategies around ICTs. In that context, cultural mediators can accumulate digital capital not only as skills, but also in terms of how they manage them to occupy certain positions within a technological space, as well as negotiating with actors from different fields.

The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section I describe individuals' relations with different ICTs and then the everyday practice of making music websites. The focus is on four types of practices regarding the making of websites: design, choosing the site's domain, redesigning the website, and processes of updating. In the making of websites cultural mediators situate themselves within networks where flows circulate, but they also objectify their positions within those networks, as well as representations of the scene and its flows. The second section explores how cultural mediators become 'experts' at using digital technologies in particular fields of cultural production. Thus their digital capital begins to be converted and

exchanged in the form of positionality, recognition, and economic capital in particular fields, especially the field of advertising. This section also examines how tensions emerge as the result of the professionalisation of individuals' relations with technologies and networks. Then the third section describes how Twitter and Facebook operate as platforms through which cultural mediators' digital capital is shown, and at the same time as spaces where digital capital is produced and accumulated. Both platforms allow cultural mediators to accumulate audiences by sharing content and information related to their websites, as well as curating informational flows. In addition, by accumulating audiences, both platforms are central devices for actors from the field of advertising, through which cultural mediators can promote their brands and products.

The fourth section explores to what extent the role of non-human agencies, particularly website metrics, affects actors' relations with digital technologies and their everyday practices as cultural mediators. Metrics and measurement techniques around the sites' performance shape the practices of cultural mediators. They are devices through which collective action can be traceable (Latour, 2011), and are also a by-product of connections and interactions accumulated by digital technologies (e.g. Google Analytics) (Savage, et. al 2010). On the one hand, those metrics are devices and representations of cultural mediators' digital capital as the ability to manage content and accumulate audiences that help individuals make connections to other fields (e.g. the field of advertising). Metrics are measures that help cultural mediators to establish alliances with brand consultants, to show their cultural expertise and digital skills in the form of digital capital. On the other hand, the focus on those metrics reflects the evolution around individual aims and strategies to reproduce and exchange their digital capital as part of a process of professionalisation. Measuring audiences represents a strategy to accumulate digital capital and to convert it in order to obtain prestige, recognition, and economic capital within different fields. The chapter ends with a conclusion explaining how cultural mediators construct networks of audiences, downloads, clicks, and Facebook or Twitter 'likes', assembling the cultural and technological expertise that is visible on their websites and social networking sites, but also through website's metrics. Through their appropriation of technologies, cultural mediators create the field at the same time as they produce and accumulate digital capital as forms of mediations of digital technologies that are valorised, exchanged, and converted. Thus, cultural mediators' digital capital is then represented on websites.

1. Creating their own 'space': digital technologies as tools to connect with others and spaces of freedom

The creation and maintenance of music websites by cultural mediators are the result of a historical relation with different ICTs, particularly computers and the internet. A key development was access to internet connections through personal computers by the end of 1990s, particularly the sense of connection and the possibility of being related to different flows of information. Similarly, it is common amongst research participants to define their relation with ICTs as self-taught and personal, that is, without intermediaries. That is the case of Camilo, the creator of the website 'Disorder'. As a secondary school student he became familiarised with the Internet at the age of 15. The main property of that technology is the possibility to talk to other people in 'chat rooms', something that he still considers to be the fundamental characteristic of the internet. Similarly, Alejandro, (the creator of the website Paniko), was a frequent user of ICQ and IRC, two of the most popular instant messaging services named by research participants. For him, the possibility of interacting with others is the key feature and the 'secret' of the internet.

A. - How was your relation with the internet? When you started using it?

Alejandro: "It was completely self-taught. At that time there were no Chilean websites, there was nothing. The only thing we had was ICQ, IRC, and Latin Mail. At that time I used to develop web pages for friends like pre-historic 'fotolog'¹² very rustic, it was not possible to write comments, basic HTML¹³, and then I started learning basic notions of PHP¹⁴ and I started seeing that it was possible to write comments on the sites. Thus there was interactivity within the internet and people started looking for each other online, connecting to others".

For research participants, the relation with the internet was developed continually, spending considerable amounts of time engaging with different websites and programs in order

¹² According to Wikipedia, Fotolog is a "a Web 2.0-based shared photoblog website. With over 30 million registered users, it is one of the oldest and largest sites for sharing pictures through online photo diaries or photo blogs". In Chile before Facebook it was very popular amongst youth. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fotolog>

¹³ HTML is the acronym of "HyperText Markup Language. Also, "it is the main markup language for creating web pages and other information that can be displayed in a web browser". Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTML>

¹⁴ PHP is the acronym for 'Personal Home Page'. Created in 1995, it is "a server-side scripting language designed for web development but also used as a general-purpose programming language". Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PHP>

to gain skills programming and designing their own websites. This learning process is self-taught in practice, which means reviewing websites and getting involved with programming language, sometimes reading information about it, but most importantly, by copying the codes of websites in order to learn the structure and programming language. It operates as a form of leisure, which is important regarding the professionalisation of practices that will be described in the following sections. For instance, Camilo and Alejandro told me that seeing different websites and spending time online improved their HTML programming abilities. In their cases, there were no “warm experts” (Bakardjieva, 2005) showing them how to use the computer or programming tools. This meant exploring the structure and dynamics of websites by using them. By contrast, Felipe links that learning process with his family context at home, but not in such a way that someone told him how to use those technologies. His father was always involved with the latest technologies, particularly computers, and then had access to an internet connection. In this sense, the context was the opportunity to have access to a computer and leisure time to experiment with that machine. This meant that, for Felipe, the process of getting involved with digital technologies was also self-taught. Those experiences of surfing online and having access to a technological space where it is possible to obtain knowledge of deconstructing the mechanics of existing websites at that time was vital for them. Similarly, it is the first stage for individuals to begin accumulating digital capital in the form of knowledge, which circulates and is embedded in a technological space that they are also creating by the time they develop their own websites.

Thus, the individual learning process was also the main motivation to create websites. At that stage, time and access to the internet was the only investment needed to have websites up and running. The idea of having their own space to share music and comments meant spending many hours online. In the case of Camilo, at the beginning his website was a magazine in basic HTML published once a month or over two months. In the case of Felipe, he used to spend time surfing online, collecting links and music, as well as information about his favourite music bands. He has a close relation with technology because his father gets the newest computers and television sets. He tried to create a website about the music band Oasis in Geocities¹⁵. However, it was difficult to keep updated due to his lack of formal knowledge of

¹⁵ Geocities is a web hosting service created in 1999 through which web users can store websites.

programming. In 2000 the online platform Blogger¹⁶ appeared, facilitating the process of having a website, making it easy to maintain and keep updated with information. In that context, the existence of a digital technology that facilitated having a 'space' to share his musical interests and links with others inspired Felipe to have his own website. He spent much time researching in order to have his space with information and music about the blogs he used to read. Thus his motivation was also associated with a sense of freedom and creativity. For Felipe, leisure time is intertwined with a sense of freedom and the possibility of being creative. In that context, the website operates as a 'white page' or a 'canvas' where he can express his creativity and freedom. It takes a material form in order to collect and organise in his own space the information and music from bands he used to apprehend a dispersed way.

Felipe: I used to spend the day online connected to the internet. People used to say that leisure helps to make things happen. I always think if my freedom and leisure time is restricted my creativity is threatened. In that context, one day I was staying in Argentina for a weekend with my girlfriend at that time. I was alone in front of the computer and I started learning how to use the 'blogspot' platform in order to upload my links, music, and music concert DVDs.

The connection between the emergence of a user-friendly technology like Blogger and individuals' motivation to have their own websites is the key stage for the practice of making the website. In this sense, the decision to create and have their 'own' website is the result of strategies and learning processes through which individuals understand the mechanics of programming, as well as different sources of information related to their interests. Individuals always translate those strategies by spending lots of time in front of the computer reading, observing websites, collecting links, and developing their own 'spaces'. On the one hand, the more time they spend online, the more resources they have to apply in the creation of their websites. Those resources are defined as types of design that can be developed on the website, as well as the kind of information and flows they wish to share with others. On the other hand, at the time they started creating their websites, individuals become more engaged developing digital skills (e.g. programming, designing, and having information to share), in order to apply

¹⁶ Blogger is a web service for publishing blogs. According to Wikipedia, a blog is "a discussion or informational site published on the World Wide Web and consisting of discrete entries ('posts' typically displayed in reverse chronological order (the most recent post appears first)). Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>

them to the creation of their own artefact. In that context, as Camilo explains, those skills and tools help him to play a role in networks of circulation:

Camilo: "Digital technologies in my case are tools that help you to be connected with others and feel part of something".

1.1 The practice of making the websites: situating in a network of circulating flows

Websites represent key moments in cultural mediators' trajectories. They offer the possibility for website creators to have their own space and to share information with others. Regarding the website as 'space' for informants means that it works as a place where they can materialise, in an object that belongs to them, their taste classifications in the form of links, pictures, and videos about their favourite music bands. As entities created by cultural mediators their websites move from being seen as property, to being objectifications, and then to becoming external entities with lives of their own. For instance, as property, cultural mediators see a website as an object over which they have power to decide its destiny (e.g. selling to audiences or advertising agents), but also something they can take off, deciding what is best for the life of that entity, based on aesthetic decisions (e.g. in terms of its design, the type of bands they include). Thus as objectifications the sites are entities through which cultural mediators materialise their representations and categorisations of the scene's flows. As entities with lives of their own, the websites engender a sense of responsibility in cultural mediators, who feel they always have to keep the websites alive with information, because they exist independently of their creators. They are the result of relations between audiences, their creators, the representations of the scene, and commercial relations with advertising agents, amongst others.

The websites also represent a sense of freedom that takes a material form, that is, the website over which the creators have a sense of possession or ownership. That means the possibility of a trial and error process, designing and re-designing the website, updating practices, adding more features and applications. That sense of freedom is objectified on the website as part of the cultural mediator's identity. On the other hand, that space enables individuals to be part of the circulation of different types of flow (e.g. informational, technological, and musical) that helps to situate them in varied fields of cultural production

such as the music scene, as well as the field of advertising, the local music scene, and global music websites.

The websites are constructed and updated by their creators through different practices. These practices can be organised into two categories: 1) the site's design, and 2) the updating routines. The design of the website is an issue that is constantly explained by research participants in different conversations. It involves the organisation of technical knowledge to set out the contents and taste classifications that are objectified in a particular design. This includes searching for other websites to obtain inspiration and to imagine the final result, the relation with technologies that are able and 'new' so as to be included on their own sites, the acquisition of the web URL through which people will access the site, and the constant process of trial and error to inspire confidence in the site. The updating routines of the websites involve practices through which individuals have access to different flows of information, such as the internet, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

In this section I explain how cultural mediators' practices of designing and updating websites are also constitutive and performative of their digital capital. Practices managing different types of content are put into circulation on these websites, but also collected from various online sources, are central in the making of the fields where they try to achieve positions of recognition. Through those practices, fields are constructed in the form of a technological space through which individuals put into circulation flows of information and taste classification regarding music scenes and other issues in the same way as they are represented online. Cultural mediators also establish networks of connection and circulation facilitated by a set of digital technologies in the making of their websites, as well as others such as Facebook and Twitter. Those networks are constituted by the different connections they establish with the audiences that visit their websites or follow their profiles on Facebook and Twitter, as well as people from different fields (for instance, advertising agencies). Through practices of designing, re-designing, and updating the websites, individuals use the space they are constantly creating to show their digital capital as cultural and technical expertise around cultural flows, but also as the result of the mediation practices of particular technologies.

Designing the websites

After taking the decision to create their own space, the design of the website becomes the first priority of my informants. This is the result of time spent surfing online looking for attractive designs. This also enables individuals to choose which structure the website will have in terms of how the content will be presented. By doing this, they are mediating their aspirations and expectations to put into circulation different types of flows. The design of the site is associated with individuals' technical knowledge of programming using different codes (e.g. html) and software like Photoshop. This depends on the year the sites were created. For instance, Super 45 is one of the oldest sites in Chile and is also included in this study. Meanwhile, for the newest sites the existence of platforms such as WordPress facilitated the process, especially as regards updating the website in less time. For informants, the evolution of the websites in order to make more and more content available for their audiences is related to the existence of new platforms that facilitate these processes. The experience of Max, the creator of Poustá, illustrates this process. To find inspiration for designs, he used to check Web Creme¹⁷, a site where it is possible to find suitable sites. Similarly, the site's design was affected by the emergence of new applications, including those applications that were used by the site's audience.

Max: "For instance, in 2010 our design was basic, we used to have a 'widget' of Flickr because at that time it was fashionable and people can upload pictures. Before that, our first design gave lots of relevance to RSS and people's feedback through e-mail. At that time it was common for people to use the 'feed' to read information from different sources. In 2013 we included a space where it is possible to see how many people follow us on Facebook as fans. Now everybody uses Facebook. In 2011 our design was oriented to give a good experience to our audiences on their Ipad or Iphone. However, the problem with that design was big because with that change we had lost lots of posts".

In the case of Juan Pablo, his site, 192, began as a blog where he used the program 'Dreamweaver' to create the sections and the structure. He remember that the first version of the website (in 2006) included only a picture that he took of a shopping mall in Santiago where he would frequently buy music albums, music bands' stickers. Then in 2007 he and a friend

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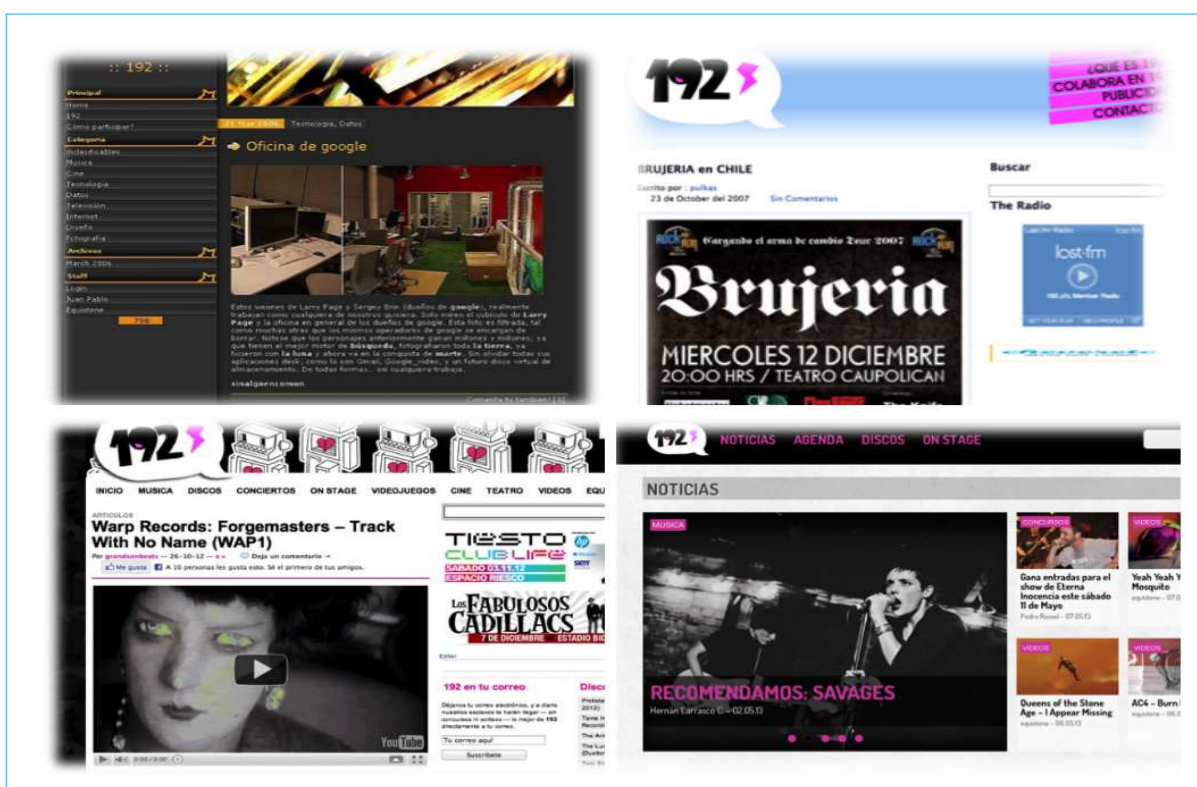
www.webcreme.com

created the logo of the website, which was an important stage in the evolution of the website. In terms of the structure of the website, at the beginning it was organised as a blog, which means displaying the content in one large column. Now they have changed the structure, organising the site in different sections including one where their audience can collaborate with information about gigs (see the evolution of the site's design in figure 1). However, for Juan Pablo the blog structure is better compared to the new design of the website because it gives you a sense of the chronology of the site's content.

The practice of designing the website is taken seriously by informants, and involves defining how, when, and what the site will include in terms of its structure and the information presented on it. This is always related to the technologies and applications that are available at different stages of the site's existence. For instance, some of the websites were created in the middle of the 2000s, with the basic applications that were available at that time. By looking at the different designs of their websites, respectively, research informants explain that the evolution of the site design occurs in parallel with the availability of applications. At the beginning, it was common for them to include newsletter subscriptions for their audiences in order to send them the latest news and content available on the sites. Thus, with the emergence of new applications like Flickr –that enable individuals to upload, store, and share their pictures, or Last.fm, which enables individuals to listen to music online, and increasing use by their audiences, a 'box' with the application within the site were included. The same happened with other applications like Facebook or Twitter which began to be part of the site's design and structure (see Figure 1). The complexity of the site's structure goes hand-in-hand with the development and emergence of new digital applications. In this sense, that complexity also assists individuals to improve their positionality within networks of circulation of content and flows online, to differentiate with other websites that are doing the same thing, but most importantly as a signifier of sophistication regarding their relation with digital technologies. For instance, remembering the processes related to the design of the site, Alejandro and Alvaro consider that one of the most important aspects of their site is the originality of its design. It is the result of a process of searching for ideas from other sites, but also of creating something new. For them it is not the same as having a design ('plantilla') provided by Blogger or WordPress, rather than creating their own design.

In this sense, collecting ideas from other websites, particularly the ones that are part of the global music scene, is part of the individual's learning process. Bakardjieva's concept of "warm experts" (2005), that is, actors who help inexperienced people to connect to network technologies, takes a non-human form that are followed by individuals as references in terms of their design, technical structure, as well as content and information. The best example is the case of Pitchfork (pitchfork.com) which is a permanent reference in terms of its structure with which to present content, as well as its design component, but most importantly the technological applications that enables the presentation of the music they like (e.g. in the form of YouTube videos, using the application SoundCloud that reproduces audio files, or as Pitchfork, having its own music player enabling visitors to move between different web pages while listening to music). For instance, Nicolas' aspiration is the idea of having an application to reproduce music like Pitchfork for his webpage NNM.cl.

Figure 12. Evolution of the website 192 (from left to right)



Source: prepared by the author on the basis of fieldwork material.

Choosing the site's domain

Website domains help individuals to construct cultural scales (Slater and Ariztia, 2010) within local and global locations. Domains symbolically help individuals to situate themselves as part of national and global networks of flow. In a sense, having a domain inserts the websites, as representations of the music scene, in wider networks of global music scenes. Informants establish that there is a transition from having a web address that is part of a platform (e.g. blogspot) so as to get the address with the internet country code (in this case, .cl¹⁸ for Chile). However, for some informants there is still a difference between having a web address finished with the domain '.com'¹⁹, which is considered important in order to reach global audiences and beyond the boundaries of Chile. Regarding the acquisition of the web address, informants told different stories. For instance, Alejandro, Nicolas, Juan Pablo, and Felipe began their sites with the web address provided by the platform 'blogspot'. This means that to access the website it was necessary to write the name of the site and the domain 'blogspot.com' (e.g. paniko.blogspot.com, 192.blogspot.com). It is common for informants to understand the evolution of their sites according to the web address they have. For Alejandro, the domain '.cl' was a birthday present from his parents, an important evolution for his site enabling the possibility of reaching wider audiences within the country. For Felipe, buying the '.cl' domain was a crucial point related to the continuity of his project. Having a blog rather than a website with its own domain or web address made it possible to keep the contents alive, without the possibility of being discharged by blogspot in this case (considering Felipe was uploading music albums without permission). Also, when advertising agencies in receiving revenue from the site, it became 'necessary to obtain the .cl' domain.

While doing my fieldwork one day, I checked my e-mail and Felipe began talking on Gchat (Google online chat). He sent me a link with the new design of POTQ radio, an online radio station which is part of the main website POTQ. He was very enthusiastic about the new design, but particularly because it had the domain '.net', which is, according to Wikipedia,

¹⁸ According to Wikipedia, the domain '.cl' is "is the Internet country code top-level domain (ccTLD) for Chile (including Easter Island)". That domain can be registered and paid for at the website www.nic.cl which is administered by the University of Chile. Retrieved from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.cl>

¹⁹ According to Wikipedia, the domain '.com' is "a top-level domain (TLD) in the Domain Name System of the internet. Its name is derived from the word 'commercial', indicating its original intended purpose for domains registered by commercial organizations". Retrieved from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.com>

derived from the word 'network'. It makes sense that Felipe uses that domain, considering that the radio is part of the POTQ network which also has an online television channel. Felipe developed an interesting issue related to the domain of his radio in our online conversation. The new domain offers him the possibility of promoting his radio globally:

Felipe: "We got the domain .net"

A. - What does it mean?

Felipe: "You can think in global terms, not only in Chile"

A. - More people see you with the domain .net?

Felipe: "Yes, it is international. It is the same with a .com domain".

A. - Why did you decide to change the design of the radio's website?

Felipe: "Because the content was not very well organised, but also it wasn't cool".

Felipe's quote reflects the particularities of cultural mediators' practices within the Chilean context. Like him, it is common for research participants referring to their sites' domain specifically as a form of distinction between them and the rest of the national sites (e.g. "my site has the domain .com and the rest have the domain .cl"), but also as a device to construct and perform 'cultural scales' (Slater and Ariztia, 2010), connecting centres and peripheries of cultural production through digital technologies. Research participants' discourses around the site's domain are representations, but also a form through which they perform a sense of connection at a local and a global level, independently of the content of their websites, when most of them reproduce information from global music scenes (Garland, 2008). Commonly, research participants establish a hierarchy related to their site's domains. For instance, at a lower level of importance in terms of recognition and connectivity domains to create websites provided by free platforms (e.g. Blogger which domain is. BlogSpot), are seen by informants as not very sophisticated, considering that almost all of them began their sites with those domains. Then, the domain '.cl' is located at an upper level according to their classifications. That domain situates them and their sites in a national context, through which they can reach national audiences. However, as Cristian (Super 45) explains, the domain '.net' or '.com' are forms of positionality within global cultural flows, as are those that are produced in the international indie music scenes His site works under two domains 'Super45.net and Super45.cl':

Cristian: "When we decided to have 'continental nature', the domain .cl makes us feel not very comfortable".

A. - 'Continental nature'?

Cristian: "Yes, this denotes being international... internationalization. Within the team of Super 45, there were two positions: one group interested in having the .cl domain, the other one likes the .net domain. The domain .cl obliged us to be recognised as a site made in Chile, but it is more singular. However, the movement of indie music is global; almost all music websites around the world have international domains... Pitchfork, Playground, Inrocks".

New design and promoting the new site

The promotion of the site's design is a key stage in the evolution of cultural mediators' practices. It enables them to share with their audiences new improvements in order to give them a better experience on the website. Similarly, it reflects the ability of cultural mediators to actualise their knowledge about the latest technologies; in the same way it is an opportunity to reaffirm their motivations and aims through the sites. In this sense, the practices of redesigning the websites and its promotion are opportunities for cultural mediators to show their high levels of digital capital within the field, and these are also actions oriented to obtain recognition by others within the field.

Informants conceive new designs as an opportunity to put energy into the website, as well as shaping their relation with audiences. It is a sense of engagement with themselves, but also with their audiences and followers. In the same way, redesigned sites include new applications, space distribution for advertising, but most importantly, as will be explained in the next section of this chapter, improving the site's design is oriented to converting audience visits into 'clicks' and (Facebook) 'likes'. In practical terms, the promotion of the new design for each website includes writing a post on the site describing the new features, which also operates as an invitation for audiences to continue visiting the site. During the fieldwork, all websites changed their designs. Sharing the new design with their audiences has a double meaning for cultural mediators. On the one hand, it operates as a motivation for them to continue doing what they do on the sites. On the other hand, including new features is strategic in order to gain more audiences, but most importantly, it situates them in the field as having high digital capital. New design are opportunities to show cultural mediators' abilities with new applications and technologies, for instance, connecting users' Facebook account with the sites content in order

to make comments on the site's post. Also, this is a strategy to engage audiences, and it operates as cultural mediators' abilities to get related to new applications and technologies. They explain or give orientation on their sites about how to use the new features. Thus, it is a form of distinction in the field to show their proficiency managing and incorporating to their practices the latest digital technologies in the making of their websites.

When Nicolas' site NNM changed its design, he wrote a post promoting the reasons behind that decision. For him it was necessary after having had the same design for three or four years, an 'eternity' for a website. However, the new design also represents an important stage since they began to have a 'blogspot', taking their 'responsibility as technological experts seriously'. In the post he wrote, Nicolas described the new sections of the site as a guide to explain how to use it. Similarly, Juan Pablo presented the new design of 192 with a post explaining the new features to his audience. Changing the design of the website took him a full night working with his friend Cristian. He explained on the website the new applications and sections, particularly the possibility of watching videos on the site, without leaving 192.cl. Juan Pablo highlights how fast the new design works on different devices, such as an iPad or mobile phones, but most important is the integration of new software to organise and upload audience comments. These practices are strategies through which cultural mediators search for positionality within a field, performing and showing their high levels of digital capital. Another strategy commonly developed by cultural mediators is the promotion of their site's newest design by organising dance parties. As figure 2 shows, Nicolas promotes the new design of his site on Facebook, but he also shows the new alliances and connections he has established with other partners (e.g. music stores). These parties are also a strategy to collect money for the site's maintenance (design, hosting, paying collaborators).

Nicolas: "Today with my friends at NNM.cl, we are going to celebrate all these years of surviving, with all their ups and downs. We are in a very good moment, with new design, new alliances with partners like Alter and Needle. For that reason, we are bringing a couple of DJ's we like. We want everybody to celebrate with us, but also we want to continue doing this for many more years. For that reason, your attendance is important and dancing and enjoying this very reasonably priced party. Thanks!"

Figure 13. Nicolas' Facebook profile



Source: Collected from fieldwork material

The practices of updating the website: discourses, strategies, and routines

Updating the websites is a key stage for cultural mediators in the production of the field, which is objectified taking a material form as a website, in the same way that individual practices help them to search for positions of recognition within the field they are creating. Updating the websites is the result of different practices related to content management. But most importantly, they represent a sense of distinction within the field cultural mediators are constructing, the one constituted by their representations of music scenes and global trends using a set of digital skills and taste classifications, and showing their levels of digital capital as markers of distinction. This is translated into the frequency of updating and managing large amounts of data. All these practices reflect individuals' technical capacity to mediate technologies, as well as flows of information.

At the first level, cultural mediators shared similar motivations for creating their own sites, just as they shared similar discourses, strategies, and routines as practices through which they produced and maintained them. This is reflected in the way they related to digital technologies in the making of the sites. However, at a second level, considering the similarities between their production practices, it is interesting to differentiate their activities and the

particular goals that individuals consider relevant for the existence of their websites, especially in terms of the sites' design style and the different music styles they decided to include. For instance, some websites are more oriented towards 'indie rock' music; meanwhile others are oriented to mainstream rock. But at a third level, individual practices related to the sites' maintenance, through objectifications of taste classifications, differ with regard to their strategies to gain audiences in the form of 'clicks' and 'likes' on the sites' content. With their similarities and differences, these practices are the result of individual aspirations, shared knowledge about the use of digital technologies, and the beginning of their accumulation of digital capital. Describing these practices enables us to understand how individuals, through their relation with digital technologies, start to situate themselves in networks of flows, as well as connecting through their sites as hubs for the interaction between human and non-human agencies.

During the interviews and observation, it is common for informants to talk about the routines they undertake to update the websites. These routines involve spending a considerable amount of time in front of the computer surfing on the web, searching for interesting news and information related to the sites' topics. There are no fixed strategies or rules related to the sites' everyday updating, even though they present new content daily. However, two patterns emerge through observation of the daily maintenance of the websites. The first is related to the production of content based on other websites at a global level. That content is related to music bands and published on websites –the most referenced website by informants - Pitchfork²⁰ –, the British magazine New Musical Express (NME), and the Spanish site Je Ne Sai Pop²¹. If a new album by an international band is announced on those sites, the information is immediately translated and reproduced by informants' websites. It is common to observe the same information from global bands on the websites. For instance, when the French electronic music duo Daft Punk released their new single, the song was immediately uploaded and commented upon on websites, as well as on the band's Twitter and Facebook accounts. The second pattern is about the constant dissemination of information about local gigs in different places in Santiago and other regions of the country. Every day each website uploads details about gigs and concerts that are happening in different parts of the country, mostly in Santiago. Cultural mediators constantly update the sites, something which is perceived to be 'essential' by actors.

²⁰

<http://pitchfork.com>

²¹

<http://jenesaispop.com>

Both continuities on their practices are vital in order to achieve a sense of being permanently 'up to date' regarding their topics of interest. In that context, digital technologies operate as a tool to facilitate access to those flows of information in the same way as they are tools to spread that information. In the latter case, digital technologies enable individuals to constantly be part of those flows, as well as being able to communicate those facts. But most importantly, updating the site represents individual capacity to differentiate themselves from other cultural mediators in the field they are creating. It represents being professional in the way they are involved and investing time on the site. As Juan Pablo explains:

Juan Pablo: "If a site is not updated in a week, it is dead. How can you have nothing to post in a week? What do you do, then? In that case, invest your time by doing something else".

Individual technical capacities to mediate technologies, as well as manage large amounts of data, are central elements in their levels of digital capital. They are always looking for new ideas and content from different websites in order to adapt them to the style of their sites. That means translating the content founded on other websites, especially global ones, - into the sites' written style and editorial line, but also producing their own content in the form of posts with interviews of musicians, music reviews of gigs and albums, as well as fashion trends. Observing informants' everyday practices updating the sites, it is common for them to talk about the information they have on their RSS²². Accumulating information is the most important way of finding ideas and inspirations for their sites. It also shows their ability to manage content and taste classifications. Before uploading contents onto their websites, cultural mediators spend considerable amounts of time collecting and organising information in the form of links and feeds. However, the practice of updating websites can be described as 'content management', a combination of frequent update with the organisation and administration of sources and feeds.

A good example of the practices involved in updating the websites, –and a way of differentiating themselves from other cultural mediators and their websites, is the description that Max gives, which in a way is shared by other informants. For him, there are no rules. However, with his friend Francisco they used to attempt to upload at least three posts on the

²² According to Wikipedia, RSS is "is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video in a standardized format. An RSS document (which is called a 'feed', 'web feed', or 'channel' includes full or summarized text, plus metadata such as publishing dates and authorship)". Retrieved from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS>

site daily. Then after long periods doing that, they decided to spend more time preparing posts. This is because they wish to differentiate themselves from other blogs and websites that are based on the same topics as Max's site (Pousta), but at the same time he is learning to understand the interests of their audience. As he explains:

Max: "After a couple of years writing posts on our site, we know our audience in a better way. All of the websites with similar 'onda' (style) have the same information. In our case we can't be leaders in men's fashion trends because in the U.S. there are websites that spend all the time doing that and they have all the access for doing it. We take that information, adapting it to Chile, with a slightly ironic stance, written according to Pousta's style. For instance, I always look at four blogs to see content. I read them and then start making connections, links. I see an article from France and then the same news from a Spanish site. Then I write in my head the post for my site. I always read my RSS, and then I send by e-mail the articles that I consider to be interesting. I spend hours doing that, especially on my iPad".

Independently of the daily routines necessary to produce content for their websites, individual uses of digital technologies are oriented to have access to networks of circulation of flows in the form of information and a sense of connection to other locations outside Chile. That is a shared practice by actors. By spending time surfing online, collecting articles and information in order to filter and convert it into posts for their sites, actors get involved in the circulation and exchange of flows where technologies are artefacts that help them become part of those processes. In fact, a common practice for informants, –as Max's quote explains, is consistently reading websites related to their interests, sometimes adapting those contents for their websites, sometimes reproducing them. However, it is in the act of being in front of the computer collecting links, sharing them through different devices (e.g. iPad, iPhone) and software (e.g. Gmail to their websites) that individuals situate themselves through those artefacts within networks where different flows circulate, particularly information. Max explains his ability to do 'content management' which is assembled by different actions in front of the computer, but most importantly having the technical ability to organise different amounts of content collected through the web. That is then transferred to the website with different frequency. For some cultural mediators, as Max explains, it is more about quantity than quality. However, Alejandro emphasises the importance of updating the website on a daily basis. On the one hand, it reflects professionalism. On the other hand, managing content and using the latest

technical platforms is a way of being on top of trends. The frequency of website's updating operates as a form of distinction in the field in a Bourdieusian sense. Similarly, it reflects cultural mediators' digital capital, participating in the circulation of flows and taste classifications by copying and pasting feeds, links, and different types of content. The dimension related to the speed of circulation is also a part of an individual's digital capital.

The practices of updating websites are the result of knowledge, which is accumulated and developed in relation to a set of digital technologies (e.g. the computer, design software, the internet). This knowledge is related to the question of how to create a website based on shared, dispersed practices and meanings around technologies (Schatzki, 2001). Similarly, as dispersed practices (Schatzki, 2002) cultural mediators' knowledge is brought together on the websites, taking a material form that is the result of individuals' projects, emotions, and aims. Cultural mediators' websites are the result of different types of knowledge, objects, emotions, and activities that are stabilised and accumulated on websites. In this sense, individuals' 'digital habitus' – as dispositions that structures ways of being and doing towards digital objects – is developed through the exchange of information in those networks and, in practice, with ICTs. Even though, the creation and maintenance of websites as shared practices by actors are also a form of shared competence (Shove, et. al, 2007), where an artefact is created through human action and a set of objects (e.g. computers, software, links). That competence is also the result of a network constituted by different combinations of objects and practices (e.g. conversations between actors about the contents of the sites, uses of digital technologies in order to produce the websites, and website design). Creating a website is the result of a distribution of competence between individuals and digital technologies, as well as interaction with their peers, the information available on other websites, and the uses that other people make of those technologies.

2. Distinguishing within fields: cultural mediators' sense of 'newness' and 'expertise' as part of their digital capital

Being up-to-date with the latest digital device, as well as using the newest 'app'²³ on their websites or mobile phones is a factor considered to be valuable by research informants. Similarly, digital technologies operate as tools affording access to the latest information about

²³ 'App' commonly refers to software applications. Informants referred to 'apps' during the fieldwork.

website topics. In fact, during my fieldwork I spent hours talking with informants about different apps, but the most interesting thing was not the particularity of those technologies, but individuals' curiosity about something new'

Individual digital capital is a mixture of technical ability using the latest technologies, but also the ability to show those technical skills in order to become distinctive within the field and to establish connections with people from other fields. The professionalisation of their practices, particularly regarding individual digital capital, is the result of the connections they have with people from other fields, as well as by showing their technical abilities. But most importantly, their ability to be on top of the latest digital trends on their websites and by using different platforms such as social networking sites. During fieldwork I met Camilo at his office and he was working on his computer. The first thing he said was 'did you create an account on Google+²⁴?' That particular social networking service was launched a couple of days before. Camilo was very enthusiastic about that new app, because he considered that, compared to Facebook, on Google +, it is possible to classify your friends and relatives. He explained how to use it when I realised that at least six of the research informants were 'friends' of Camilo in that social networking site, considering it was available only a couple of days before visiting Camilo. Similarly, but in another context, I met Rodrigo, an active collaborator on the website Super 45, at a Denver concert. Rossana, a friend of Rodrigo and on the team of Denver's record label 'Cazador', invited me. Before the concert, Rossana asked me if I could use the Twitter account of the record label and relay to their followers varied comments and impressions during the concert. The first thing they both asked me was 'do you have a mobile?' When I showed them my mobile they began to laugh. It was not an Android²⁵ or an iPhone; it was an old Nokia mobile phone. Rodrigo said 'you can't be doing a study about technologies without having the latest one, but especially without knowing how to use it'. He was right, and I was very nervous about the situation because I have never used an Android mobile phone.

²⁴ According to Wikipedia, Google + is "a multilingual social networking and identity service owned and operated by Google Inc. It is the second largest social networking site in the world, having surpassed Twitter in January 2013. It has approximately 359 million active users... Google has described Google+ as a "social layer" that enhances many of its online properties, unlike conventional social networks generally accessed through a single website". Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google%2B>

²⁵ Android is "a Linux-based operating system designed primarily for touchscreen mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers". Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Android_\(operating_system\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Android_(operating_system))

In some cases, the visibility that cultural mediators achieve through their websites, as the field through which they show their digital capital in the form of knowledge about how to use digital technologies, has been recognised by people from other fields. That is the case of Nicolas and Juan Pablo. They both have their own websites about music and music scenes. Similarly, in different stages of their careers they have been involved with advertising agencies in charge of digital strategies for clients to promote brands on Twitter and Facebook. Nicolas and Juan Pablo were chosen to promote two products by the telecommunications company Movistar²⁶. In Nicolas' case he was part of an advertisement for the company's broadband service. The video, which was promoted by Movistar on YouTube, shows Nicolas talking about the importance of using Internet broadband for his job. The advertisement begins with Nicolas in front of two computers, then using different devices (a turntable, a mobile phone, a mini iPad) talking about the importance of internet broadband in everyday life. An extract of his appearance follows:

Nicolas: "Today the world is living on streaming. There are millions of post, blogs, tweets, and videos to watch. Every second there is a new song available and I need to download it. If it takes you more than 10 seconds to download a song, you're lost. In my work I need to be the first, for that reason I have everything fast with the speed of Movistar broadband. When I want to share something Movistar broadband allows me to create posts and use different devices at the same time without losing quality and speed".

Similarly, but through a casting selection, Juan Pablo interpreted for Movistar the character 'Movistar Guru' who gives advice to users of the company's mobile phones through tutorial videos (e.g. 'How to configure your contacts in your mobile'). When I asked Juan about his experience of being 'the technological expert', he told me it was a good opportunity because the company is an excellent 'platform' for showing and 'positioning' himself as an 'expert in technologies'. Also, it was a well-paid job, but most importantly, he thinks he was chosen in the casting because of his 'geek attitudes'²⁷. As will be explained in detail in Chapter 6, actors from other fields such as advertising conceive cultural mediators as 'experts' in the use of digital technologies. However, being considered as a technological expert is something that is not very

²⁶ Movistar is a Spanish mobile phone operator, owned by Telefonica S.A, which has a presence in various countries in Latin America, including Chile.

²⁷ A 'geek' is someone considered to be technologically aware, but particularly a fan of digital technologies.

important for some of the informants. They are pragmatic in terms of considering that classification as something useful to achieve better job positions, as Juan says, —but at the same time they have an ironic stance about it.

A good example of the irony related to that label is the case of ‘community managers’. Being a ‘community manager’ (CM) means being in charge of a brand or a cause through online platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. Some research informants work as community managers for brands, as well as for their own websites. As Felipe suggests, CMs have ‘to create and build communities online’. For instance, Nicolas, Juan, Rodrigo, and Felipe have been working as CMs, creating and managing Facebook profiles and Twitter accounts for different brands. Commonly, some ridicule the activities of CMs, particularly regarding the emphasis that the field of advertising gives nowadays to that activity. Likewise, these ironies are also based on the emergence of Chilean universities that offer diplomas training students to be community managers, especially when informants consider that it is through experience that you learn to manage the digital tools related to the work of CMs. When I asked Felipe about his work as community manager for the Levis brand, he told me that his website experience has been relevant in order to understand how to communicate using social networking platforms. In a way, his job as a CM is mediated by the connection he has with the brand, as well as his previous experience and practices with digital technologies in the making of his website, but also because he is presumed to understand young audiences:

A. – Why do you think the people from Levi’s advertising agency hired you?

Felipe: “Because I have experience. I’ve been working with social networking platforms and I know how they work. Also, I have contacts and my personality makes them lots of sense with what they want for the brand. They want to be pioneers. Similarly, I can’t refuse the offer of working with a brand I feel close to.

A. – What do you do as a community manager?

Felipe: “I’m in charge of the brand online in Twitter and Facebook. Now we are using Foursquare, an application that allows you to let others know where you are. It is useful to promote Levis stores in the city”.

Felipe’s quote also reflects a crucial aspect of cultural mediators’ professionalisation. For him, creating his website was a far from lucrative project. His main aim at that time was having his own space and exchanging his musical interests. However, when he realised the

technical abilities he was accumulating and how they could be exchanged with and valorised by actors from different fields, a process of professionalisation became part of Felipe's motivations and practices. On the one hand, this meant becoming valorised by people who consider relevant the work of cultural mediators, particularly their technical skills, as well as their ability to manage those abilities in commercial and non-commercial contexts. On the other hand, professionalisation for Felipe became a way of life, but in particular one with the possibility of being associated with brands that made sense in terms of his identity. However, another reading of his words suggests that his position as community manager was not achieved only because of his digital capital, but because he was young (but not too young) and had 'geek' knowledge such that he was presumed to understand young markets (as in the old idea of coolhunters). The professionalisation of cultural mediators' practices is also defined in terms of the frequency with which they update their sites. Being professional means having the ability to update the websites frequently. For instance, Alejandro explained to me that he was surprised that a website that he had considered a rival to his own is now almost dead as a result of not being updated. However, for Nicolas and Cristian, the process of updating the sites is supported by original content, and is vital in order to avoid becoming a 'copy' of their references and sources such as Pitchfork.

...

Previous sections of the chapter described individual experiences, and showed how using digital technologies based on the everyday making of their websites helps to situate them within a network of circulation of flows. I also describe how those experiences with technological devices position them within a professional network providing services, for instance, as community managers for different brands. This is the first step through which individuals accumulate digital capital, in the form of technical knowledge, but also display it on their websites in order to distinguish them within the field they are creating as a result of their mediation of digital technologies. In this sense, the practices related to the making and maintenance of websites help individuals when configuring different uses of particular technologies. Those uses in the form of practices are objectified on the websites in their designs, as well as in the everyday maintenance (e.g. uploading content). In this sense, digital technologies operate as objects that facilitate individuals' positionality within different networks

based on practices through which they are mediated. There is a sense of shared knowledge on the part of individuals regarding the use of digital technologies based on the practices performed in the making of the websites. However, that knowledge also involves a set of strategies displayed by cultural mediators in order to show their technical abilities. It is in this context that the website and other online platforms operate as the field they are constructing to show their digital capital and to distinguish between them to achieve positions of recognition within that digital field or technological space, as well as other fields like advertising and the music scene. Thus, cultural mediators' relation with digital technologies, particularly the positionality within different networks they achieve through them, does not operate as a result of values or dispositions previously fixed in the form of digital habitus. On the contrary, it is based on the practices they reproduce in different contexts regarding the making of their personal websites, as well as being, for instance, community managers for various brands in other fields of cultural production like advertising in order to achieve positions of recognition within them.

In the next section I analyse individual relations with Facebook and Twitter, particularly in regard to how shared practices and knowledge regarding the use of those digital platforms are, on the one hand, the result of the negotiation between human and non-human agencies. On the other hand, I shall also analyse how those platforms enable them to position themselves within networks where flows circulate, and most importantly, how those platforms operate as spaces through which content management and technical abilities are objectified.

...

3. Facebook and Twitter as spaces for the accumulation and objectification of digital capital

Facebook and Twitter operate as platforms through which cultural mediators' digital capital is shown but at the same time it is a space where digital capital is produced and accrued. On the one hand, both platforms allow cultural mediators to accumulate audiences by sharing content and information related to their websites, as well as demonstrating their abilities to curate informational flows. On the other hand, by accumulating audiences, both platforms are central devices for actors from the field of advertising, through which cultural mediators can promote brands and products.

Individual practices of updating websites are intertwined with the everyday use of social networking sites, particularly Facebook and Twitter. Those platforms, as well as the websites, are interconnected as a result of technological developments. For instance, Twitter and Facebook are tools that help individuals to collect, exchange, and put into online circulation different types of content. But most importantly, just as the websites are objectifications of individuals' ability to organise content, as well as a space to display technical knowledge; social networking sites are also tools through which individuals show their digital capital.

In that context, research informants spend a considerable amount of time using Facebook and Twitter to circulate and share the content they consider relevant (e.g. articles from their websites, as well as different links obtained from various blogs and sites). In order to understand how research participants mediate those devices, I followed the actors through their everyday use of these platforms, considering the amount of time they spend with them, as well as the relevance they have to their everyday conversations. By 2011, the period of my fieldwork, Chileans were increasingly using Twitter²⁸. However, research participants they have had their accounts since at least 2009-2010. Research participants considered themselves 'early' users of Twitter. The case of Facebook is similar, even though that platform is more spread amongst Chileans²⁹. At first, research participants commonly define those tools in terms of their use regarding the websites, particularly focusing on how those platforms behave and help to increase the number of visits to the websites. Twitter is considered to be a platform for promoting ideas, content, and individuals' work. Commonly, informants display the articles they write for the websites, pictures of the latest purchases such as LP's, digital technologies (e.g. Play station), or films.

In most cases, Twitter is a space for self-promotion, especially regarding work and leisure activities. Alvaro is one of the creators of the website Paniko and for him Twitter means the possibility to show other people what he is doing, but most importantly, it is the form to make visible things that can be ignored easily, particularly regarding his job. Alvaro's relation with Twitter enables him to share with others his activities, but in particular that space enables

²⁸ According to the UDP National Survey, in 2011, 21% of Chileans between 15-29 have a Twitter account. The same survey showed that Twitter is used only by 11% of Chileans.

²⁹ According to the same survey, 86% of Chileans between 15-29 have a Facebook account. Similarly, statistics show that almost 50% of Chile's population have a Facebook account. Source: <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/chile>

him to talk positively about his job and the happy relation he has with it. When I asked Alvaro about his relation with Twitter, he explained:

Alvaro: "I use Twitter to tell others and to show them my new works and articles. That is to maximise the promotion of what I've been doing and not leave it hidden or in anonymity. You know what? It is very Chilean not telling others about how happy you are with what you're doing. Honestly, I like telling others about what I'm doing. I'm proud of that. Here (in Chile) lots of people spread their shit against you when you are proud of the things you're doing. I use social networking sites to tell my followers about what I've been doing in my job".

The practices described by Alvaro regarding the uses of Twitter and Facebook, are shared by other informants. I followed them on a daily basis on Twitter and Facebook identifying the different uses, even though it is common for them to have their respective accounts interconnected. That means the things they publish on Twitter are published on Facebook, as well. However, considering the instantaneity that Twitter provides, cultural mediators use it frequently during the day. The topics are varied, from tweets about the latest news about music, opinions about new music available, commonly based on international music websites like Pitchfork or New Musical Express. As Nicolas explains, for him Twitter is a good tool that is always oriented towards the music. For that reason, to a lesser extent he tries not to use that space to share things related to his personal life:

Nicolas: "I try not to use Twitter to say 'I woke up sad this morning'. No. It is to share music like 'look at the new content I just uploaded to my website' or 'I recommend to my followers this song'. That is my relation with Twitter. Nothing very personal, music related only".

Cultural mediators' Twitter profiles share similar characteristics. The first is related to the customisation of their profile, uploading pictures of their websites, their favourite bands. Similarly, in the section where they can describe themselves or their activities they include the URL of their websites, as well as their current job position. Individuals have a clear idea about the varied uses that can be accepted on Twitter. For instance, for Juan Twitter is a space through which he can promote himself and his website with his followers. That means not using that platform for having conversations with people. As he explains:

Juan: "I chat on Twitter with the people who collaborate with the website. But Twitter is not a chat room. For instance, the other day a guy criticised me on Twitter publicly because I did not upload a review of his band. I told him 'this is not a chat room. Send me a direct message (private message) if you want but Twitter is not like this'. Some people use it in that way, but I use it to share links, comments, or the content from the website".

Facebook and Twitter operate as platforms through which cultural mediators' digital capital is shown but at the same time it is a space where digital capital is produced and accumulated. Two stories from fieldwork represent this process. The first is about Felipe (POTQ) who commonly shares on Facebook and Twitter articles and comments about local political news, sports, music videos, and music news, but also to show his achievements with his website or his band The Suicide Bitches. For instance, in less than 48 hours he uploaded three posts on Twitter and Facebook promoting his band and his forthcoming meetings and talks. The latter are the result of the recognition his website has been achieving within Latin America:

Felipe (June, 8th): "Confirmed: by the end of this month I'll visit Bogota to give a talk about digital media and to cover the music rock festival 'Rock al Parque'. Great news!"

(122 Likes on Facebook and 12 comments)

Felipe: (June, 9th): "2.500 followers of @suicidebitches can't be wrong".

(31 Likes on Facebook)

Felipe: (June, 9th): "I just received an invitation from Bogota to cover with POTQ.cl the Rock al Parque Festival 2013, the biggest rock festival in Latin America. I'm very pleased ;). Special acknowledgements to Jose Gandour from www.zonagirante.com"

(10 Likes on Facebook and 3 comments) (6 Retweets and 2 favourites)

Felipe's posts are an example of his ability to manage his reputation on Twitter and Facebook in the same way as he manages the content for his website. Showing achievements and sharing them with his followers is important "if you have experience you have to show it", he told me when I asked about his posts. This expertise also shows that there is no demarcation between personal and website branding, in the same way there is no distinction between content related to personal activities, and professional content. Facebook and Twitter are platforms through which Felipe promotes his digital media skills, receiving an invitation from

Colombia to talk about his experience with his website POTQ, but also showing his ability to circulate taste classifications covering a music festival. The example of Felipe shows how digital capital is permanently shown, spread, and produced. On the one hand, technical platforms like social networking sites put achievements and goals into circulation. On the other hand, these platforms reflect the networks of which cultural mediators are a part. In the same way, the members of those networks can give feedback through Facebook 'likes' or by doing 'retweets' on Twitter.

The second story shows in depth the administration of cultural mediators' digital capital through Facebook and Twitter, but most importantly, how individuals' conceive those platforms as valid spaces where they can manage their position and reputation as central components of their digital capital. During the period of fieldwork Camilo (Disorder), Juan (192) and Alejandro (Paniko) used Twitter and Facebook to make public complaints against other people related to marketing agencies or, in the case of Alejandro, his partner on the site. Camilo and Juan used those spaces to report the non-payment of their fees by an advertising agency that uses their sites to promote brands. For advertisement agencies the number of cultural mediators' friends and followers on Facebook and Twitter, respectively, are central to incorporate the websites as part of varied advertisement campaigns (for more details check chapter 6). In that context, Camilo and Juan decided to use both platforms to report the misbehaviour of the agency. Meanwhile, Alejandro announced on Twitter that his partner was not working with him anymore, and also asked for a 'retweet' to spread the news. By doing it publicly, Alejandro, Camilo and Juan were keeping the site's network of followers updated about his professional issues. Again, the practices of cultural mediators are really close to the way they use technologies in order to accumulate and show their digital capital. They can do things through those technologies that were impossible before, especially the promotion of their technical abilities and positionality within a field they are also constructing in spaces like their websites, Facebook and Twitter; that is, a technological space.

4. Non-human agencies: website metrics as 'metrologies' of cultural mediators' digital capital

Metrics play an important role in the practices of cultural mediators, particularly regarding the everyday generation of digital capital. Basically, metrics are measures and statistics relating to cultural mediators' websites. Those metrics represent the audience levels

each website has, but they also operate as a way for cultural mediators to assess their ability to accumulate audiences, along with 'tweets', 'retweets', and Facebook 'likes'. Metrics visibilise - and operate as scripts for - different associations between cultural mediators, digital objects, music, identities, flows of information, and actors from the advertising world, for instance. They are devices through which collective action can be traceable (Latour, 2011). Thus, they are a by-product of connections and interactions (Savage, et. al 2010), for instance, between flows of information and websites' audience profiles (e.g. age, gender, locality). Metrics can be accumulated and produced in the form of reports by digital technologies.

In order to describe how cultural mediators use those metrics it is useful to go back to Latour's ANT, particularly his concept of 'inscriptions' (1985) as a transformation, an experiment, for instance, which results in a material form being converted by the scientist into a sign or a piece of paper. Following Latour, website metrics as inscriptions work as 'metrology' (1985: 27), meaning representations that group different types of measure, in this case, related to the websites. As Latour suggests, 'without it no measurement is stable enough to allow either the homogeneity of the inscriptions or their return' (Latour, 1985: 27). As 'metrology', website metrics make visible how many people access its contents. But at the same time it reflects the sites' spread amongst people, its success and impact within the field which cultural mediators' are part of, particularly establishing connections within the field of advertising. As inscriptions, website metrics mobilise a set of events that are represented in the output, a piece of paper with a detailed account of the site visits. Website metrics are obtained from Google Analytics, a service providing detailed data about the performance of a website. As figure 4 shows, the type of data that this report provides include: the number of unique visits to the website in a particular period of time; the total number of pages visited (the number of pages users visit on the site); the average time a user spends on the website; the sources of a site's traffic (e.g. web browsers like Google or Yahoo, other websites, direct access to the site); visitors' national origins; and the most viewed contents.

By the time of fieldwork, talking about metrics with cultural mediators was a frequent topic. Commonly, they understand metrics, in the form of numbers and reports about the sites' performance, as a form of distinction within the field of music websites about Santiago's indie music scene, but also as actors that helps assemble the network where different fields get related to each other (e.g. the field of the music scene and the field of advertising), as well as

where cultural flows circulate. As Alejandro explains, metrics are the most important thing for advertising agencies in order to establish a commercial relation with the websites, particularly as devices that connect those fields:

A. – Why are advertising agencies interested in the websites?

Alejandro: “Why do they pay attention to us? First, hard data, visits, time spent on the site by audiences”.

In this sense, through metrics, cultural mediators exchange taste classifications in the form of the content they present and organise just as they sell audiences to advertising agencies. Website metrics are a part of cultural mediators’ ‘media kit’, a document in the form of a PDF presentation that is presented to advertising agencies interested to being part of the site contents. Through their ‘media kit’, cultural mediators explain the topics covered by the sites, the type of audiences they have, and the number of visits (including graphics and numbers, frequently obtained from Google Analytics)³⁰. In this sense, metrics are central to the generation of cultural mediators’ digital capital, particularly as representations of the strategies individuals are able to use to convene audiences on their sites as a result of their practices of content management, but also as a consequence of their ability to use digital technologies. For instance, by June 2013 the Twitter account of the website 192 (@192) had a detailed account of the site’s metrics in the accounts’ profile: ‘We have been publishing for seven years without stopping. Today we carry about 8,208 posts and 76,011 comments about rock music, parties, bands, and more. Read us, participate, and sponsor us’. When I asked Juan, he explained that these numbers represent his reputation, in Bourdieu’s terms, as a particular position in the field reflected in those metrics.

Juan: “Reputation means my posts. If someone asks me ‘who are you?’ I can tell them to ‘read 192.cl... Six years of writing posts, knowing bands, going to gigs. For instance, today I was attending a conference about digital advertising and the manager of a very important company asked me ‘are you the guy from 192?’ My boss was with me at that time and I started talking to the manager... that is reputation”.

³⁰

For a detailed account of the site’s ‘Media Kit’, see Chapter 6.

The way metrics are relevant to cultural mediators is exemplified by Maria, the creator of the website Rocanrol. Besides being representations of individual digital capital in order to distinguish in a particular field, metrics also shows how the sites and their content are part of different cultural flows in other locations. When I asked her about her site's metrics (e.g. number of visits), she was really upset with the question, but then explained:

A. – Do you know how many visits your site has? You pay attention to that?

Maria: “Do I have to tell you? Yes, I’m aware of it, but is it necessary talk about it?”

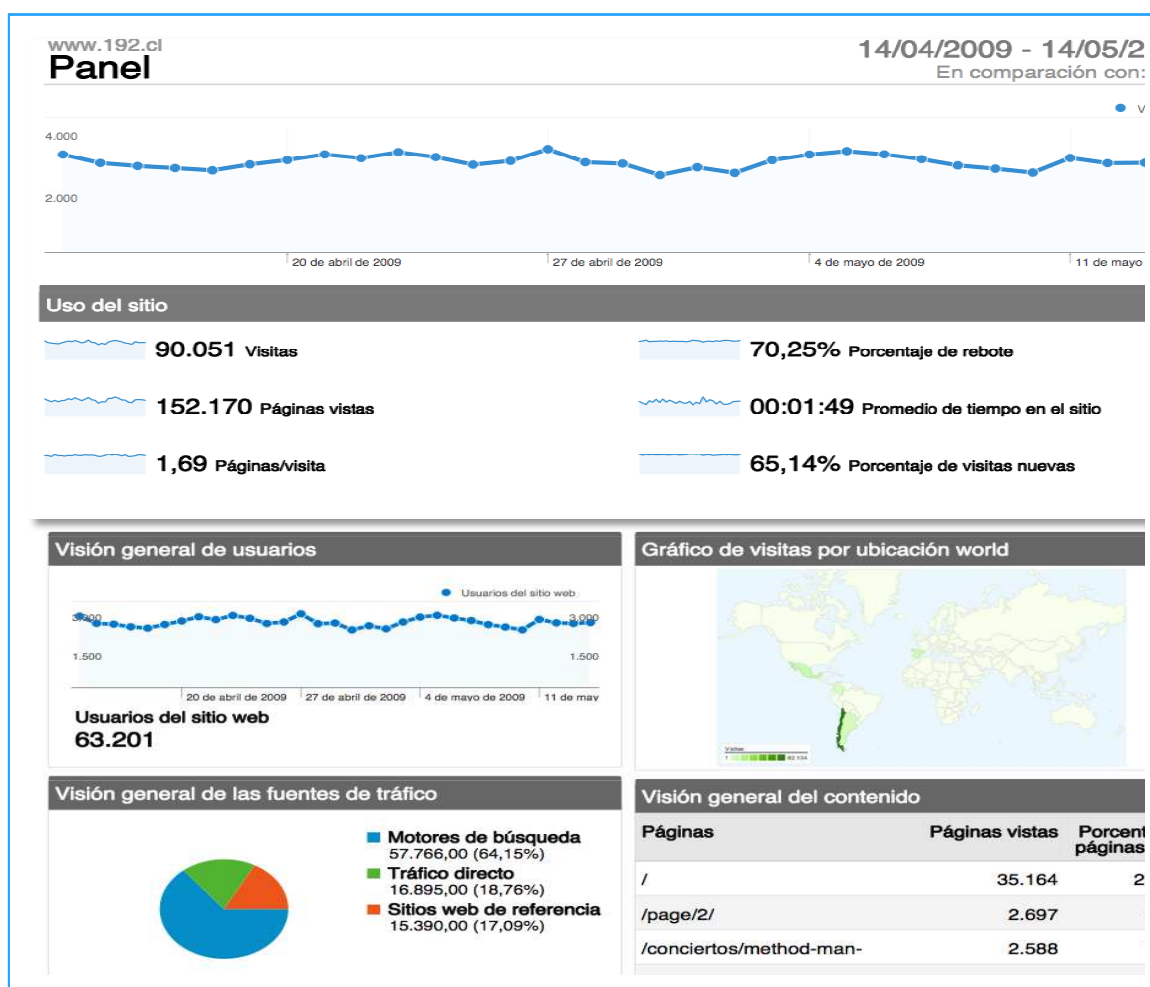
A. – Yes, no problema

Maria: “Yes, I’m looking at those numbers on a daily basis. More than checking how many visits the site has I’m checking where those visits are coming from”.

A. – And where are those visits coming from?

Maria: “We have visits from Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Spain. Sometimes from faraway countries like Hong Kong or Russia. Once I tweet ‘Maybe Maura Rivera (a Chilean model married to a football player who plays in Russia) is reading us from Russia’... it was really funny”.

Figure 14. Google Analytics Report of the website 192.cl



Source: prepared by the author based on fieldwork material

From another perspective, cultural mediators negotiate their practices and identities because sometimes metrics can shape their projects (Moor, 2012). The site's metrics represent the performance (in terms of success or failure) of cultural mediators creating and developing a community around certain topics of interest, particularly music. This is relevant in order to establish a relation with advertising agencies and then to convert cultural mediators' digital capital into economic capital. Similarly, metrics as objectifications of cultural mediators' digital capital help make it persuasive for different actors. As a strategy to translate the profile of their audiences into metrics, cultural mediators do surveys using their websites. But most importantly, those tools help individuals to have a description of the type of visitors they have in order to exchange that information with advertising agencies to apprise them of the type of consumer the sites' have, and how as a result of their digital capital they are able to accumulate

a specific niche of consumers. Alejandro, for instance, explains the role of metrics, comparing his website with the digital versions of more mainstream newspapers, but most importantly, how those metrics enable him to establish a connection with brands and advertising agencies:

A. - Could you tell me about your site's metrics?

Alejandro: "In a normal day we have 4.000 visits from unique users, they stay around two minutes or three minutes. We are not at the level of mainstream newspapers such as The Clinic, for instance. We are not a very well-known brand and we are oriented towards a particular niche of readers. The Clinic has almost 9.000 daily visits or LUN [newspaper], which has 120.000 visits. However, for us knowing those numbers helps because we have a defined group of audience for brands".

A. - Who is your audience?

Alejandro: "It is funny because we don't know. To know that we have to do serious studies. By using the internet, we can do surveys, but some things never lie and that is Facebook fans. When you create a fan page on Facebook you have access statistics and metrics that help you to know the profile of your visitors. We have 6.300 fans and half of them are women between 18 and 25. That is our target. The second groups of fans are men between 18 to 25.

Metrics 'translate' cultural mediators' taste classifications, and their ability to create 'communities' niche audiences through their websites, into economic capital. They operate as objective entities that represent in the form of numbers the impact of cultural mediators' taste and the number of audiences they are able to reach, and finally, their digital capital. Metrics give formal and objectified, transactable reputation or capital; but for Alejandro they are purely formal and don't necessary correspond to his sense of audience. For him, they are merely a currency, but for people from the field of advertising metrics are not only a currency. According to Latour, based on his fieldwork in scientific laboratories, objectivity is slowly built 'inside the laboratory walls by mobilising faithful allies' (1985: 18). In this sense, metrics do not lie but become an 'objective' resource that facilitates the connection between the field of advertising and the field of the music scene represented by cultural mediators on their websites. In a way, the sites are laboratories in which cultural mediators experiment using digital tools, creating their own field of cultural production: websites about scenes that operate as hubs through which other fields are connected, and where cultural flows circulate in the form of taste classifications and niche audiences. As a brand manager and the executive of a digital

advertising agency explain, metrics are also a way of differentiating between the sites, and cultural mediators' digital capital, to make commercial decisions:

BM: "The site's traffic is our measure to decide where we want to advertise. If those sites have traffic of 1,000 people per month we don't consider them. For instance, sites like Paniko or POTQ have good numbers, they create communities, but they are also oriented towards a specific group of people. Both sites are oriented towards a 'niche' of consumers, a small group of opinion leaders interested in the latest trends in, for instance, music and gigs.

Executive: "The (advertising) industry believes in numbers. It's nice the 'indie' world, but if they don't have numbers, they don't exist.

In this context, how does the process of conversion between cultural mediators and advertising agencies work through the site's metrics? Agencies evaluate the site by reading its content, checking the metrics provided by cultural mediators (numbers that are part of their 'media kit'), and then try to agree a price to promote a brand on the site in a specific space, or as part of the site's content. However, from the perspective of cultural mediators, a different strategy is required to understand how the site's metrics can be convertible into economic capital. Felipe explains it:

Felipe: "It is easy to convert the site's metrics into money. You count the site's visits and then multiplied by three. For instance, if your site has 1.000 visits you will receive 3.000 pesos (£3.9 pounds). One visit count for 3 pesos. In a month with one million visits the space for advertising will cost three million pesos (£3.900 pounds). However, this is only a reference. Finally, you do not convert your metrics to those values because it is expensive. Brands are not paying that amount of money. Spaces within the website cost around 1.5 million pesos or £1 million. In our context, that is acceptable and brands know that £1million is a good price.

A. - And how do brands or advertising agencies evaluate investment in your site?

Felipe: "When a campaign finishes you have to present a report showing how successful the campaign was on the website".

In this context, cultural mediators are ambivalent about the relevance of metrics around their practices, and how they can shape them. On the one hand, on some occasions they orient the site's content to increase the size of audiences interested in the site's contents, maximising and improving their metrics. At the same time, on the other hand, they are critical about some strategies oriented to improve their metrics. For instance, for Juan, attention to the site's metrics is important if one is to write articles about the most successful topics or the most viewed posts, and try to reach new audiences from other countries. However, for Cristian, the importance of metrics like Facebook 'likes' or the number of retweets go against the interactivity promoted by the audience of this site. According to him, part of the site's relevance, and an important dimension of his digital capital, was the ability to promote debates around music through reviews of gigs and new albums on his site. For Cristian, people 'like' or 'dislike' the content, rather than commenting and engaging in discussions. However, metrics shape the way individuals understand and define their practices, if sometimes they orient their actions towards increasing their numbers. I spent some time with Juan checking the metrics of his website. While looking at graphics and numbers on Google Analytics, he realised that the site's numbers decreased in recent months, even though he tries to overlook that issue:

A. - I'm impressed that Google Analytics is the most important source to obtain website metrics.

Juan: "Yes, it is the standard of the industry. If someone wants to sell himself, showing the success of his site, (Google Analytics) is the most reliable source, because before Google it was the Alexa ranking, but now that is not reliable. If we look at these numbers I see how the site has been decreasing in visits. However, those numbers put my mind at rest and I don't have to be worried about it. Neither a client is at stake nor a brand. To be honest, I'm not interested in making the site profitable because I will have to be worried of everything. If I'm seeing that the site's metrics are going down I will say... what's going on... I have to make an alliance with a brand or write more about this band instead the other".

One dimension regarding the generation of cultural mediators' digital capital is their ability to make taste classifications and content management by using digital technologies. Individuals know that their site's metrics are the result of their ability to select content, but they are also a result of their classifications around bands and the different types of music they present. They try to prioritise that criterion to gain audiences rather than other practices that

can result in increasing the number of visits, but can also act against the durability and reliability of individuals' digital capital. For instance, Max considers that it is be easy to gain audiences by doing daily contests (e.g. inviting people to participate commenting on the site to win a pair of shoes, for instance). On the contrary, he prefers to create his own content, even though he previously took part in those contests and knows how easy it is to gain audiences. Similarly, as Nicolas suggests, he is oriented to obtain good metrics as a result of good content, rather than doing things to the detriment of his digital capital.

Nicolas: "We are not seeking to be massive, we are not trying to generate controversy, and we try not to generate that kind of content in order to gain 'clicks'. We don't want to have our website full of clicks, but if we are going to do it, it will be with the things we like. It is related to my personal ethics. I will not throw shit at other people on my website... It might be useful in a short period, I will gain (Facebook or Twitter) followers, but I will be considered an ass-hole. Nobody will give me information, nobody will let me interview them, and nobody will advertise my site because they know I can fuck up any time".

For Nicolas, website metrics are a type of knowledge that needs to be connected to the ability of a cultural mediator to give interesting content to his audiences. At the same time, they do not necessarily reflect the quality of a music website. On the contrary, analytics and metrics can show success and access to audiences, but they can also hide the meanings and strategies through which those numbers were reached. According to Nicolas, the strategies oriented to obtaining 'good numbers', such as writing articles in order to generate controversies, can also reflect the tensions between cultural mediators and people from the field of advertising that are determined by those numbers. For him, the convertibility of his digital capital into economic capital cannot be determined by those strategies. His numbers must be a result of his ability to generate interesting content that is valuable for audiences and people from the field of advertisement.

From another perspective, metrics also shape cultural mediators' projects, particularly their conceptualisations and performance of digital capital. On the one hand, the way content is indexed by web browsers such as Google represent the online reputation of cultural mediators, understood as presence, association between the person and the type of content shown online, and the relevance that web browsers attribute to the content cultural mediators generate. They

define their knowledge and positionality within a technological space through those metrics. On the other hand, cultural mediators can use that reputation as a form of validation of their practices when they establish contact to people from other fields (e.g. advertising agencies). The way their content is indexed is fundamental in order to validate their position in the field, a technological space through which they are involved in finding positions of recognition. For instance, during fieldwork observation with cultural mediators, Alejandro, Camilo, and Juan showed me how the content of their sites was always presented on Google in the first results after searching the name of a music band or a music festival like Lollapalooza. On the other hand, some tensions emerge when cultural mediators' digital capital and their position in a technological space is exchanged and converted into economic capital. For instance, when advertising agencies buy the expertise and different forms of cultural mediators' digital capital (e.g. their ability to position content on web browsers, managing content to promote brands); metrics make visible the economic value of those exchanges. However, tensions emerge when the property regarding those transactions is not clear at all. Juan gave me an example of the tensions that emerge when digital capital is exchanged and converted into economic capital. Here the professionalisation and commodification of their practices is a process through which Juan reflects about what he is trading:

Juan: "A couple of years ago I wrote 500 posts for a blog (Tecno Paris) created by an advertising agency for a department store. That was a year and a half of content, almost one post daily. Then the blog was transferred to another agency and the new agency didn't care about the authorship of those 500 posts. They changed my name for the name 'admin' (administrator), and then they changed again the name from 'admin' to 'Juan Antonio'. I was so angry, and then I published on my Twitter account my complaints against the ad agency called Media Labs because they were attributing the authorship of the content I wrote. The agency doesn't care about it. It is important for me...those posts are mine. The agency paid me, but the posts are mine. Then the agency read my complaints on Twitter and contacted me and we made an agreement. They changed the name on the posts. For me, authorship is most important and I was really obsessed with seeing my name on those posts because that content appears very well indexed on Google. It is useful for my CV, the number of posts written between 2009 and 2010. I'm indexed in lots of things, plus all my mentions on Twitter".

...

Concluding remarks: cultural mediators' accumulation of digital capital as a form of mediation of digital technologies

This chapter has examined how cultural mediators' practices of making and maintaining websites work as forms of mediation that help individuals to accumulate and exchange digital capital. These practices of creating, updating, and promoting their websites position cultural mediators within a network where cultural flows circulate, in the form of information not only about music bands and scenes, and also about digital technologies, as part of a technological space they are constructing at the same time. Specifically, this chapter has explored how those practices are central to the making of the field where cultural mediators display and accumulate digital capital as a result of their cultural and technical knowledge regarding digital technologies. The practices of creating and updating the websites in terms of frequency, sources, and spread are connected with the accumulation of digital capital, but at the same time they are elements enabling cultural mediators to establish distinctions within the field they are constructing.

By creating websites, cultural mediators begin to develop technical expertise by using digital technologies, initially as a form of leisure and freedom, objectifying their interests and cultural classifications on their websites. That technical knowledge then enables them to manage the content of flows of information through which they begin accumulating audiences. At the same time they are also accumulating new skills related to the use of digital technologies in the form of new applications and social networking sites. Cultural mediators' use of technologies enables them to situate themselves within networks of circulation of cultural flows, information, and knowledge about music scenes, as well as digital technologies. Similarly, the way they mediate digital technologies constitutes a process through which they make sense of the field they are creating through their technical and cultural expertise. By doing this, cultural mediators begin to develop strategies and practices to differentiate themselves within the field, and also in order to connect that field with other fields of cultural production such as advertising. Specifically, four strategies were described as key to how they compete to achieve positions of recognition within the field: the acquisition of the site's domain; the design and re-design of the website, and practices of updating the websites. The description of these practices reflects how technical expertise with digital technologies becomes valorised and recognised by

actors from other fields, a process that is a result of cultural mediators' predisposition to use and appropriate the latest applications and digital devices.

By creating websites, cultural mediators begin to construct their own field based on the representations of their digital skills and knowledge, as well as their cultural knowledge (e.g. about music scenes, technological trends). Those representations take a material form in the websites. The moment cultural mediators begin to make visible their cultural and technological expertise in the form of digital capital as an assemblage based on platforms such as their websites and social networking sites, they are also connecting the field they are constructing with the field of advertising where different actors (e.g. brand managers and advertising executives) may be interested in their digital capital. That assemblage where cultural mediators' digital capital is represented in the form of clicks, downloads, 'likes', and tweets, are considered by actors as the result of the professionalisation of their practices, in the same way as those non-human agencies begin to shape their projects and trajectories within the field they are creating. When cultural mediators begin to establish commercial relations in order to convert their digital capital into economic capital they are also representing the field of advertising as part of the representation of the field of indie music scenes (local and global) in a material form, that is, as websites.

This process of professionalisation of cultural mediators' relations with digital technologies, as knowledge and expertise that is commodified and then exchanged with advertising agencies, is mediated by a set of metrics that translates cultural mediators' digital capital. Metrics assemble the process of professionalisation that affects cultural mediators by exchanging their digital capital with people from the field of advertising, establishing criteria to convert it into economic capital. In this process, cultural mediators' practices in making their digital capital, as a result of the way they mediate digital technologies, differentiates them within the field. Nevertheless, they are also the result of a negotiated set of practices, narratives, and non-human agencies. In other words, websites' metrics as reports and statistics about the site's performances, and individuals' ability to create a group of niche audiences, play a central role in shaping their practices and the way they understand and make use of their digital capital. On the one hand, drawing from Latour (1987), metrics are 'inscriptions' that make individuals' digital capital visible to actors from other fields (e.g. advertising). Metrics are objectified statistics in a report full of details about the website's performance in terms of, for

instance, the size of audiences, where visitors come from, the most viewed contents, amongst other measures. Through these metrics, cultural mediators' begin to negotiate their practices in order to keep the site plied with interesting content (e.g. about music bands they like, as a form of sub-cultural capital), with other strategies to attract audiences and improve their numbers (e.g. running contests on the sites). On the other hand, website metrics mobilise the events they present, and also operate as devices that connect and bring together different fields, such as that created by cultural mediators - particularly, through their objectifications of music scenes on the websites, with the field of advertising by including brands and advertisements as part of their sites' contents.

Dealing with metrics as signs that represent cultural mediators' digital capital, in terms of how effective they are at accumulating audiences, but also the impact of their cultural and taste classifications reflects the situation where individuals begin to make sense of the evolution and professionalisation of their practices. This involves understanding how the conversion of their digital capital into economic capital demands establishing boundaries between actors involved in those exchanges. It is through these situations that cultural mediators define, but also realise, how their practices and digital capital, as a form of mediation of digital technologies, are shaped by metrics, commoditising their forms of mediation of digital technologies, but also making them exchangeable and objective.

Finally, there is a real proximity between processes of cultural mediation and the role digital technologies play. On the one hand, digital tools like Facebook, Twitter, and software through which individuals create their websites (e.g. WordPress) help individuals to circulate different forms of taste and cultural flows by exchanging links and feeds, and uploading information. On the other hand, cultural mediators' discourses show how they experience a sense of connectivity and processes of communication in terms of their presence on Facebook, Twitter, or the websites they are making. Following their practices of uploading and exchanging content, they are connecting real and virtual worlds that are objectified on those platforms. For instance, when Max explains how he creates a post for his website after reading different blogs and websites, collecting links, and sending them to his e-mail account, the topic of his post exists when it is uploaded on his website. Similarly, when Juan criticises the websites that do not upload content frequently, he is also making a connection between his presence online (that is, things are happening and he is showing his digital capital when websites are updated every day)

and the way he uses digital technologies (e.g. fast, up-to-date, using the newest applications). This chapter has showed how digital technologies are tools through which cultural mediators can produce, accumulate, and show their digital capital to achieve positions of recognition within the field they are constructing, and at the same time connecting that field with others such as advertising.

Chapter 5

Cultural Mediators Moving Across Different Fields

This chapter examines cultural mediators' strategies for operating across different fields in order to distinguish themselves along multiple axes. Cultural mediators are individuals who want to work across varied fields and audiences, and are always in an ambivalent position, moving between the field of mainstream media, the local music scene, the field of global music websites, and the field of advertising. In order to move between and distinguish themselves in multiple fields, cultural mediators display different uses of taste to curate and circulate cultural flows (e.g. meanings and meaningful forms that span different places, for instance, information, images, and identities) (Appadurai, 1990; Hannerz, 1997) through their websites and social networking sites. The chapter considers taste as judgements related to the aesthetic qualities of cultural flows and activities of actors in different fields, which also operates as a 'weapon' to demarcate boundaries between social groups (Bourdieu, 1984; Warde, 2008).

Cultural mediators move across the field of mainstream media contesting forms of taste that are 'consecrated' and validated by actors from that field (e.g. newspapers, music magazines) labelling the cultural production of the music scene (Thornton, 1995). Research informants do that discovering and promoting the work of the local scene's artists to distinguish themselves in that field. Through their practices, they try to legitimate cultural flows that can be considered as 'alternative culture'. Cultural mediators display a shared aesthetic orientation and shared dispositions towards translocal forms of taste (Kuipers, 2012). These are taken principally from international music websites and are appropriated and objectified on their own websites. By doing this they feel united to the translocal field of music websites, but also they negotiate those dispositions so that their sites do not become mere copies of global websites. The strategy they use to distinguish themselves within the field of global music websites is demonstrating their abilities to curate flows of taste that circulate online, and also to draw on having travelled to global cities like New York or London. This is facilitated by digital technologies, particularly the internet, which operates as a device for constructing and performing 'cultural scales' (Slater and Ariztia, 2008; Slater, 2013). Thus they feel part of a network of flows of global references constituted by information, images, forms of taste, and varied mediated music scenes. Moving to the field of advertising, the strategy displayed by cultural mediators to distinguish themselves is to make connections between different flows –

e.g. advertising images - in order to make judgments about them. Finally, regarding the local music scene, cultural mediators achieve positions of distinction by showing their ability to discover new bands, as well as to connect the local scene's flows to translocal scenes.

My argument is that cultural mediators move between different fields and audiences – e.g. mainstream media, global websites, the local music scene, and advertising — in order to distinguish themselves within those fields, curating flows and displaying uses of taste that are objectified on their websites and through social networking sites. Thus, as a result of those strategies, different meanings of the 'global', the 'commercial', and the 'political' are configured and performed. Similarly, I trace empirically how cultural mediators' uses of taste are displayed and circulated through selection from cultural flows. For instance, by curating information about a music band from global music websites, they display a set of qualifications (Callon, et. al, 2002) that involves the permanent promotion and manipulation of attributes that are both intrinsic and extrinsic to that band, as well as that website. Cultural mediators' curation and circulation practices are facilitated by and displayed through digital technologies (e.g. the internet and social networking sites) in order to access, select and put into circulation flows of tastes around music, musicians' identities, as well as other types of flows like advertisements and commercial brands. By curating those flows and circulating through their websites, cultural mediators display different uses of taste, shaping their connections with actors from those fields to accumulate and exchange their digital capital. The previous chapter considered 'digital capital' as a set of socio-digital skills oriented to achieving ownership of strategic positioning in digital networks. In this chapter the strategies through which cultural mediators move across different fields are based on the ways they select, qualify and circulate flows of tastes online, as crucial activities for the accumulation of digital capital. The ability to curate and circulate flows of tastes depends on the extent to which cultural mediators can control digital flows, and therefore accumulate and exchange their digital capital across different fields. The story is complex, not linear. In this sense, 'digital capital' emerges as a form of capital that legitimates a way of doing things: curating and circulating meanings around flows through digital technologies within and between different fields of cultural production, distinguishing themselves as cultural mediators.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section looks at the dynamics and uses of taste displayed by cultural mediators with regard to music and bands, as well as other types as cultural flows (e.g. images, information) in order to move across various fields, and

then distinguish themselves within those fields. In this context, relying on observation of the websites, as well as interviews with cultural mediators, I will explore how they curate flows – from music to musicians’ identities and information – then put them into circulation on their websites. By curating different types of flows, and getting involved with them to put them into circulation across fields and audiences, cultural mediators’ websites operate as spaces where those flows are qualified (Callon, et. al. 2002). Entwistle (2009: 67) described the qualification of fashion models as a “process by which things are defined, examined, shaped, acted upon by actors in order to make sense of and render them calculable”. Drawing on this idea, this section explores how cultural mediators shape their websites as spaces where different uses and dynamics of taste around flows (e.g. in the form of aesthetic orientations to certain flows, judgments about it) are displayed and objectified (e.g. images, music, and bands) in order for them to achieve positions of distinction across varied fields.

The second section looks at the strategies through which cultural mediators move across different fields in order to distinguish themselves within those fields: mainstream media, global music websites, and the local music scene where different meanings of the ‘global’, the ‘commercial’, and the ‘political’ arise. In the case of the mainstream media, cultural mediators criticise the inability of mainstream media to promote the scene and its cultural production. By doing this, cultural mediators distinguish themselves, invoking their capacity to promote the scene to different audiences through their websites, as well as their involvement with its cultural production and actors. In the case of the field of global music websites, cultural mediators rely on their contents and references, and then they mediate those flows, mixing them with local content on their websites. Their sense of distinction emerges when global music websites include in their contents information obtained from cultural mediators’ sites. Finally, in the case of the local music scene, by managing their websites and curating the scene’s flows, cultural mediators feel part of the same project, but distinguished by their abilities and criteria regarding the curation of information, images, and music, as well as their capabilities for discovering new cultural expressions (e.g. music bands, sounds, aesthetics).

1. Dynamics and uses of taste: cultural mediators and processes of curation and qualification of flows

The last chapter discussed cultural mediators' digital capital as being based on socio-technical skills to access and circulate through digital networks a set of meanings, achieving positions of distinction within them. In this section the concept is extended to include the strategies displayed by cultural mediators as they move across different fields and use their taste curating and qualifying flows, which are then objectified on their websites and circulated through digital technologies. The strategies, meanings, and uses of taste deployed by cultural mediators curating flows, and then objectified on websites, are a relevant dimension in the configuration, accumulation, and exchange of their digital capital across different fields.

Each website has a clear 'concept' based on the topics and the style of the music and information they consider worth publishing. For instance, websites can be grouped according to the issues they cover. One group relies mainly on local and global music as a topic, as in the case of *Super 45*, *Rocanrol*, *NNM*, and *POTQ*. The other group of websites, even though they mainly focus around music, also include other topics such as literature, fashion, technology, and what they call 'popular culture'. This is the case with *Pousta*, *Paniko*, and *Disorder*. Within the first group of websites, there are some differences in the style of music in which they are interested as well. *Super 45* is mainly focused on indie rock. It is common to see old punk rock bands on the website such as Television, Primal Scream or The Stone Roses, along with the latest and trendy bands such as Tame Impala, and local indie musicians such as Gepe, Denver, and Javiera Mena. In the case of *Rocanrol*, there is a mixture of European and U.S. indie and mainstream bands mixed with alternative Latin American artists and sometimes heavy metal bands. *No Naci en Manchester* (tr. Not Born in Manchester) is a website which focuses only on 'dance music', particularly local and international DJs. Sometimes the website shows the work of indie rock and pop musicians like the Australians Tame Impala, or the locals Gepe and Javiera Mena. In the case of *POTQ*, its content is a mixture of information about mainstream international bands and indie local musicians and bands. This site is more 'classic rock'-oriented compared to the rest, and includes the work of bands such as Foo Fighters, Radiohead, Queens of the Stone Age, or Arctic Monkeys. In the case of the second group of websites (which offer a mixture of information about music, fashion, technology, and advertising), the case of *Pousta* is the most relevant. This site is not purely about music. On the contrary, as its creators explain, it is about 'design, advertising, fashion, technology, music, movies, trends and inspiration'. For instance,

the site includes comments about Adidas' new ad-campaign, as well as the music video of Lana Del Rey. In the case of *Paniko* and *Disorder*, both are dedicated to music, as well as literature and film. They review the work of local musicians and interview them. In the same way, they include posts about writers and their new publications. *Paniko* and *Disorder* have a local orientation in terms of their content. They are also both interested in local musicians such as Gepe, Javiera Mena, Denver, or the rock-pop band Ases Falsos.

Websites are a valid space for musicians to promote their work, even though cultural mediators filter music and information according to different criteria and uses of taste. In the case of Maria (*Rocanrol*), for instance, she tries through her website to be an open space for new bands and music that are not covered by mainstream media; she can display a sense of authority from discovering those new bands by promoting their work on *Rocanrol*.

Maria: "I receive lots of e-mails from different unknown bands, they send us their music, and we are always open to work with them on condition that they have constant work. Not like 'we recorded a demo yesterday, and we started as a band'. Mainstream media is more selective; for instance, a friend of mine who works in a national newspaper always sends me bands that can't be covered because there is no space for them. Thus I'm interested in listening to the work of new bands and to give them an opportunity when they are interesting. For instance, I listened a couple of years ago to the music of Javiera Mena when she had just started playing. I rooted for her work from the beginning. I said 'Mena will be a big name', and it was true".

Cultural mediators know that their ability to curate flows and selecting content on their websites is related to their digital capital, which takes the form of audiences' recognition of their work, and the possibility of making those classifications exchangeable - for instance, by including paid advertisements for brands and products on the sites. Nicolas, for instance, understands clearly that his taste regarding music allows him to obtain rewards other than clicks or Facebook 'likes'. His ability to recommend the music he likes operates as a form of cultural capital he can convert into economic capital when advertising agencies call him to be a DJ for marketing events. But most importantly, and central to digital capital, it is his ability and knowledge to circulate those flows online that enable him to position his name across different fields. In that context, different dynamics of taste between cultural mediators become explicit and objectified on their sites, as well as being a result of their life trajectory and age. Cristian, for instance, is the creator of *Super 45*, at 15 years' longevity the oldest website included in this study, and according to him, he is always looking for something new, for avant-garde music. He

is now 35, older than the rest of the research participants. His inspiration for being interested in music comes from the work of music critics of the 1980's, reading magazines like *New Musical Express*, or going to record stores to buy records with friends and then mapping the story of influences and references of music bands he likes, particularly The Smiths or The Stone Roses.

For Cristian, having a website about indie music amounts to a certain ethic regarding taste, listening to new music with a 'critical ear', and searching for something original in its sounds and aesthetics. Through a contest his site organised, he discovered local musicians like Javiera Mena and Gepe, two names who by now are the foremost artists of the indie music scene in Chile. For him, when he listened to the music of Gepe and Javiera Mena for the first time, he knew that it was something completely new, something different. That difference which he tries to find in music, he also tries to objectify and circulate through his website. Cristian is trying to make taste through *Super 45* by promoting and looking for 'innovative' music, which means something 'new' and 'original'; an approach that is based on his experience of listening to music over a long period of time. Cristian is also a well-recognised DJ within the scene, and the artistic producer of a national 'mainstream' radio. The first time I met Cristian, his outfit, very distinctive, impressed me. Black glasses, black tie, skinny trousers, and elegant shoes: he was dressed like a British 'mod' from the 1960s.

Cristian: "We are accused of being elitist, snobs, and yes in some way we are, but we can't apologise if people have not experienced the 15 years I've been listening to music, much more than them. That gives you a different perspective of music. For instance, there is a band called 'Miami Horror', which is fine, but is a b-side of New Order, and I prefer listening to New Order. Today there is a lack of perspective to differentiate and qualify music. We are interested in being closer to people who are interested in 'taking the plunge' ('que se moje el poto')".

For Cristian, his website operates as a space through which he can legitimate and circulate forms of taste, particularly promoting new artists. He is very proud of having discovered Gepe and Javiera Mena, and he also considers that ability as something that differentiates him and *Super 45* from the rest of the websites. The originality he attributes to the work of those musicians means that local music can be global, and that is his mission with *Super 45*, to promote Chilean music as part of the network of indie music around the world. He contrasts his work – and taste – with the website *POTQ*. During fieldwork, I was talking to Felipe, the creator of *POTQ*, and he was very excited because he had discovered a Chilean rock band called 'Howlers'. He decided to promote their music on *POTQ*, but he was also contacted by the

U.S. magazine *Spin*, who were organising a contest and looking for new music bands around the world. Felipe had an intuition about the Howlers' quality and attitude. Thus he recorded a video of them, took some pictures in order to prepare a 'portfolio', and sent it to the magazine's contest. He was very excited because the band was selected for a shortlist of five bands; they did not win, but for Felipe it was a boost to present a new band in Chile and in New York (where the band travelled to play at the contest). For him, Howlers deserved to be promoted because they had an interesting approach. They are not part of the mainstream music scene, which is something 'tainted'. For Cristian, Felipe's taste and intuition regarding Howlers is irrelevant.

Cristian: "(Howlers) are nice guys, they sing in English and they sound like a garage band [...] the possibility that shit ('huevada') becomes important? Zero chance. In New York there are 50 bands like them. It counts here (in Chile), but outside the band's circle of friends it doesn't matter. Even though they play well, with a nice aesthetic, finally it doesn't matter".

Cristian and Felipe justify their taste in terms of music that can be considered innovative and independent. However, their understanding of the concepts is not the same. For Cristian, innovation and originality are related to 'uniqueness'. Meanwhile, for Felipe they mean something that is 'underground', not very well known or not part of the mainstream. However, Cristian demarcates and establishes a strategy to differentiate his taste from Felipe's by emphasising his experience of listening to music, and the 15 years he has been writing about 'people who are interested in jumping in'.

Independently of the style of cultural flows each website presents, cultural mediators have clear criteria for deciding what is going to be uploaded and what is not. What kind of content deserves to be part of individuals' websites? The strategies of curation of cultural flows – e.g. information, images, music, and musicians' identities – vary, from the things or flows that cultural mediators like, to information about well-recognised local or international bands. In this context, cultural mediators conceive the selection of flows as 'recommendations' where they are acting as 'filters' of flows, choosing between the ones they like and those they do not. By doing this, they promote and manipulate the attributes of those flows on their websites. For instance, some interviewees distinguish between 'indie' and 'mainstream' cultural flows as a criterion for including them on the websites. Even though their websites are very different in terms of content, *Pousta* is oriented towards advertising and trends, while *NNM* is about dance music (local and global). Both try to include on their websites content which is from the

‘counterculture’ or ‘independent’. However, it is not a fixed rule and their stated distinctions do not always fit with their practices.

Max: “With my partner Pancho we draw a graph where we establish the values that we consider in our content. Here they are: innovation, aesthetic, independent, creative, and real. ‘Real’ means ‘I make this jacket’. ‘Under’ means something that does not come to the fore, something not very well known. Our idea is to use these criteria as guidance. For instance, this post is about a girl who makes shoes. She is not mainstream; the shoes are nice, they have a story. It can be part of our content. The same happens for a music band. This other post is about a documentary about Instagram. It is new, and it is under: very nice. I’m not thinking every time of these values. I’m looking at whether the content is useful or not considering those values.

Like Max, Nicolas considers his taste, in the form of something that he likes, as the main resource for deciding what will be part of the site. In his case, he listens to music and, based on that feeling, decides if he will include that song on his website. He considers himself as a ‘recommender’ of music to his audiences, even though he distinguishes between the ‘mainstream’ and ‘under’ or ‘indie’ as useful classifications to differentiate what deserves to be part of *NNM* and what does not. He trusts in his own criteria, which he defines as ‘likeable’ or a ‘skin thing’, which means a subjective way of deciding if something can be included on *NNM*.

Nicolas: “In a day I may have uploaded three or four posts that are too pop. In that case I say ‘I will seek more rare shit and I’ll upload’, to compensate. I do not care about a press release that says one artist pulled out a song. If I listen to the album and I like another song, I go to that one. It’s a very personal approach... a ‘skin thing’. I do not care what’s going on outside, I want to use what we are interested in recommending. It’s like an old school blog where you tell your friends what you like, is the same but with a wider audience. I’m never going to upload a remix of Van Halen or David Guetta’s new song. It would help me gain more clicks, but we are in the counterculture of electronic music. Would I like to play this in my (DJ) sets? Yes. I like to dance to this song? Let’s upload it”.

A. – Who is David Guetta?

Nicolas: “A cheesy and the shittiest DJ, but by now he is the most famous DJ in the world. Everything I don’t want to be as a DJ is represented by David Guetta”.

Classifying flows and qualifying them are processes based on the combination of cultural mediators' personal feeling ('skin'), and the innovative character of the cultural flows. This is also related to the motivation for cultural mediators' practices, particularly where they are considered fundamental to their work mapping the 'next big thing' or 'trends' in their topics of interest like music, fashion, or advertising. That ability to anticipate which cultural flows will deserve to be consumed or listened to is what distinguishes cultural mediators in the different fields they are part of through their classifications. Added to this is their ability to curate those flows and circulate through their websites across different audiences and fields. By doing this, their digital capital is converted into an important resource to be, for instance, included in the value chains of the world of advertising.

A. – Which are your criteria for recommending music? Because you are not talking about Shakira on your website.

Nicolas: "I'm looking for new things. As a DJ, I'm not playing 'Justice', I'm not playing music that was hitting an 'indie' club two or three years ago. The thing (hueva) moved to another place, and for us the idea is to move with the trends on our website, going ahead to what will be the next sound".

Pancho: "Things we are recommending are chosen by our personal feel [...] sometimes we have friends who tell us 'this thing (hueva) will be the next thing', and truly you say 'I don't think so' (no me tinca) [...] and if it didn't touch you and 1,000 people, it didn't happen with other things that we've been talking about. For instance, sometimes things that are recognised as interesting now we talked about two years ago and we validated them, we had pre-visualised them".

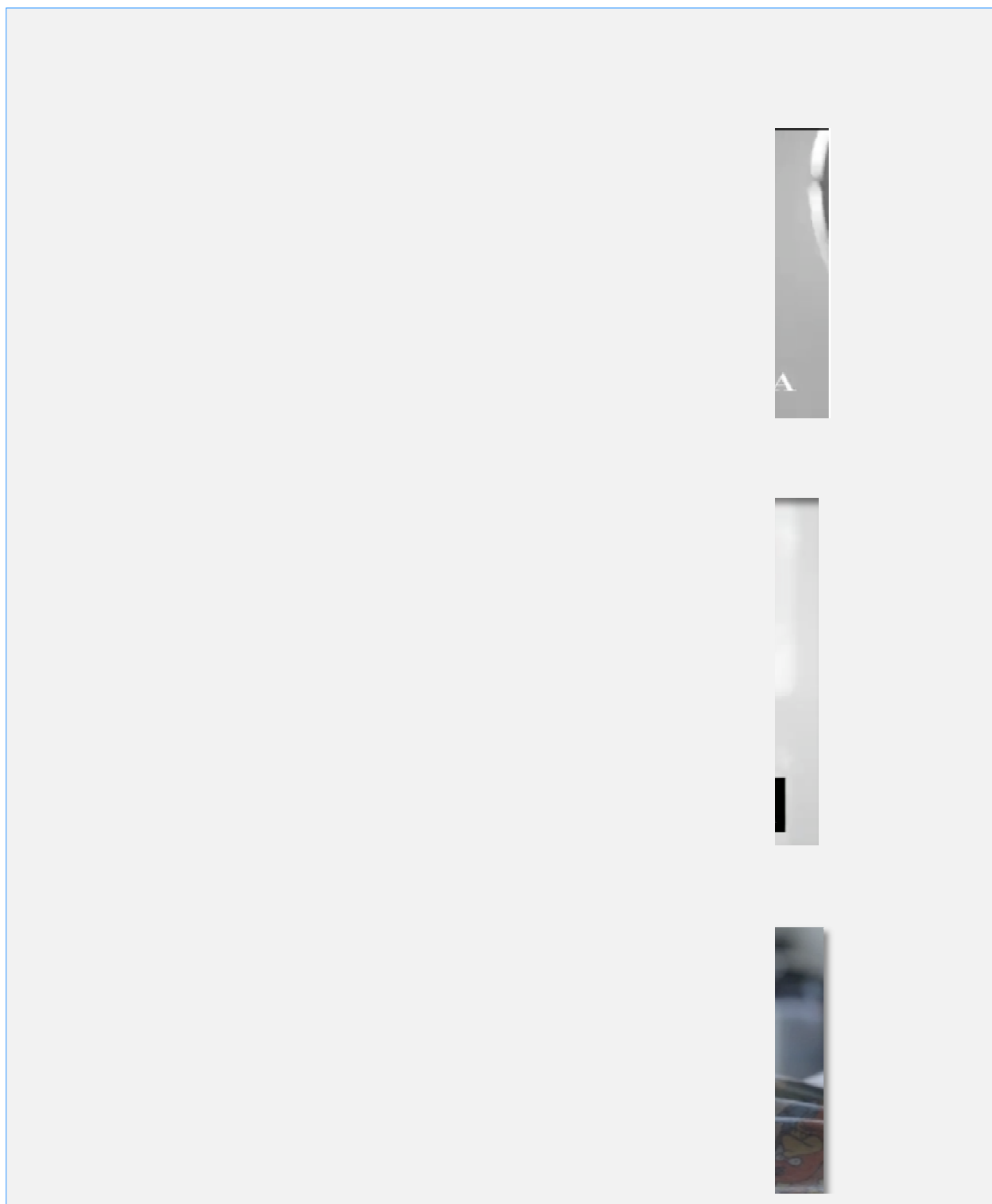
Pancho's practices of selection and qualification of flows that can be converted into 'the next thing' are similar to those of a sociologist. He needs to understand when trends are forming in order to talk about them on his site before they become well known. For instance, it is common for *Pousta* to criticise the work of advertising agencies. During my fieldwork, Pancho found an advertisement for a Shopping Centre (Alto Las Condes) in Santiago, which he thought was a copy of two campaigns and advertisements by Zara and a short film directed by Mathew Frost³¹, starring the U.S. model Ashley Smith, for the French fashion magazine *Jalouse*³² (see

³¹ A British filmmaker and photographer based in New York, his work is related to brands like Louis Vuitton, and trend magazines like *Vice* and *Jalouse*. <http://www.matthew-frost.com/>

³² According to the magazine's Facebook profile, established in 1997, *Jalouse* is about "fashion and trends, becoming a must for 'trend setters'. *Jalouse* was able to take a unique position in the French

Figure 1). Pancho's post on *Pousta* entitled 'Alto Las Condes: Nice your 100% copy spot' reached 45 comments, either approving or rejecting Pancho's finding. Some people complained about the state of advertising in Chile where everything is copied from abroad. Pancho's ability to make these connections and reveal the similarities between the advertisement and its concepts operates as a mechanism of distinction based on knowledge and 'feeling' to connect different flows (e.g. images, information, sources, brands) that are part of a repertoire that is assembled into the socio-digital skills that are in turn part of his digital capital. With his post, he uploaded three videos with Alto Las Condes' advertisement and the videos he considered were the 'inspirations' for the ad (see figure 3). The way he displayed judgements about an advertisement and objectified them in the post he wrote, distinguishes Pancho in the field of advertising, for instance, as somebody who knows about the latest trends.

Figure 15. Pancho's connections of cultural flows



Source: Collected from fieldwork material

The first part of this chapter explored cultural mediators' criteria for curating different types of flows – from music to musicians' identities, information, and images - that are objectified on their websites. Actors' ability to curate flows involves the qualification and manipulation of the attributes of those flows through different uses of taste that are objectified on their websites. Thus, those flows are put into circulation to different audiences and fields, and are relevant resources for accumulating and exchanging their digital capital across different fields. The second part of this chapter is focused on the strategies of cultural mediators for distinguishing themselves by moving across three different fields: the field of mainstream media, global music websites, and the local music scene. Cultural mediators display different uses and dynamics of taste that are 'weapons' to differentiate and distinguish themselves across fields (Bourdieu, 1984; Warde, 2008). Those strategies involve differentiating from the work that mainstream media does regarding the cultural production of the local scene - for instance, by ignoring their articles or using them as resources to validate their work within the scene as promoters of its flows through their websites. In the case of the field of global music websites, cultural mediators rely on their contents and references, and then they mediate those flows by mixing them with local content on their websites. Their sense of distinction emerges when global music websites include in their contents information from cultural mediators' sites. Finally, in the case of the local music scene, by managing their websites and curating the scene's flows, cultural mediators feel part of the same project, distinguishing themselves by their abilities and criteria regarding the curation of information, images, and music, as well as their capabilities for discovering new cultural expression (e.g. music bands, sounds, aesthetics).

...

2. Cultural Mediators and the Field of Mainstream Media

In this section, I describe the strategies used by cultural mediators to distinguish themselves by moving across the field of mainstream media. I discuss how individuals define mainstream media in terms of what they are doing in making websites about the scene. Those meanings and strategies to move across that field enable individuals to distinguish themselves as cultural mediators of Santiago's indie music scene, despite the way its cultural production is labelled by mainstream media. Through their strategies, cultural mediators give rise to meanings about the 'indie' scene, through their practices of mapping and circulating the work of local bands that are part of that scene.

Research participants define what they are doing in terms of what mainstream media does not do. For them, the mainstream media ignore the music cultural production that began happening in Santiago during the 2000s. Even though some mainstream magazines (e.g. the local version of *Rolling Stone Magazine*, and others like *Play*), or sections in the newspapers, – especially the supplement *Zona de Contacto* – were covering new indie bands and consolidated ones. Cultural mediators consider that those spaces were always showing dedicated cultural flows, leaving no space for the circulation of new cultural expressions. They argue that during that time it was difficult to see in mainstream media the types of bands they like: the ones that were showing new forms of expression through their lyrics, sound, and aesthetic. Cultural mediators follow the scene, mapping its cultural production (e.g. its bands, musicians, places, albums), and they also create the scene by documenting its existence. Bands and artists send them their albums and music in order to promote their music, as well as their gigs. Cultural mediators are interested in promoting new bands on their sites, not the big names. It is uncommon for them to promote local mainstream bands on the sites. This operates as a strategy of distinction in comparison with the work that mainstream media do regarding the scene. They are displaying sub-cultural capital (Thornton, 1995) in the form of the ability to choose fashionable new bands against the work of mainstream media that is oriented to promoting the work of established bands. By doing this, they celebrate the success of the current indie music scene as their own. As Felipe explains:

“The scene is has been recognised since a long time ago and as a result of the support of all types of media promoting these emergent bands. Neither mainstream media nor the government did that work. That happened because of the work of blogs, Facebook, Twitter, all the people who use that. I mean it is not an accident that things happened in that way... it is not coincidence. It is work done by different people: musicians and the media on a daily basis. Other sites like Poustá, Zancada, Disorder: these sites make things happen. Because if you said that, without these media, musicians would be in the same situation, I don’t think so... because we are dominated by mainstream media and record labels and there is no space for something rebel. The sites are doing the same thing; we are open to new things. As I said, this work has been done by different people and we are part of that...”

During fieldwork, it was common to find in mainstream media (e.g. national newspapers, television and radio programmes) articles on Santiago’s indie music scene, and its emblematic solo artists and bands like Gepe, Denver, Astro, or Javiera Mena. This coverage always

emphasised the artists' independence from the support of mainstream record labels. For instance, an article published in the national newspaper *El Mercurio* was entitled 'How does an independent Chilean musician survive?' showing the strategies by which musicians pay their bills. But more importantly, it is a portrait of the precariousness of being a musician in Santiago. For instance, the article discusses how the band Protistas used the platform Kickstarter³³ to collect money from their fans to finance the production of their album. Similarly, other articles emphasise the unique character and productivity of the musicians, considering the frequency of live performances and music productions. The scene and its actors are portrayed in such articles basically as something new in terms of the indie music scene, but also as a new form of cultural production. However, for cultural mediators, these articles are not relevant as a source of content for their websites. On the contrary, they operate as resources through which they validate their work on their websites. As Felipe explained in the last quote, such coverage has supported these bands for a long time compared to mainstream media. Moving across the field of mainstream media, cultural mediators distinguish themselves through their judgement and ability to map the scene, following the work of its artists, and discovering new artists before mainstream media.

One article was constantly mentioned by research participants in their conversations, interviews, and on their Twitter and Facebook accounts. Published by the Spanish newspaper *El País*, and cited by different Chilean newspapers, the article, entitled "Chile: the new paradise of pop" was a detailed description of Santiago's indie music scene. The day the article appeared, various research informants sent it to me by e-mail, and all of them commented upon it on Twitter. For cultural mediators, the article supported the possibility of making visible the scene they were representing on their websites, just as it was an opportunity to mark the differences between them and their practices. For instance, Cristian was cited in the article as a key voice disseminating the characteristics of the scene. For him, featuring in the article was a qualitative achievement and amply displayed his knowledge about the scene, and his role in circulating the production of different musicians. On the one hand, the article considered Cristian's site the only reference to explain the scene: 'we are the authorised voice to talk about indie music in Chile', said Cristian. On the other hand, Cristian considered that Super45 was the only resource to understand what was happening in Chile in terms of indie music. In a way, he claimed a

³³ Kickstarter (www.kickstarter.com) is a company that provides people with a technological platform for raising money for different creative projects. It does that via 'crowdfunding', which is a collective way of amassing funds through the internet to finance people's ideas; for instance, a music album, a documentary, a film.

certain authority within the field of Santiago's music scene based on the external validation that the newspaper article gave him. However, although not mentioned in the article, Juan (192) still used it to reaffirm his position within the scene, explaining how, through his website, he was producing the scene by mapping its cultural production:

Juan: "It is really cool that people from Spain have been amazed by Chilean artists after so long. The same article you just read in El Pais should have come out in 2006, because they are talking about the bands or artists that were working from 2000 to 2005. However, this phenomenon where Chileans are excited to realise that we have a music scene is like a slap in the face because it's existed for a long time and nobody talks about that. We have been talking about it because we are immersed in that context. Bands promote their work on my website; I always go and see them playing live in order to write a review of their gigs. To me that's normal, but now there are people who are impressed, saying 'El Pais is telling the truth, we have artists that are making music professionally' and now Spanish people listen to Chilean bands and their record labels are publishing Chilean records, and Chilean records are publishing Spanish music. Again, there is a communicative brotherhood between both countries, even though, for them, we are so far away".

Cristian and Juan use the *El Pais* article to validate their work within the scene, to distinguish themselves, and to distance their work from that of mainstream media. The tension here is related to how the validation of this scene is based on recognition by a transnational newspaper and not necessarily by the work they are doing on their websites. However, they use mainstream media articles about Santiago's indie music scene and its actors to demand a position of recognition as cultural mediators of the scene's flows.

3. "Here, there and everywhere": cultural mediators moving across the field of global music websites

Appadurai (1990: 296) suggests that the "new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order". In the situation where "world production is oriented towards non-material commodities ... (that) are so mobile, the notion of flows becomes a central analytic, one which – much like networks - subsumes hitherto more segregated social processes" (Slater and Tonkiss, 2001: 186). These flows, such as images,

information, music, identities, and aesthetics references, circulate in different forms, particularly through media and technologies. For Appadurai (1996), we are living in a world with a “global imaginary”, where people’s imaginations move across space and time. His concept of ‘mediascape’ is useful to explore cultural mediators’ imaginaries and meanings of the ‘global’ facilitated by their movements across the field of global music websites. This section describes how cultural mediators configure meanings of the global by moving across the field of global music websites. By sharing similar cultural references, the ‘global’ is imagined and experienced for cultural mediators as the possibility to be close to original flows and experiences that are happening outside Chile.

For cultural mediators, their websites operate as spaces to socialise and to objectify their connections with global cultural flows. Through discourses, their uses of ICTs, and curation practices, they experience that sense of connectivity, relying on global references to accumulate digital capital (e.g. managing, translating, and circulating information from international websites), to distinguish themselves, and to achieve positions of recognition within the fields they are operating in. To achieve that, cultural mediators deploy three intertwined strategies. Firstly, they are constantly relying on information provided by transnational music websites that promote international music bands, as well as music scenes. By doing this, they are re-mediating these cultural flows mixed with ones related to the local scene. Secondly, cultural mediators invoke global references as a result of their trips to music festivals abroad, or in the form of interpreting online news of those events in accordance with their experience. Thirdly, they try to make connections with global music websites through providing other cultural mediators with information to use on their sites.

Through these strategies, actors invoke global references in the form of flows, images, identities, and meanings, in order to distinguish themselves along multiple axes. On the one hand, they are music fans who are permanently up-to-date with the latest sounds and musical trends. On the other hand, they ‘produce’ a mediated scene on their websites, which is a mixture of the local cultural flows produced by musicians within Santiago’s indie music scene, and the global scenes mediated on translocal websites. Cultural mediators are constantly refereeing those international websites and including the flows mediated there on their websites as objectifications of their ‘networks’, ‘taste’, and ability to curate those flows.

Cultural mediators constantly refer to international music websites as sources of information and music to publish on their own websites. These sites are ‘models’ in the way

they circulate particular forms of taste. Specifically, they are always looking at information on international websites like *Pitchfork*, *Brooklyn Vegan*, *Spin* and *New Musical Express*. These websites operate as centres of information for cultural mediators about what is going on in the global music scene, especially Anglo-American scenes (e.g. New York, London). In this sense, by reviewing on a daily basis the information these websites provide, actors construct cultural scales through their websites, feeling themselves to be part of the circulation of cultural flows at a global level (Slater and Ariztia, 2008). They articulate the global through those websites in two different ways: 1) as valid sources of global musical taste, and 2) as sources of cultural flows that enable them to feel part of those global scenes. For instance, depending on each site's area of interest, if the website *Pitchfork* publishes a new song by the British band 'Arctic Monkeys', this will immediately be part of the cultural mediators' websites, mixed with local news about bands from Santiago's indie music scene. However, the story is complex since they are not invoking the global through the websites as a fixed concept based on things that are happening abroad or flows that are only produced outside Chile. On the contrary, international music websites are spaces where the most important and interesting bands collide, independently of where they come from. Cultural mediators are not thinking of their movements across the field of global music websites as a strategy through which global culture is localised. They see their connections with global music websites as an opportunity to distinguish themselves across varied fields (e.g. the field of advertising) as actors that can put into circulation the local scene's flows with global scenes' flows as part of the same story, in the same way that they can promote locally the work of international musicians. As Nicolas explains, in the process of circulating and promoting new music from global scenes on his website he feels part of the same global network in which flows circulate. Nicolas acts as an intermediary between those actors and local or regional audiences. In doing so, he is interested in obtaining recognition in that field, the field of global music scenes, differentiating himself and his website from the rest of local cultural mediators and their websites.

Nicolas: "We are always looking abroad, outside Chile rather than inward. Today I was tweeting using the website's account with a guy (huevon) who was tweeting about our site for two days. He lives in Monaco. He wrote to thank us for the post I wrote about him on the website and we agreed that at the moment he wants to promote his music to a Spanish or Latin American audience, we can do it. That's what we want".

A. - A musician from Monaco?

Nicolas: "Yes, and that's what we want. We don't want to make money, but being validated by the people we like and being considered one of the most important blogs for that niche. If money comes in or not, who cares? It is like everything you do for art's sake. You do it because you like what you're doing. In that context, I only want that recognition".

However, some cultural mediators are interested in the opposite strategy, which means, in order to obtain recognition within Santiago's indie music scene, as a field of cultural production, their efforts are oriented towards mapping the scene and its actors, independently of achieving recognition from foreign websites or actors on global music scenes. For Alejandro (*Paniko*) and Felipe (*POTQ*), their websites are spaces where they are mapping the local scene, as a strategy to situate Santiago's indie music scene and its local cultural production in the same network where global flows circulate.

In the same way, the relationship cultural mediators have with global music websites is ambivalent; they are trying not to be mere translators of the content these websites present. However, sometimes they do actually translate content. They also use it as a form of differentiation from other websites. International music websites are spaces where different scenes happen in the same way that cultural mediators are creating their own sites and generating their scene in Santiago. In the case of *Pitchfork*³⁴, cultural mediators follow it as a model in terms of its design and the way information is presented, and for reflecting about how 'cool' a website can be. However, they do not want to model themselves on *Pitchfork*'s content to the extent of seeming to be a local version of *Pitchfork*. Cultural mediators try to differentiate between the US-based website and the local websites involved in covering Santiago's indie music scene. However, *Pitchfork* enables them to construct cultural scales in order to differentiate themselves from other websites, and to reaffirm their position within the scene. Cristian, for instance, feels he has a lot in common with a website like *Pitchfork*. He considers himself to be part of the same generation as the creators of the website, that is, they share

³⁴ *Pitchfork* (www.pitchfork.net) is a "Chicago-based daily Internet publication devoted to music criticism and commentary, music news, and artist interviews. Its focus is on independent music, especially indie rock. However, the range of musical genres covered extends to pop, hip-hop, folk, jazz, heavy metal, experimental, and various forms of electronic dance music. The site, which was established in 1995, concentrates on new music, but *Pitchfork* journalists also review reissued albums and box sets. The site has also published "best-of" lists – such as the best albums of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and the best songs of the 1960s – as well as annual features detailing the best singles and albums of each year since 1999. Retrieved from:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitchfork_Media

similar musical tastes and an interest in the same music bands. In other words, there are no differences in terms of the editorial stance between his website, *Super 45*, and *Pitchfork*. For him, this is the result of practices regarding the experience of listening to music in a record store, choosing a couple of albums, and then listening and finding connections between those records and bands from past decades. Through his relationship and comparison with *Pitchfork*, Cristian's cultural scale also operates as a form of distinction, differentiating himself and his website from other sites that are mapping Santiago's indie music scene. He compares *Super 45* with *Pitchfork* and himself with Camilo, the creator of the local website *Disorder*, evoking a generational proximity with the website as a discourse that situates himself in the same position as the creator of *Pitchfork*.

Cristian: "There was a moment where we concluded that it was stupid for us to try to be similar to Pitchfork covering the same bands and music. We can't be a translation of that site, even though, ideologically, we share some points with them, especially in generational terms. We are guys in our mid-thirties who grew up listening to music at the end of the 80's, the beginning of the 90's. In that context, we always share a similar point of view with Pitchfork because they are all the same kind of people. I will always be similar to Pitchfork rather than Camilo of Disorder, you know? Because Camilo comes from another 'school'. However, Ryan³⁵ – I don't know his surname - probably grew up listening to the same LPs as me or similar... In that respect, we are always going to share a similar point of view with Pitchfork or Rockdelux³⁶... or Playground Magazine³⁷ which is an internet fanzine very similar to us - at least, we have similar interests, you know?"

For Cristian, the similarities he shares with *Pitchfork* and its creators are ways of constructing a cultural scale, situating him and his work as part of the same field and shared meanings. For him, *Pitchfork* and *Super 45* are part of the same project, based on similar curation and classifications of cultural flows (e.g. music, images, identities, information). They

³⁵ He is talking about Ryan Schreiber, the owner and creator of the website *Pitchfork*.

³⁶ *Rockdelux* is a Spanish printed and online music magazine with distribution across Europe and Latin America. It was founded in 1984 and focuses on indie rock. In recent years it has been interested in Santiago's indie music scene, particularly in the work of musicians like Javiera Mena and Gepe.

³⁷ *Playground* is "a window to the future of music and related cultural phenomena. Updated daily, it's based on quality journalism - in-depth, observant and alert – and is a place where ideas, predictions and thoughts combine. Capturing the zeitgeist, it serves an audience interested in innovative cultural developments". They are interested in music, particularly as media partners with renowned music festivals like Sonar, Primavera Sound, and Unsound. Retrieved from: <http://www.playgroundmag.net/who-we-are>

use a similar set of practices that helps to differentiate them from others who are creating and maintaining music websites in a particular music scene (see Figure 2). This is reaffirmed by Nicolas' description of the role that global music websites have on practices related to his website, *NNM*. For him, these websites enable him to promote in a global context what he is doing on *NNM*, even though they are also a valid source of data on global music scenes, as well as about which new albums are released. By maintaining these websites, he can also establish differences between his website and other websites that are covering music locally in Santiago.

Nicolas: "I found interesting music by looking at blogs similar to ours... they also know people through us, and we know producers through them".

However, there are differences between cultural mediators' relations with global websites. Cristian and Nicolas are using those sites in order to be part of the same project, positioning themselves differently from other local music websites. Max and Pancho (*Pousta*) are using global websites to highlight local practices that they consider to be copies of activities that are taking place abroad. In other words, on their own websites they are exhibiting their ability to search for what is happening on global websites in order to determine what is good or not good about the work of local cultural producers like advertisers or musicians. For them, the sense of distinction in the field of local and global websites is the result of their ability to unravel what qualifies as something 'original' or not in Chile, according to what is happening globally.

A. – *"Why are you always looking at websites abroad?"*

Pancho: "A problem we are having at this moment is that in Chile everybody is copying and here they are selling their copies as something 'cool', as if they were the coolest people and - to tell the truth - that's false. If we are talking about things that are happening abroad it is not only the U.S., we are talking about things – e.g. design, music, art, trends - that are happening around the world. We want to show them. Our site is a selection because we are also showing interesting things that are happening here in Chile. Our aim is to show what's happening everywhere, not only here. The idea is with our site people in Chile can feel stimulated and learn..."

To show what is considered to be 'interesting' Pancho is always looking to small websites like 'but does it float'³⁸, which is an art website that is constantly uploading photographs and drawings by new artists. However, Max, his partner on the website *Pousta*,

³⁸

www.butdoesitfloat.com

considers that they rely too much on specific websites in order to generate content for *Pousta*. When I asked Max about why it is so relevant for him to be up-to-date with what is going on globally in terms of design, music, and fashion, for instance, he has a clear idea about this, which is central to his way of assembling his digital capital. Firstly, there is a connection between the internet and the sense that ‘everything is global’. Through that technology it is possible to have access to developments that are taking place abroad (for Max, such developments are not taking place in Chile). Secondly, according to his description, Max considers that there are structural possibilities that facilitate internet access in the country, allowing people to be connected to the rest of the world. Thirdly, there is an approach towards global cultural flows driven by the idea of discovering something or someone in terms of its originality or quality, which is also gainful in terms of ‘clicks’ on his website. For him, the global emerges as a space where original ideas circulate and it is his role as cultural mediator to select and display on his website what is good and interesting, available from that space. By doing this, he can convert that ability to curate ‘interesting’ flows into more ‘clicks’ on his website, which is also a relevant dimension of his digital capital.

A. – Why are you interested in what’s going on outside Chile?

Max: “With the internet everything is global. It doesn’t matter if it’s from China or Africa, if it’s good, we will show it. Lots of things are happening abroad... things that are not happening in Chile. For instance, the music festival Coachella: by covering it on our website it is an event that brings us audiences. In Chile there is a big presence of blogs because there is an open policy related to the internet in terms of access, low prices for broadband connection, and in the public discourse everybody assumes that each Chilean has to have internet access... In that context, we are looking in detail at what we are going to collect from abroad. You need to have a ‘good eye’. For instance, we made an interview with Kreayshawn³⁹ because she was promoting a new music video. Two months after the interview she became a ‘hit’. That year she was hosting at MTV. After that, she disappeared. I’m not saying that Pousta elevated her, but we interviewed her before she become famous. The same with Lana del Rey⁴⁰, she didn’t become famous because of

³⁹ She is a U.S. hip-hop artist who attained popularity on the internet in 2011 and then recorded an LP via Columbia records with the song *Gucci Gucci*.

⁴⁰ A U.S. pop singer who recorded a song called ‘Video Games’ in 2011 that reached 20 million views on YouTube. In 2012 she released her second studio album ‘Born to Die’, selling 3.5 million copies. According to Wikipedia, her music style is reminiscent of the 1950s and 1960s American pop. Retrieved from:

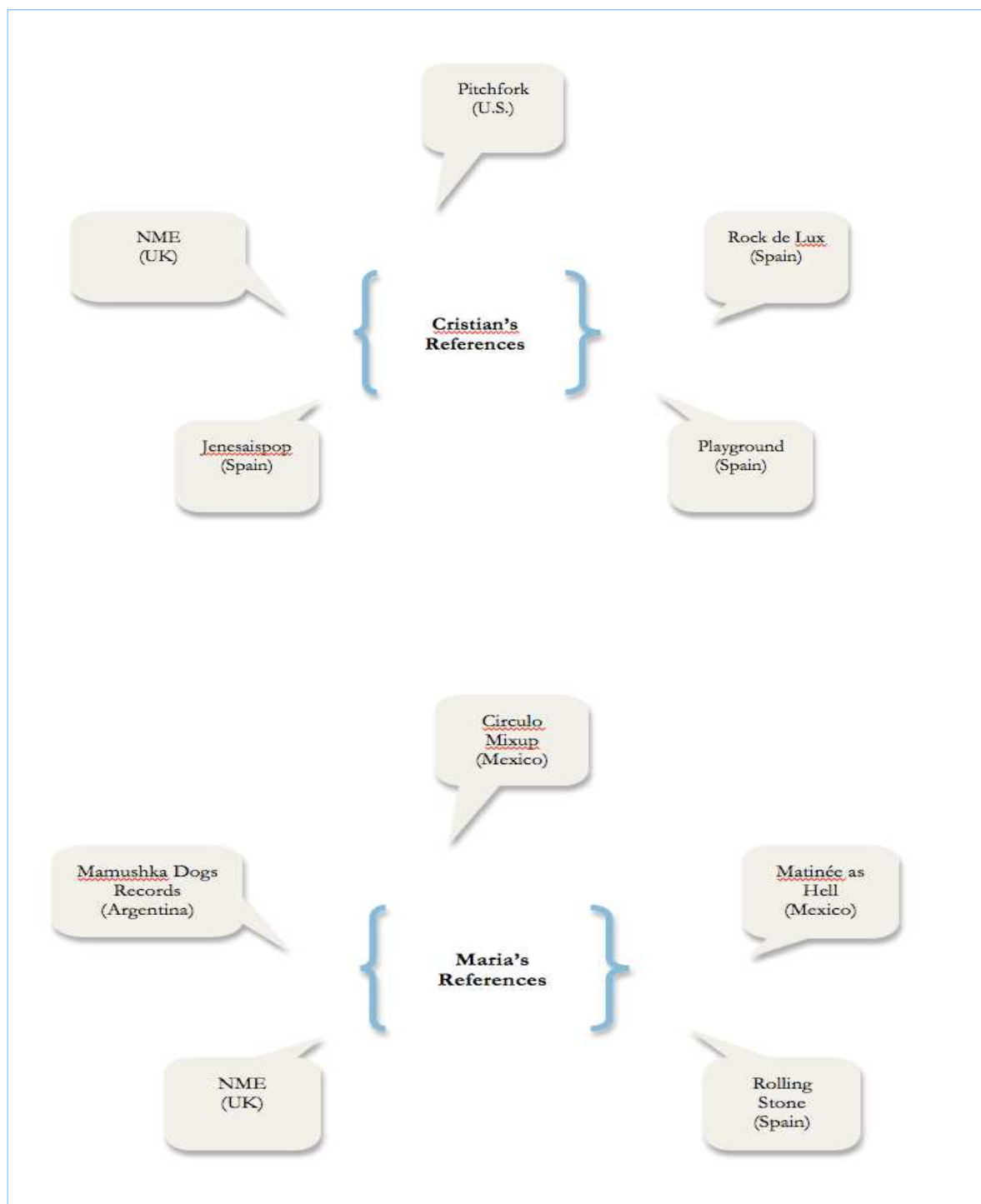
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lana_Del_Rey

our website, but we realised that she would be a phenomenon able to be exploited as a character and that resulted in more clicks for us”.

Strategies related to the construction of cultural scales through global websites, particularly from Europe and the U.S., are not necessarily shared by all cultural mediators. Even, the role digital technologies play in performing those scales, – in the form of access to and use of the internet, creating a feeling of connectivity and participation in the circulation of global cultural flows- actors also rely on sources that they feel closer in terms of both distance and affinity. The case of Maria is interesting. She is always looking at Latin American websites in order to have access to the cultural production of their local music scenes. In various conversations, she was more interested in mentioning Latin American websites or musicians’ profiles on MySpace, than European or U.S. websites and music bands (see Figure 2). She receives information directly from the Latin American bands that are on her MySpace, as well as by looking at websites in Argentina or Peru. She told an interesting story about her connections with people and music in Latin America:

Maria: “I have a virtual friend in Peru. An Argentinean friend told me ‘I know a Peruvian guy who lives in Argentina and he is studying film production’. I said, give him my Messenger and the guy went back to Peru [...] he started recommending me local bands. I told him that I am very interested in visiting Peru to know local bands [...] For that reason, I am also looking at websites in Mexico. Generally, everything is happening on the internet or by e-mail, which finally is also the internet. It is more immediate”.

Figure 16. Cristian and Maria's international website references



Source: prepared by the author from fieldwork material.

3.1. Travelling without moving?

By talking to and observing the practices of research participants, a question emerges related to the ability of cultural mediators to move within different global scenes. During fieldwork, some cultural mediators made short trips to locations such as Mexico, New York, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, and London. Most of these trips were for tourism, including being at music festivals or specific gigs, as well as shopping. These trips, and those undertaken before the time of the fieldwork, are intertwined as resources through which cultural mediators differentiate themselves. On the one hand, these physical trips are sources of information and experience that help individuals gain access to different cultural and taste flows. For instance, by participating in music festivals such as Coachella, or being in a music store in New York, cultural mediators can relate to music records and people that they do not necessarily see in Santiago. On the other hand, cultural mediators use these trips as experiences enabling them to establish cultural distinctions across different fields (e.g. advertising and the local music scene). This is achieved by using digital technologies such as Flickr, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter as spaces through which they share with friends and followers pictures and comments about their trips, the goods they bought, and the gigs they were part of. However, by physically travelling to those places they are showing and assembling their cultural capital as a form of direct access to the sources where the cultural flows that they discuss on their websites are produced and circulate. In this sense, for cultural mediators, being in those places is better than simply reading about them. Those travels operate as a resource of authenticity and superior knowledge (cultural capital) regarding their practices and uses of taste.

Alejandro, for instance, went to New York for a month. For him it was necessary to live there for the experience of being in a cultural capital, but also as a source of inspiration and information to work on his website (*Paniko*). He realised that in New York things are not necessarily very different from Santiago regarding the making and maintenance of a music website, and considered that he would like to buy the website domain *.com* in order to have a Latin American version of *Paniko* in Spanish and English based in New York.

A. – *Why did you go to New York?*

Alejandro: "Because is a cultural capital [...] things are happening there every day and for the media it is important that things happen on a daily basis, especially if it's media focused on culture".

A. – *What did you do there?*

Alejandro: “Going to gigs, knowing the city, learning how music magazines work. I bought lots of print magazines [...] there are conditions for leaving Santiago and moving to New York. Also, if you are going fairly well with your website – as I think things are happening for us with Paniko – the market there is much, much bigger”.

Like most of the research informants, Alejandro constantly invokes those trips abroad. For instance, by going to an international music festival, the research informants can obtain material, e.g. videos, interviews and pictures that become part of the sites. For instance, an important moment for Alejandro was his 2010 visit to the music festival Lollapalooza in Chicago. He paid for the trip himself and obtained authorised access from the festival’s organisers. He spent time talking to different musicians backstage and recording videos of them for his website. He was very proud of asking the festival’s creator, the musician Perry Farrell, about the possibility of bringing the festival to Chile to have a local version of Lollapalooza. Farrell told Alejandro that it sounded a very good idea without knowing that in 2011 the first version of Lollapalooza would take place in Santiago.

However, cultural mediators’ travel narratives are not always related to physical travelling. Following Urry’s (2002: 256) concept of ‘virtual travel’, cultural mediators ‘travel’ online, ‘transcending geographical and social distance’ by accessing international websites, as well as following in real time the live streaming of a music festival like Coachella⁴¹ in Los Angeles or Sonar in Barcelona. By doing this, they are exposed to varied flows in the form of images, places, and people. They travel without physically leaving Santiago. Individual senses of connectivity, feeling part of a network of circulation, operate as a form of distinction in the various fields they are part of (e.g. Santiago’s indie music scene, the field of music websites, and the field of advertising) because they feel themselves to be participating in the circulation of global cultural flows, and are able through their taste classifications to distinguish the ‘interesting’ or ‘cool’ flows. Moreover, that sense of connectivity and access to global cultural flows not only exists on the internet and in ‘virtual travel’, but is also experienced through travelling physically to music festivals and going to gigs by national and international artists, as well as being part of the local version of global music festivals like Lollapalooza. In this sense,

⁴¹ Created in 1999, Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival is a two-week festival that takes place in the Coachella Valley, California (U.S.). Various music genres converge, principally rock, indie-rock, and electronic music. From 2013 the festival has been streamed live on YouTube.

the story that cultural mediators are constructing and experiencing is more complex than the dichotomy between the local and the global as separate and rigid cultural scales. The way they become related to cultural flows and the forms of taste they are relaying and circulating are a result of the hybrid interaction between the local and the global scales they construct and perform, through the internet and in social situations with others in Santiago.

An example from the fieldwork illustrates the idea. I spent the day with Nicolas at his house, talking while he was uploading information to his website. It was the day the music festival Coachella began and it was streaming online on YouTube. Nicolas told me he missed the opportunity to go to that version of the festival because he had too much work (by that time he had a radio programme at a national radio station). In that context, he gave me a complex explanation about how he felt connected to a network in which cultural flows – in the form of music, images, lifestyles, and experiences - circulate locally and globally. But most importantly, he described how his ability to be part of that network of global music websites and international musicians, going to live festivals and watching their online counterparts, helps him to create the music scene in Santiago, as well as the technological field where different music websites co-exist. For Nicolas (NNM) these processes put Santiago, and his website, in a good position vis-à-vis other countries where interesting things are happening on a cultural level.

Nicolas: "I'm very proud of being up-to-date about things that are happening abroad. In Chile it is difficult to do these things, but with the internet it's easy. However, when people we admire come to Chile to play (DJ's or musicians)[...] people who are checking our website, the content and the music we are uploading tell us, 'this is the same music Fabric⁴² is playing in London,' it's the best for us, totally amazing. That's the payment we receive for the things we are doing [...] it is great going to New York or London, but it is great to have something of that here (in Santiago). We are doing that here, and it is great to know that the same party we are doing at Bar Loreto in Santiago summons 300 people in London or New York".

⁴² Fabric is "a night club in London, United Kingdom. It was voted number 1 in DJ Magazine's "Top 100 Clubs in the World" poll in 2007 and 08 and number 2 in 2009 and 10. It is located on Charterhouse Street opposite Smithfield meat market on the southern boundary of the London Borough of Islington". Retrieved from:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fabric_\(club\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fabric_(club))

A. – *Why do you think those things are happening?*

Nicolas: *"I think blogs and music websites have become popular and more people are willing to go to gigs and parties. There are no blogs like NNM in Argentina, and not very many in Brazil. We have lots of readers from Argentina and Colombia (a place where similar things are happening). But in Santiago there are lots of inquisitive and motivated people doing things. Because, in terms of the amount of people doing things in Santiago, we are not so many, but in terms of proportion it is much more than compared to other countries. Here a party or a gig with the same characteristics as ones in New York have the same amount of people."*

When the 'local' meets the 'global': cultural mediators' experiences of being recognised abroad

According to some research participants, one of the most important motivations for creating and maintaining websites is being recognised. This means people knowing of the website and getting work cited by global music websites. During the fieldwork there were two occasions when the work of cultural mediators were cited on those international – and well recognised- music websites. The first was when the website of the British magazine *New Musical Express* published an article based on a song uploaded by the website *Paniko* by the band Jane's Addiction. Even though the magazine did not make reference to *Paniko* (other than by uploading the song that was available on Paniko's Soundcloud account), it was the first time for Alejandro that his website had been cited on one of his music references. Immediately, Alejandro wrote this tweet on his Twitter account, after sending me an e-mail telling me the news:

Alejandro's Twitter account: @djdrga: 'What do you know of sending content to NME?'

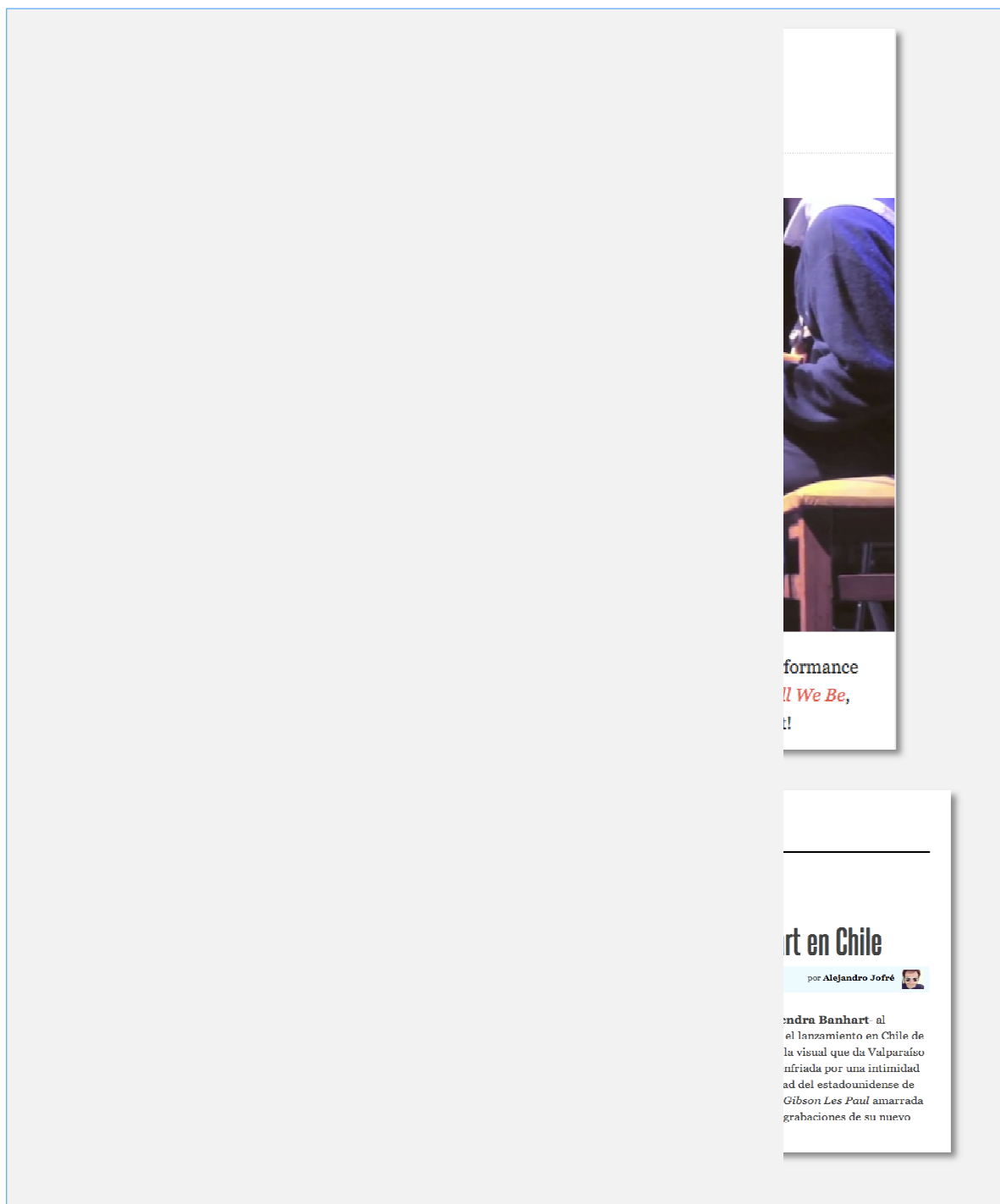
Firstly, by doing this, Alejandro showed his ability to generate musical information through *Paniko* that is relevant to a website like *NME*. In the same way he is always looking on that site for content for his own website. Secondly, he demonstrated his particular competence to put into circulation information as part of a global network of cultural flows which is represented by music websites that are permanently producing and exchanging music information. Thirdly, by distinguishing himself from other websites by relating on Twitter that his content is part of one of the most important music websites abroad, at the same time he is situating *Paniko* at the same level as *NME* in the field. Similarly, when the musician Devendra Banhart played in Chile as part of a music event sponsored by the energy drink 'Vitamin Water', *Paniko* wrote an article and uploaded two videos of Banhart performing two new songs to YouTube. The next day, Pitchfork published an article quoting 'Chilean culture site *Paniko*' (see Figure 3). Alejandro told me that for him it is very important to feel recognised by his *peers*, and that word means for him doing the same thing very far from New York or London. Alejandro and his website *Paniko* were not the only case where the 'local meets the global'.

Similar was the case of Rodrigo. He usually acts as the website photographer, documenting the gigs and performances of national and international bands for *Super 45*. During the music festival Lollapalooza in Santiago in 2012, Rodrigo was contacted by Pitchfork to take pictures of the festival to be shown simultaneously on *Super 45* and Pitchfork. When Rodrigo's pictures were shown on Pitchfork and *Super 45*, he started uploading messages onto Facebook. The creators of various websites included in this study congratulated Rodrigo (using the 'like' option on Facebook). For instance, Rodrigo wrote on Facebook that the person in charge of the visual interface of the artist Kanye West congratulated him for his pictures:

Rodrigo's Facebook Status: 'The author of Kanye's visual interface wrote me congratulating me on my pictures... sorry about the self-promotion, but these things don't happen daily'.

It is interesting how Rodrigo exhibits, as part of his 'digital capital', the compliment he received. He is trying not to indulge in self-promotion of his work, which is something that is commonly rejected by cultural mediators. It operates as a way to attenuate the obvious exposure of their digital capital.

Figure 17. *Pitchfork* citing *Paniko*'s coverage of musician Devendra Banhart performance in Chile



Source: Collected from fieldwork material

4. Moving across fields: the local music scene and local music websites

Cultural mediators move between complex and overlapped fields, which is the result of the interconnection between them. For instance, the field of advertising represented by branding and marketing agencies interested in promoting products and paying for space on websites interrelates with the field of the scene at the point when those agencies produce music events - that is, marketing events where musicians play - hiring musicians and inviting cultural mediators to take part (for a complete analysis of this topic see Chapter 6). Similarly, as explained in Chapter 3, through their websites, cultural mediators create a technological space where they fight to legitimate their taste classifications based on their objectification, circulation, and exchange. That space is also a field where they try to catch the attention of audiences within the local music scene in order to accumulate and exchange their digital capital. That field emerges as a result of cultural mediators' representations on their websites of Santiago's indie music scene cultural production. In that context, as described in Chapter 3, websites and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are tools that help individuals to be part of networks of circulation of cultural flows, but also as markers of distinction between them (e.g. how cultural mediators use ICTs to curate, qualify, and then circulate flows). By curating and circulating varied cultural flows on their websites – based on flows that circulate on global music websites, as well as the local music scene - cultural mediators fight to distinguish themselves. In order to achieve positions of distinction by moving across the field of the music scene and the field of local music websites, cultural mediators' strategies are based on their ability to select and distribute the work of alternative bands, but also on connecting those flows with international websites. By doing this, and also through discourses and meanings about their 'indie' character as cultural mediators, they can differentiate between each other's work in terms of the means of production and the precariousness around their practices. For instance, they combine production of the websites with other activities that are paid and operate as their main sources of income. Similarly, they produce websites because the mainstream media is not a source of information or a space where interesting cultural flows circulate.

There are four intertwined distinctions that are considered relevant for cultural mediators to evaluate their position in the field of music websites by moving across different fields, particularly the local music scene. Firstly, the number of years they have been maintaining their websites. A new website like Maria's *Rocanrol*, created in 2010, is not

considered in the same way as *Super 45*, which has for many years been mapping the indie-rock scene in Santiago and internationally. Secondly, there is the level of professionalisation in the production of websites, that is, how much time is involved in making and maintaining them. Thirdly, the topics of interest that are part of websites' content, that is, what they talk about in terms of music styles, fashion trends, and the relations they establish with brands through advertising agencies. Fourthly, cultural mediators consider as relevant the strategies through which their uses of taste are objectified, and then put into circulation by using, for instance, Facebook or Twitter to promote their site's content. As Alejandro explains:

"When we started with our site there were two or three websites about the scene and popular culture: Super 45, Disorder, and us. The case of Disorder is strange because Camilo works in other places; he is not working 24/7 on the site. On the contrary, that's not the case with POTQ [...] That site anticipated me in lots of things. That is a site I envy a lot because they do good musical work. You can see the work on the site. It's the same with music bands, when they are working full-time on their music. You can see that in their sound. POTQ does very good work because they are dedicated 100%. They can reach (news and content) soon or late, but they reach everything registered, which is something I consider as cool (la raja). That's my goal. When I finish my university studies I would like to work 24/7 on the site and try to see if it's profitable, because I'm not interested in working for the sake of art".

For Alejandro, *POTQ*'s ability to cover the issues of the scene, independently of the frequency or timing, is a category of evaluation of the site's performance and status within the field cultural mediators are creating. *POTQ* and *Paniko* have some similarities in terms of their respective contents. For instance, as *POTQ*'s creator Felipe explains, his site is oriented to mainstream as well as indie rock-pop bands. But most importantly, he wants to show an 'attitude' and 'cool' things. On his site might be the new Radiohead song along with an interview with the local musician Gepe or the indie band Ases Falsos. In this context, for him there is no space for rivalry because the 'market', as he defines the field where he is involved, is very small. "Fighting is stupid because it is important that a synergy exists between the sites, that all are working together to create culture, to make Santiago a 'cool' place". However, in practice, cultural mediators fight for a position within the field of the scene, as well as the field of music websites. In the case of Felipe and *POTQ*, he knows that his site has a huge number of Twitter and Facebook followers, as well as visits, compared to the rest included in this study. He promotes those numbers across different fields and on his website, Facebook and Twitter.

Compared to Felipe, Cristian knows his position within the field is important, not necessarily based on the number of visitors to his website, but because he was an important actor within the scene producing gigs - particularly by international DJs and indie musicians - which enabled him and *Super 45* to establish direct contact with musicians, rather than repeating content produced by international music websites. For instance, in 2000 Cristian and some friends produced concerts by the U.S. band Animal Collective and the Swedish musician Jose Gonzalez. This was something very 'avant-garde' for at that time were not many international indie artists visiting Chile: something that gives Cristian a certain status within the field of music websites and the local music scene.

Cristian: "Sites are not equivalent or comparable. They emerge because they are points of view. Lots of people that are working at the music magazine Extravaganza⁴³ were rejected to work with us [...] 'We don't want you writing here, cool but no, thanks'. Paniko or Disorder are more similar to what the 'Zona de Contacto'⁴⁴ did, more related to a lifestyle of young writers who are living in Santiago. POTQ is much more about music, but it is empty music. They have a much bigger volume of visits than us, but they include music from bands like 'Queen' to music that never interested us. So they look us as the snobbish guys on earth, and maybe they are right, but our point of view is specialised. We are a specialised website and we can't apologise for that".

Like Cristian, Nicolas (NNM) differentiates his website from *Paniko* or *Pousta* based on the quality of the articles, particularly how well they are written, but also regarding the type of music those sites cover. Also, in his case he knows there is another difference. His partner on NNM is the owner of 'Fauna', a small firm in charge of producing gigs, bringing international indie-rock bands to Chile. Fauna has been responsible for concerts by a several bands like the Australian psychedelic bands Tame Impala and Cut Copy, and the 1970s U.S. punk band Television, as well as well-recognised DJs. In that context, like Cristian, Nicolas can interview those musicians, uploading content to his website. These connections and the ability to produce gigs are an advantage for Nicolas and Cristian within the field of websites and the local music

⁴³ *Extravaganza* is a Chilean music magazine created in 1989 by two brothers, Francisco and Fernando Mujica. The magazine started as a fanzine, covering local and international indie-rock scenes. Between 1993 and 1999 the magazine was distributed nationally and then stopped circulating. In 2008 it was re-published until 2012. Cristian began writing in the first phase of the magazine before creating *Super 45* in 1996.

⁴⁴ *Zona de Contacto* was a printed supplement of the national newspaper *El Mercurio* between 1991 and 2010. It was oriented to younger audiences, combining articles about music and literature. Some of its participants became well-recognised opinion leaders. *Zona de Contacto* and the national radio *Rock and Pop* were considered as referents of youth culture in the 1990s.

scene. On the one hand, they produce the scene through the objectifications and comments they make about local bands, but also produce gigs by international indie bands or respected DJs in Santiago. On the other hand, in that context they can produce their websites with original content in the form of interviews with musicians, or have access to new music obtained directly from musicians or DJs. Similarly, as a weapon to differentiate theirs from the rest of the websites, cultural mediators can share with musicians not only as fans, but also as actors who can promote music, recommending it to other people. Thus musicians and cultural mediators establish a direct relationship, which also operates as a source of distinction for cultural mediators. For some, translating content from an international music website instead of recommending music they have received directly from musicians is not the same.

Nicolas: "My site enables me to know all the musicians that come to Chile. We go out to have dinner with all of them, also listening to music. Another 'profit' we obtain from the site – and for that reason we are interested in things that are happening abroad - is that we know people who are really involved in the thing abroad. We can't be more involved with that than when we are talking to them. That thing also opens our minds, like, let's move there, we can't stay talking about Chile all the time. Let's go straight where things are truly happening outside Chile and then bring it here. We can play that music at the parties we have. We are a blog much more global than anyone. POTQ is very Chilean in the way they do their thing, focused on Chilean bands and international music, but they go to Spin magazine to translate their news. We are not a blog of 'music news'. We are a blog for recommendations. That distinguishes us."

However, the sense of distinction that Nicolas describes operates as a symbolic boundary that can be converted into a physical boundary when cultural mediators are part of marketing events in bounded spaces. Also, these boundaries can be literally traced on the websites as a result of cultural mediators' uses of taste to curate flows of content. Alejandro (Paniko) is conscious about how, through uses of taste that are represented on the websites, its creators trace symbolic boundaries where other audiences and consumers can feel excluded, in the same way as it represents differences between cultural mediators' styles of mediation.

Alejandro: "For instance, the creators of the website No Naci en Manchester (NNM) started organising parties based on the music style they like, which is more oriented to dance music. Then they included live performances by local indie bands or artists like Javiera Mena or Denver. They started producing a scene regarding the type the music they enjoy [...] some people called it 'shuper' or 'hipster', referring to urban tribes that are part of those very small scenes, which are

successful because they are produced by people with good contacts, you know? Then brands are interested in supporting those parties because they like that type of public, you know? But those parties are sectarian. In Maipú (a middle class area in Santiago, which is the second largest commune in Chile) you don't see posters about those parties, neither in San Bernardo (another middle class area of Santiago where Alejandro lives). Those parties are located in Providencia (a high class area) and uptown⁴⁵. I don't think they have posters: they are promoted online, on the internet, in websites that are visited by less than 1,000 daily".

The difference in terms of the style of mediation presented by Alejandro is interesting because it also shows to what extent cultural mediators feel part of the same scene they are objectifying on their respective websites. The stylistic differences between each website are also a particular form of mediation and representation of the scene they feel part of, and create through their classifications. For Alejandro, the scene he produces and feels part of with *Paniko* is not the same as the one Nicolas produces and represents on *NNM*. The main difference is the style of music (dance music versus Chilean indie pop, or global music festivals like Lollapalooza, for instance), as well as the type of topics they present. In the case of *Paniko* there is space for 'under' literature, as well as coverage of marketing events where bands play. In the case of Nicolas, only dance music or remixes of indie pop bands are part of the content of *NNM*. In this sense, the differences between the type of scene Alejandro and Nicolas feel part of is also the difference between which cultural flows - in terms of musical taste or relations with other fields like advertising, promoting certain types of brands - they try to legitimate on their websites, but also within the fields they are connecting to: for instance, advertising and the music scene.

Similarly, Alejandro's quote reflects how Nicolas' uses of taste and its corresponding representations on *NNM* operate as a weapon that symbolically differentiates actors' positionality within the field they are creating. Meanwhile, although both are doing something similar - producing a music website - the worlds they are configuring through their practices situate them in different positions in the fields they are part of. For instance, Nicolas carries advertising campaigns for telecoms in Chile; in 2012 he was a host of a radio programme at

⁴⁵ The city of Santiago is Chile's capital and is situated in a valley where seven million people live. Commonly, for its inhabitants there is a symbolic boundary that divides the city between the rich areas and the middle class and poor areas. 'Plaza Italia' (Italy Square) divides the communes of Providencia and Santiago, and traditionally Chileans used to understand it as a symbolic boundary between the poor and the rich. Similarly, because the city is near the mountains, people commonly refer going *arriba* (uptown) or *abajo* (downtown), which also denotes going to the rich and poor areas of the city, respectively.

Horizonte⁴⁶, and he is a popular DJ at brand events⁴⁷. Alongside his work on *Paniko*, Alejandro collaborates as a journalist and designer for the online newspaper *El Dinamo*, but he is not involved in advertising campaigns or obtaining rewards, in terms of income or prestige as DJ, as a result of his work on *Paniko*. Both Nicolas and Alejandro have parallel jobs while they work on their websites, although, compared with Alejandro, Nicolas is more connected to different fields of cultural production. He participates in the circuit of 'brand events', which is the result of the connections he has established through his website and through various jobs. This complexity, the ability to position themselves in and move between fields as a result of their curation of cultural flows, is not necessarily reflected in the number of Twitter followers on their personal accounts, or their websites' Facebook pages, respectively. Alejandro has reached 3.000 followers on his personal Twitter account, 37.292 followers on *Paniko*'s account, and 19.925 fans on Facebook. Meanwhile, Nicolas has 7.028 followers on Twitter, *NNM*'s Twitter account has 4.898 followers, and the site's page on Facebook has 8.547 fans.

As Warde (2008) suggests, actors' shared tastes operate to create a sense of 'belonging and solidarity and between-class sense of distinction'. While creating and maintaining websites are practices shared by cultural mediators, who are differentiated by their ability to curate flows based on different uses of taste, there is a space where they feel part of the same project, or as if they are within a 'shared project'. This is empirically observed through the judgements of cultural mediators regarding cultural flows or social events. In 2011 the U.S. music festival Lollapalooza arrived in Santiago organised by 'Lotus', a local producer, together with the festival's creator, the musician and member of Jane's Addiction, Perry Farrell. This was the first time that an international music festival had had a local version in Santiago. For cultural mediators, this was like a dream in terms of the bands that were visiting Chile. It also furnished the possibility of being part of a music festival in Santiago, like Coachella in Los Angeles or

⁴⁶ 'Horizonte' is a national radio station that was very popular amongst young audiences (aged 20-34) between 2008 and 2012. The style of music they played was 'indie-rock' and was considered a niche radio for the 'hipsters'. It was also the official sponsor or media partner of the most important music concerts in Santiago, as well as the first version of Lollapalooza music festival held in 2011. In 2012 the radio was sold to the Luksic Group, founded by Andronico Luksic – the richest person in Chile, according to Forbes magazine. By then, the radio had changed its style to appeal to a more adult audience.

⁴⁷ 'Brand events' or 'Marketing Events', as commonly defined by research participants, are private events produced by marketing agencies, financed by brands, oriented to a limited number of consumers and entertainment figures to promote new products. Commonly, some 'brand events' include live performances of local indie music bands. Research participants are always invited to those events by advertising agencies, and some establish economic relationships with them, considering that some brands feature on websites through paid advertising. In the case of Nicolas, he is usually hired by advertising agencies to play music as a DJ at those events. For a detailed analysis of the role of cultural mediators at 'brand events', see Chapter 6.

Glastonbury in the United Kingdom. Cultural mediators were enthusiastic about the festival. For instance, during the fieldwork I spent the day at *Pousta's* office observing and talking to Max and Pancho. They were excited because Kanye West would close the festival the next day, and it was also an opportunity to understand the site's style based on their taste:

Max: "We will go to Lollapalooza on Sunday to see Kanye West, who is very like Pousta. You'll see. If you check our website you'll find like 30 articles about him. We love him, he represents all our characteristics. He has a big ego and you can't say anything against him because he is really good at what he does [...] He changed the way hip-hop was made in the world. If we had to choose a 'face' for our website it would be him".

After the festival, several websites uploaded reviews and comments about the bands and the social event they were part of. The case of Maria (*Rocanrol*) was interesting, compared to other websites that celebrated every aspect of the festival. She wrote an article criticising members of the audience who were not interested in bands and music, but were there only 'for being cool and paying lots of money for being part of a social event, without thinking of the music'.

Maria: "I'm old school, where going to a gig was something marginal [...] when you paid 10 'lucas'⁴⁸ and went to a night club or to Victor Jara Arena [...] not so many people went down by Plaza Italia. Today you can't see the same people that were part of those gigs at music festivals like Lollapalooza. [...] Similarly, that's the problem with the rest of the music websites which are part of that circuit, promoting that form of consumption of music".

While Nicolas celebrated the possibility of having a music festival like Lollapalooza in Chile in order to 'live the experience of being in a festival', he also agrees with Maria's judgement – even though he doesn't share its critical tone - considering that some people 'feign liking music, but that is only an aspiration; it is sad, but it's true [...] Some people are only interested in the social side of music, without paying attention to the music itself'. In some ways, they are both claiming the attribution of being pure fans of music, but they also feel part of the same 'project', sharing the same way of enjoying music. The tension between Maria's judgements about the websites' responsibility regarding the experience of listening to live music is worth examining, particularly because, following her post on *Rocanrol* which was criticised by some cultural mediators as Nicolas suggests, various websites began to comment

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A *luca* is the popular way to refer to 1.000 Chilean pesos.

about how music festivals and the experience of going to a gig was changing as a result of people who are interested not in music, but only in the social side of music, showing others that they are part of something 'cool'. For instance, an article published on *Paniko* commenting on the music festival 'Primavera Fauna' was entitled 'We had lost the experience'. Similar to Maria's, the point was how passive the audience were: more interested in checking Twitter on their mobiles than listening to the music bands. The website *POTQ* wrote similar judgements about the gig of the punk rock New York band, Television. Here is an extract from the review:

"So the band Television passed by Santiago. Maybe a little misplaced by the energy of a detestable place, they failed to connect at all. Not as lively despite a perfectly constructed and performed set list from start to finish. So passed a piece of rock history in the eyes of many. Many were disappointed with the unfortunate and erroneous impression of being in front 'museum pieces' that did not please the audience. They need to know that the museum pieces are respected more. At least in those places there is silence".

It is interesting that the site's audience commented upon the article, especially commenting that these kinds of gigs which are sponsored by brands, in this case Converse, are oriented towards a small niche of consumers, more interested in being part of the party than the music event. Through these examples it is apparent that cultural mediators share a similar project, independent of their taste classifications: a project that is based on their fight for positions of distinction within fields, reclaiming the value of music, and proposing a form of behaviour which they believe is a 'proper' musical experience.

Meanings about the 'commercial' and the 'political'

Cultural mediators move between different fields of cultural production. For instance, by promoting brands and products through paid advertising, they are in contact with people in the field of advertising. Similarly, by promoting the music of local and international bands, they establish relations with musicians, record label managers, and people from clubs where gigs take place. This is a context in which cultural mediators establish categories and deploy strategies that enable them to move between those fields, but most importantly to justify their judgements and uses of taste according to the spaces they are part of. Through those strategies they display discourses and meanings across fields, for instance, about the 'commercial' and the 'political'.

Max created *Pousta*, which is oriented mostly to topics like advertising, music, and design. He is constantly in touch with advertising agencies, brand managers, but also 'indie' artists and musicians, and workers within the field of advertising. During fieldwork, he wrote a post on his website about the work of the Serbian performance artist Marina Abramovic. The post was entitled *'Talking about Marina Abramovic makes me look like an intellectual?'* and Max analyses in an ironic way how 'art performance' can be considered a form of art, laughing about the movement Marina Abramovic made from the avant-garde and independent art scene of the 1980s towards being converted into a fashion icon with retrospectives at MOMA in New York. However, the interesting point is the connection he establishes comparing Abramovic's collaboration with pop artist Lady Gaga to collect funds for her arts institute, with a group of Chilean actor/artists promoting the 'private' pension system in Chile. Max's critique of the kind of artists that 'sell' their pure work to become rich, by promoting brands or a private pension system, is part of a world he represents on his website. His critique met other posts about the new advertising campaign for the brand Adidas, the 10th anniversary of the coffee chain Starbucks in Chile, and a new album from the local band Picnic Kibun. For him, the main characteristic of his site is as a space where different opinions about cultural flows meet. Sometimes he feels that has to moderate his 'critical side' considering the convergence of different worlds – brands, advertising, music, design, etc. - that are part of the space he creates. In this sense, he is aware of having to maintain his levels of digital capital positioning within varied fields, but also to gain recognition through the way he mediates and connects the work of Marina Abramovic with how a group of Chilean actors support the private pension system. For Max there are no contradictions in establishing these categorisations and distinctions. On the contrary, that is part of his 'style' of mediation of cultural flows, connecting different spheres of cultural production like the 'indie' with the 'commercial'. Max knows that he likes to be critical, but if he wants to maintain relations with people from different fields, independently of how they valorise his critical ideas about advertising, art or music, he has to moderate his judgements according to the field and the 'game' he is playing.

Max: "Now we are trying to be a beacon of light; before, we were oriented to create youth opinion. Sometimes I feel that to communicate things is based on or oriented to maintaining the status quo. The more popular you are, the more money you make, the more you have to cover your back, not taking as many risks as before when you had nothing".

During the fieldwork, the work of cultural mediators was shaped by the social climate that affected Santiago's daily life. As the British magazine *The Economist* put it:

"You can hardly walk down Santiago's main thoroughfare, the Alameda, these days without coming across someone with a protest banner and a grievance. Last month some 30,000 people marched against the government's decision to approve the building of a giant hydroelectric plant in pristine Patagonia. On June 16th 80,000 students, teachers and sympathisers demanded more money for state education in what was reported to be the biggest protest march since the mid-1980s, when Chileans braved General Pinochet's water cannon to demand a return to democracy"¹.

By the time of the fieldwork, protests were frequent against the first right-wing government since Pinochet's dictatorship in 1990. However, considering the context, cultural mediators did not necessarily represent the social climate or the protests on their websites. One night I expected to go with Alejandro to a gig by the new indie success, a solo artist called 'Pedropiedra'. I arrived at the venue in a taxi moving between protesters, and the police trying to crack down on the demonstrators. Then I received a message from Alejandro saying that he was not able to listen to music inspired by the protest, so he preferred going to the streets and observing the protests. The next day, he wrote an article on *Paniko* about his view of the protests and citizens' discontent with the government's decision to allow the construction of the hydroelectric plant 'Hydroaysen' in the extreme south of the country. Interestingly, he signed the article he wrote with a false name. In a way he did not feel very comfortable talking about political issues on his website unless he was indulging in his most frequent hobby. Alejandro is mediating the political on his website, negotiating his digital capital in the space he has constructed, connecting political issues with music and other consumer goods. Alejandro's story shows how cultural mediators move between different fields, in this case the field of politics and other fields that are represented on his website. However, the fact that he did not sign the article reflects actors' strategies to engage with processes they consider are interesting for the site's audiences and which increase cultural mediators' digital capital. For instance, when I asked Juan (192) why he was not interested to write about the protests on his website, he gave me a clear explanation, directly connecting his judgements with the accumulation of cultural mediators' digital capital:

Juan: "For our site those issues are not interesting [...] I think for other sites, they do that to gain more audiences".

A. - Do you think so?

Juan: "Yes, they do that according to the 'trending topics'². If you want to position yourself you have to write comments about those issues to reach more people [...] but I can't talk about issues that are not part of our website. Before we used to write critical articles, but it was oriented to make some noise, and after I realised we have to support only the music scene and position ourselves by doing that, so let's talk about the music we are listening to".

1 "Marching On". *The Economist*, June 23rd 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.economist.com/node/18867572>

2 Juan is referring to Twitter and the use of that technology by cultural mediators in which trending topics are "a word, phrase or topic that is tagged at a greater rate than other tags". Retrieved from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter#Trending_topics

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how cultural mediators display different strategies to move and operate across different fields in order to distinguish themselves along those axes. Particularly, it described how they display varied dynamics and uses of taste, curating and qualifying cultural flows on their websites that are circulated online and across fields such as the local music scene, global music websites, and advertising. This chapter has also examined how individuals circulate their uses of taste on their own websites with the aim of achieving positions of distinction within the fields they are part of, but also as strategies to perform their sense of distinction, delineating symbolic boundaries to differentiate themselves through discourses and the flows they are curating in the making of their websites. Through the curation, qualification, and circulation of those flows on their websites and social networking sites, cultural mediators display different uses of taste across fields. Thus, they shape their connections with actors from those fields (e.g. global music websites, the local music scene) to accumulate and exchange their digital capital. Their websites are spaces where 'qualifications' (Callon, et. al. 2002) of cultural flows and forms of taste take place. The websites are the result of processes where cultural flows are examined, judged, shaped, and acted on by cultural mediators in order to make them convertible and exchangeable. In this context, digital capital involves socio-digital skills oriented towards achieving ownership and control of positions across digital networks. Similarly, individuals' strategies - moving across fields, curating and circulating flows - in order to distinguish themselves are also central for the accumulation of digital capital.

Actors move across fields and audiences in order to distinguish themselves by displaying uses and dynamics of taste that are 'weapons' (Bourdieu, 1984) to differentiate between themselves. In the case of the field of mainstream media, some cultural mediators validate their work covering the cultural production of the scene by criticising the mainstream media's coverage of the local scene. Others ignore the mainstream media and contest the 'consecrated' forms of taste which national newspapers and magazines validate. Thus, they reaffirm their position outside mainstream forms of cultural production. By relying on global cultural flows obtained principally from international music websites, cultural mediators also experience and construct cultural scales so as to feel part of the same network of cultural production. Moving across the field of global music websites, they deploy two intertwined strategies to distinguish themselves. Firstly, they travel to the places they consider as 'cultural

capitals' to be involved and gain access to varied cultural forms and flows. Also, through 'virtual travelling' (Urry, 2002), facilitated by the use of digital technologies, they live the same experience and establish contacts with flows, as well as international musicians, for instance. In this process, individuals feel themselves to be in a position where they translate those experiences in the making of their websites, by curating flows, objectifying them and putting them into circulation, as a central dimension in the accumulation of their 'digital capital'. By doing this, the websites are shaped by actors' expectations and experiences of moving between places, performing a sense of 'global connectivity', which is something central to their identities as cultural mediators. Finally, cultural mediators move across the field of the local music scene, distinguishing themselves by displaying abilities to discover new bands, and connecting different flows of the local scene to the translocal scene through their websites.

Cultural mediators distinguish themselves across fields by displaying a sense of exclusiveness, which is a form of 'sub-cultural' capital (Thornton, 1995). They access global cultural flows, they discover bands that no one has known before, they share with musicians and flows from abroad, and they go to international cultural capitals. That exclusiveness is the result of individuals' abilities to move across fields and audiences, but also to their ability to curate and circulate cultural flows, displaying dynamics and uses of taste that are then objectified on their websites. As a result, meanings about the global, the commercial, and the political are configured by moving across varied and overlapping fields (e.g. the local scene, global music websites, and mainstream media). However, one movement that is crucial for their identity as cultural mediators is the way they move across the field of advertising in order to distinguish themselves, but also to achieve positions of distinction within that field. Cultural mediators establish relations with advertising and marketing agencies to promote brands and products on their websites in order to obtain economic rewards. In the next chapter, I will explore one crucial interface between cultural mediators and fields, particularly their strategies and meanings displayed in advertising, which is potentially also the most threatening to their sense of distinction as 'indie' actors. However, it is also a relevant field, where they control digital flows in order to accumulate and exchange their digital capital, connecting different fields of cultural production.

Chapter 6

Cultural Mediators and the Field of Advertising

This chapter examines how cultural mediators connect the flows of the music scenes they mediate on their websites with the field of advertising, particularly as part of ‘branded music events’ organised by advertising agencies. The chapter considers cultural mediators to be the “transmission belt” (Bourdieu, 1984) between producers and consumers, “embodying and promoting an ethos of fun and pleasure in order to produce the need for their product and, by extension, themselves” (Smith & Mathews, 2010: 408). Cultural mediators are actors who shape the flows that circulate at events, that is, people, brands and identities, and convert them into something valuable for consumers through their representations of the events on the websites. In this chapter I trace empirically how, through their practices, cultural mediators connect the scene (as a field of cultural production) and the field of music websites with the field of advertising in the making of niche markets, thereby blurring their boundaries. Central to this is the role of human and non-human actors, particularly the position of cultural mediators during music events, and their websites as artefacts that connects –but also shapes through different cultural distinctions deployed by cultural mediators- the flows that circulate in the scene and the market (Moor, 2003). In this sense, cultural mediators connect various fields of cultural production by mediating them on their websites. Thus websites are spaces making visible a set of social and economic relations while they connect a range of fields.

My argument is that cultural mediators construct both networks and objectifications in the form of a website, which constitutes exchangeable capital. That capital – particularly ‘digital capital’ - is seen by marketing and advertising agencies as something valuable to be incorporated into their value chains. That capital is objectified in the form of a website, as well as through social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter where cultural mediators’ distinctions and classifications of flows are represented, but also distributed through the networks they create by using digital technologies. This process reveals a series of tensions and negotiations for cultural mediators, with and between themselves and with advertising agents. The negotiations are related to the possibility of making a living through their websites, as well as degrees of professionalisation. At the same time, it raises issues about being part of market-sized forms of cultural production and the payoff of that decision. Similarly, I trace empirically

how cultural mediators, through the websites, and by extension their practices in social networking sites (e.g. Facebook and Twitter), are the basis upon which they connect the scene to different entities that construct marketplaces, as the result of cultural and economic calculations (Slater, 2002). Music events are bounded spaces through which cultural mediators' objectifications of the scenes are assembled in a whole set of relations, in particular economic, that commodify the scene's cultural production. It is in this context that cultural mediators' digital capital is relevant to this chapter: on the one hand, as valuable knowledge that people from the field of advertising need to incorporate into their value chains; on the other hand, as a resource that enables mediators to make a living through their practices, operating as a resource to position themselves within other fields. In this sense, cultural mediators bring together the 'cultural' and 'economic' dimensions in the making of niche markets, by classifying cultural flows – in this case brands, flows, and goods - but also by their knowledge of digital technology. By doing this, they position themselves in a network of social and economic relations based on objectifications that are part of their websites, connecting different fields of cultural production.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first explores cultural mediators' definitions of being 'indie' in order to understand to what extent they try to represent those definitions on the websites. As cultural mediators in the context of Santiago's indie music scene, research informants are conscious of their positions as part of an independent field of cultural production, considering their practices in the making of the websites as an opportunity to make a living. Even so, they understand that, compared with indie musicians, they are not independent in a way that is beyond mainstream cultural production. This is understandable considering that, during the fieldwork, there was a transition in the way the scene is constructed and assembled: from working without private sponsorship to the presence of market agents (e.g. branding and advertising agencies) interested in sponsoring the cultural production of the scene, and being part of the flow of goods that circulates there. In that transition, through their practices in the making and maintenance of websites, its creators have been responsible for representing and shaping the scene to small groups of audiences, which are relevant for actors from the field of advertising to create niche markets. In the same way, that transition has affected cultural mediators' practices, representing a change in the way they are related to their sites: first as a hobby, then towards something more professional, dealing with different types of tensions during that process.

The second section looks at processes through which cultural mediators are related to advertising agents, by exploring two intertwined narratives. First, I recount the way people from the field of advertising, particularly brand managers and advertising executives evaluate the work of website creators. They consider cultural mediators to be trendsetters enabling them to connect their brands to niche audiences. Cultural mediators also negotiate the definitions around their practices with advertising agents in order to work together. Both narratives, and experiences, are based on different cultural calculations and qualifications (Callon, et. al. 2002; Ariztía, 2013) of the websites and its audiences performed by cultural mediators and advertising agents in order to establish commercial and economic relations. The analysis is based on interviews with brand managers and executives of branding agencies, the creators of websites, and my own observations over meetings with them and executives. Through the establishment of economic and social relations between advertising agents and cultural mediators, brands become part of the flows of the scene represented on the websites. This also demands that cultural mediators be involved in branded music events organised by advertising agencies.

The third section explores how the scene and the market are assembled in a particular 'branded music event', the Corona Clash, as a result of a set of cultural and economic calculations performed by different types of cultural mediators: actors from the field of advertising, and the creators of music websites about Santiago's indie music scene. I discuss how cultural mediators qualify branded music events in two intertwined forms: as moments where they make sense of their practices, and their position in relation to market agents. However, these meanings move between the affect involved in their practices, and their negotiations during the relations performed there, mostly economic, and valorised by audiences and advertising agents, reducing the importance of the music in that context. After reviewing the main empirical findings discussed here, I finish by proposing that, through different set of practices, particularly the performance of cultural mediators' digital capital, they occupy a central role in the branding of the scene, connecting the social worlds of the indie identity in the making of a market niche where their cultural distinctions are valorised and exchanged.

1. The morality of being indie: between autonomy and dependency

In this section, I describe what 'indie' means for a group of music website creators, and how these definitions are negotiated during the establishment of formal relations with market agents. I discuss how individuals conceptualise the indie identity as a form of cultural distinction, comparing those definitions with their practices in the making of websites. Those definitions enable individuals to make sense of themselves, their position in the scene as a field of cultural production, but most importantly, in negotiating their relations with actors from different fields, particularly the field of advertising. In this context, I will explore how individual narratives about being 'indie' facilitate understanding and performing the stage of professionalisation in which they connect the scene with market agents.

The websites included in this research were founded at different times between 1996 and 2009. In this sense, varying stories in regard to being 'indie' emerged as a result of the generational gap between website creators, all of them inspired by their love of music, being involved with the scene in Santiago, and their indie references. For Cristian, who founded Super 45 in 1996, talking about 'indie' is linked to the idea of going to the record store, spending the day listening to music, waiting for the owner to recommend something new to you. This newness for him was related to the sounds of New York and the UK in the late 1980s, particularly the shoe-gaze movement⁴⁹.

C: "I have a 90's idea (of being indie). For me, indie is like going to the flea market searching for a cassette. It is related to collecting, an issue of love focused in the music and its aesthetics".

In this context, what 'indie' means to research participants moves in different and sometimes opposite directions. On the one hand, indie is considered to be individual autonomy in the face of market rules and processes of mass production. On the other hand, dependency on the market as a source of economic resources to achieve that autonomy, to be creative and economically sustainable, emerges as the main characteristic of being 'indie'. Market rules and mass production can affect creativity in the process of cultural production, especially when the result of cultural creation becomes commodified. Autonomy has a dimension that also involves a degree of self-responsibility around cultural creation, which is associated with individualism. Max, the creator of the website Poustá, explains this double dimension of being 'indie':

⁴⁹

"Shoe-gaze" is a sub-genre of alternative rock that emerged from the U K in the late 1980s.

M: "Independent' is something self-produced. The good thing is that the limits of your development are determined by your own limits. Your indie record has bad artwork because you did it badly or the person in charge of it did. If your record is bad it's your fault".

The individualistic side of being indie, that is, individuals' responsibility in the process of cultural creation and the result of it, is connected to the autonomy that can be achieved when individuals make a living doing what they want to do. The possibility of making a living, without constraints on freedom in the creative process, is the essence of being indie for research participants. Considering that their definitions of being indie are oriented towards music production and distribution, when they think about their definitions of indie in regard to their work on the websites, some tensions emerge, especially about the relation between their practices and definitions that are situated in economic relations within specific markets. When I asked Alejandro, the creator of the website Paniko and a respected fan of the scene and its artists, whether he is 'indie', he had doubts about it, mainly because being indie is related to an economic independence he has not yet achieved

AA. - What is being "indie" to you?

A: "Make a living from my job, living 'selling' albums, promoting them, and when I go back home, sleeping well..."

AA. – Do you consider yourself, or the people who work with you in Paniko, as indie?

A: "We have other jobs; we are not indie at all. There is a stage where, in the end, we can't afford the money to make a living. My partners are independent, they live by themselves. One is a teacher, the other one is a journalist, and they pay their bills but not with the money from Paniko. It's hard to consolidate through an indie media".

In this sense, Alejandro's interest in creating a website around the cultural production that circulates in the music scene does not mean that he defines himself as indie. In fact, being indie is related to achieving economic independence through his website. The lack of economic resources plays a central role in their definitions and practices around what they think being indie has to be. As Alejandro observes, it is not possible for him to live according to his definitions because he has to work in different places at the same time in order to make a living. He used the examples of other website creators who have the same difficulty working in other things related to media and advertising (e.g. a English translator, radio director, or community

manager). The idea of economic independence is a goal they are trying to achieve. Meanwhile, they are working in different places as journalists, in marketing, and the media sector.

In this sense, research participants associate the indie identity, particularly that related to music production, with autonomy in regard to processes of cultural creation and production, but also in an economic sense, as the possibility of being economically and financially sustainable. Those definitions are inseparable from strategies to achieve that degree of independence. Individuals consider that today it is not possible to be independent without understanding market rules. In this way, they see in marketplaces the possibility of achieving that economic independence within that space, rather than beyond it. Through their association with economic agents, –e.g. actors from fields such as advertising- who are interested in the audiences the sites reach, individuals negotiate their definitions. In the next section these strategies and negotiations will be explored.

2. Cultural mediators and economic agents: qualifying consumers, negotiating identities

A key stage that represents the formalisation of an economic relation between cultural mediators and economic agents is the sponsorship of sites for a particular advertising campaign. In this process, negotiations take place between cultural mediators and branding or advertising agencies. The encounters begin with an initial informal relation of mutual exchange of products provided by agencies and content about those products presented on the sites by mediators. In this context, after a few exchanges it is common for website creators to try to make some profit through their practices on the sites. These exchanges are the result of a process of mutual interest. On the one hand, branding agencies consider them important for the product value chain, inserting a brand as part of the flows of goods, identities, and cultural flows mediated by website creators. Those brands start circulating as part of the scene mediated on the sites with other global and local flows, as well as musicians' identities. On the other hand, mediators can make profit as a result of the valorisation of their 'digital capital' in the form of technological knowledge, as well as their ability to organise the scene's flows on the websites. Similarly, they begin to achieve social positions in the marketplace, helping in its construction. These encounters between cultural mediators and economic agents will be addressed in the second section of this chapter, exploring the relations that occur during branded music events where cultural mediators perform their digital capital, helping to assemble the scene and marketplaces.

Through practices of creation and maintenance of music websites, actors begin to establish relationships with different brands. The establishment of these relations represents an important stage in the professionalisation of cultural mediators' practices. Thus they begin to relating to mainstream actors and establish commercial relations beyond the indie music scene. As places where different cultural flows circulate, particularly those related to Santiago's indie music scene, websites emerge as interesting sources of information for different audiences. For brand executives and advertising agencies, there is an interest in becoming part of the cultural flows, as well as identities that circulate on the sites. On the one hand, the sites are considered to be relevant spaces where niche audiences are concentrated. On the other hand, the content of the sites represents the interests and lifestyles of those audiences (e.g. of music, technology, identities). By doing this, they can improve the value of their products and brands, differentiating themselves from others as a result of those cultural and economic relations. As the brand manager of Corona beer explains:

BM: "They are niche sites, cutting edge. We try to follow the same line. Corona (the brand) must be present in communicating trends: sites, magazines, and media to communicate or reach opinion leaders or references that we look for in people 25 to 35 middle-high segments [...] In terms of cost, they are not very expensive compared to other media. They are sites that reach a super consumer public or these activities that we propose and they value the content we provide".

A. – What do you mean by 'niche'?

BM: "These sites are not interested in reaching vast numbers of audiences, they are oriented towards this group or sub-group of people who use digital media, who like being informed about parties, concerts, and content of music bands [...] for instance, an artist who represents Chile in that festival abroad. I am interested in the person who reported this, opinion leaders of the groups where they belong. If you bring your brand to these people, then they will party with the brand, and then they bring people to the Corona Clash".

Cultural mediators and branding executives display similar qualifications around the sites and their audiences in order to establish economic relations, classifying the profile of the sites, and its audiences as specific types of consumers, respectively. For instance, a branding agency executive considers that music websites are about trends, about the "issues that everybody will be talking about", which is fundamental for him in order to identify the group of consumers that

will be part of a market niche. At the same time, this is one of the main characteristics of those potential consumers. This is similar to the way websites are promoted by their creators. As an example, the website Paniko defined itself as a site “talking about the issues of the future”. It is in this context that branding agencies propose to their clients the possibility of promoting their brands on these websites. Those qualifications are central in the identification and construction of a commercial 'niche', a term frequently used by cultural mediators and advertising executives. Those niches represent a group of consumers with similar characteristics, particularly with regard to taste classifications. However, a tension for cultural mediators arises from the fact that sometimes their audiences are 'critical' of brands, and they have to deal and negotiate that with the site's audience. As Felipe (POTQ) explains, their audiences are young people *“critical, alternative, with exquisite taste. People more rational, critical of society, they don't trust anyone. They are also very critical of brands”*. In that context, cultural mediators appear to economic agents, particularly advertising and branding agencies, as advanced and 'independent' consumers who can recommend various flows of goods to their audiences. Even so, for the site's audience this is not always a good thing, which demands that the sites maintain a clear separation between their content and the presence of brands that enable the site's existence. When this separation is not very clear, audiences react against the site and its creators.

For branding agencies and companies' brand managers, different forces have pushed the process of establishing commercial relations between music websites and brands, particularly related to the internet. The main reason for this is the increasing level of internet use in Chile by young middle-high socio-economic segments over the last five years. Branding agencies slowly realised that music websites are spaces with sizeable audiences where brands can be promoted. For brand managers, music websites represent the interests of a small group of consumers who have been abandoned by mainstream media, which have been incapable of reflecting processes of cultural production locally in areas like art, music, as well as globally. It is in this context that relations between economic agents such as branding and advertising agencies and cultural mediators take shape.

During the fieldwork it was common to talk to cultural mediators about their relations with brands and advertising agencies in regard to their sites. For most of them, those relations are the outcome of a slow process of becoming acquainted with brand managers and branding agencies. Only then is it possible to establish a 'relationship' or an 'association' and to work

together. The exchanges between the sites and brands began in most cases two or three years ago. In some cases, those relations were part of a strategy by cultural mediators to obtain economic resources to maintain the sites. In other cases, the relations were casual, when an advertising agency contacted the creator of a site asking for information to promote a specific commercial campaign. In order to create bonds between each other, it is common that at the beginning agencies offer goods to create contests on the websites in order to exchange content and mentions of the brand as part of the websites' content. Through contests it is easy for cultural mediators to increase the audience volume of the sites; for them, it is a 'win-win' relationship. Cultural mediators and branding agencies then establish shared criteria to evaluate the site and the range of rates in order to start working together implementing 'activations', which is the first stage of a long-term marketing campaign. Those activations appear on the website in the form of a piece of news, a banner with the brand's logo, or a video. During an interview with Felipe of POTQ, he received a text message on his mobile. When I asked him what it was about, he explained the process of starting an advertising campaign:

F: "Tomorrow we will start an advertising campaign on the site, a worldwide campaign that has chosen us as a music website, that's really good".

A. – How does it work, the sponsorship issue?

F: "It is a long-term job. Day by day you have to work to get the attention of brands. Content is the most important thing, and then sponsors will appear as a consequence. When I started with the site, I send my friends links of the website by Messenger. After that, visits started growing".

A. – When did those brands started showing interest on your site?

F: "This year. Before that it was sporadic, only to promote one specific campaign instead of a long-term one. The change has been impressive, now every brand wants to be on the internet, being part of your site. Before we charged not much, now we charge more and they don't care about it".

Central to defining that partnership is the 'media-kit', a report designed by the website's creators to describe their sites to advertising agents and brand managers. Through this device, mediators present the characteristics of their sites, the type of content they offer, the profile of their visitors, as well as a description of the possibilities of presenting a brand and its products as part of the site's content. For cultural mediators, the media-kit represents a key stage in the

professionalisation of their practices where they perform various cultural calculations. It is a device that objectifies content as a set of qualifications, meanings attached to a website's audiences, oriented towards the demands of different economic agents such as advertising agencies. This requires an understanding from website creators of their audiences and the content they are offering them, which is always framed in regard to a particular lifestyle; connecting technological uses and consumption practices. A good example of these qualifications is the media kit of the website Disorder defining the profile of the prototype audience which visits the site:

“Young individuals of the new century, who use iPods, laptops, and designer trainer shoes, who are scattered in different cultural capitals around the world, and are living online”.

“They are young individuals looking for information, culture, as well as, new trends [...] always looking for newness in a global world”.

These symbolic associations in the form of qualifications, attributing meanings and particular characteristics to website audiences, move between particular uses of technology, a sense of global connection, and the consumption practices of their audiences. They also represent a self-definition of cultural mediators as advanced consumers in a market context. For instance, during meetings with advertising and branding agencies, research participants show their 'digital capital' based on their particular uses of social networking sites, giving executives examples of how they generate content, increasing the number of followers on Facebook and Twitter. Through those qualifications and descriptions, their practices are valorised by economic agents, making them convertible into economic capital, but also defining the position of website creators in a social space, the field of advertisement, as 'opinion leaders' of particular consumer niches.

Devices to connect cultural mediators and advertising agencies: the 'media kit'

During interviews it was common for cultural mediators to mention the 'media kit' as an important device of self-presentation to advertising agencies and brand managers. The media kit consists of a document with some basic design in a PDF file that begins with a brief description of the website, particularly its topics and the date when the site was created. This information is very important for cultural mediators because it gives them a sense of authority; it represents the reputation of the sites on the internet. As Alejandro from Paniko explains, *"How do we sell to the brands? Telling them about what do we are aspiring to be, with this number of visitors on the site, and we have been operating from 2003 on the internet [...] that makes a difference against the other sites"*. After the presentations, media kits have a detailed amount of data pertaining to the number of visitors to the site. It is common to present the data of the last three months, usually taken from Google Analytics. That description is important to advertising agents to measure the potential level of impact of a campaign; in the same way it operates as a mechanism to negotiate the advertisement fee with website creators. In order to give more information about sites' metrics, mediators use Facebook's fan pages where visitors can follow the account of the site, and obtain their information (e.g. age, gender, occupation).

In the same way, it is common for cultural mediators to upload surveys to get information about their audiences. That data is also presented in the media kit. Another slide of the document presents a picture of the website with the spaces available for advertisement in the form of 'banners'. This part of the document is presented in different ways, for instance, some media kits identify them as 'advertisement spaces', or 'sponsorship opportunities', and others never use the term 'advertisement'. Some of them present information about fees, which varies from £600 -1000. The final section is about the ways in which the brand can be mentioned on the site. The first type of mention is called 'publi-post' which is content written by mediators 'presented' by the brand, or it could be a review of a specific product (e.g. training shoes). Juan (192) explains how publi-post works:

A. – *What is a 'publi-post'?*

JP: *"For instance: 'Arturo Arriagada is the new sensation of the moment', and I write [...] something like, 'I heard that Arturo is the new sensation, what's this?'... That's a publi-post"*.

A. – *And you charge for that?*

JP: *"Yes, it costs between £ 200 and 250"*

2.1 Tensions between cultural mediators and market agents

Tensions between cultural mediators and economic agents such as branding and advertising agencies, are very common. On the one hand, cultural mediators are exposed to time constraints and pressure from agencies, particularly during the period of a marketing campaign. On the other hand, tensions rise when cultural mediators realise that they need to depend on others, particularly on the income provided by economic agents as opposed to maintaining their financial independence. In order to secure the prominence of the brand on a website, it is common that agencies put pressure on mediators. Felipe (POTQ) often receives calls from branding executives during the weekends asking him about the presence of a brand on the site or to be advised on the state of a campaign. This is a stressful situation. He sometimes attempts to delay publishing the content of brands, considering the site aims of trying to offer music content to its audiences rather than branded content. Another source of tension for him is the relation with audiences in regard to brands advertising on the site. Sometimes it is difficult for Felipe to explain to audiences, as well as his collaborators, that having advertising on the site is important to keep it alive. However, he tries not to make such “mistakes”:

F: “A couple of weeks ago I published a post that was not related to music, nothing, nothing... it was a product by Adidas. I could publish that shit in another form, you know? On Facebook, I don’t know. I did an important advertisement; it was cool, for an agency [...] then people started complaining on the site [...] ‘I don’t want to read this shit’, they said. And a friend (Andres, a collaborator) complained and I tried to explain: think that this is a 30-second ad and after watching then you can access content that you like. People don’t understand this, it’s annoying for them in blogs, but it’s shit that allows you to learn [...] however, that thing can’t happen”.

4. – Branding agencies are annoying sometimes?

F: “Yes, a lot [...] and through wicked strategies, calling me on Sunday morning”.

In this context, cultural mediators define boundaries within which they decide to establish a relationship with a branding agency. For instance, it is important for them that the brand fits with the sites’ topics. Considering Felipe’s experience and negotiations with audiences’ interests, as well as those of his collaborators, another way actors create boundaries with brands is by familiarising themselves with its history and its products. For instance, Alvaro (Paniko) and Juan (192) told me that sometimes they were not interested in working with organisations that represent a particular religion or lack socially responsible practices in the

making of their products. In the case of Alvaro, a protestant church contacted him, interested in promoting some of its orientation services on the site. He refused because his site is not “oriented to any religion in particular”. In the case of Juan, he and his partner in the site refuse to work with Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). At that time, they were both vegetarian and were informed about KFC’s bad treatment of poultry. After the offer by the company to buy a banner to advertise the brand in the site, both friends decided to reject the sponsorship. Another strategy is to create content without making direct reference to the brand, trying to satisfy the demands of branding agencies as well as their audiences. For Camilo (Disorder) it is common to create new sections on his site, for instance, that entitled “cocktail reviews”, through which he cynically comments on the quality of food served at Heineken marketing events. He was given access to the event by the advertising agency, maintaining good relations with them, without ‘selling himself’ before the sites’ audience. These examples emerge as strategies for cultural mediators to negotiate their interests, as well as definitions of independence. However, for some research participants one of the most important constraints of being related with economic agents like advertising agencies is the possibility of losing their sense of freedom and independence in regard to their websites. During the fieldwork, I asked Juan (192) about his site’s media kit, and he began to reflect upon the tensions involved in selling his site to advertisers.

A. - *Do you have a 'media kit'?*

JP: *“Yes, it’s not very updated, and it says ‘192 is a blog about music and concerts, album reviews and videos [...] our target is [...] That’s the way when you are selling yourself”*

A. - *You do that?*

JP: *“No, because I don’t have time. If I do that, I have to dedicate 100% in order to make a living from that, my sales would be my monthly salary [...] but I don’t want to make profit from the site because I have to leave my job and dedicate myself to knocking door-to- door, looking for contacts everywhere”*

A. – *Do you think there is something wrong with that?*

JP: *“Because it’s obvious that there is a final goal, make profit [...],to me the most important thing is to spread the information, helping the bands, publishing their gigs, albums, without being related to brands, because after that you start playing with your editorial line. I’m very*

'acido' (critical) on the site with my comments sometimes [...] someone from the brand or an advertising agency would say 'hey, I don't want you talking in bullshit about my brand, because your sponsorship would be threatened'. I don't know, with 192 I prefer complete freedom and if someone wants to pay for a space it's only this space [...] if you want to sponsor 192 it's because you like the content, the community, the things we are publishing".

For Juan it is important to keep his website outside the mainstream, and more than that, to keep it as his creation without the pressure of being involved with other actors. He likes the idea of engaging in his activities as a music fan without pressure, maintaining the site, going to gigs, recording and uploading videos, in order to have the respect of his audience. For Maria (Rocanrol), it is the same. She considers that it is possible to have a relation with brands only if they are not interfering with the site's editorial line, defined by her as "my musical taste", but now she prefers living outside that space because "being totally independent is having a comfortable sense of freedom". She is able to have that relation as a result of her ambitions.

...

The first part of this chapter explored research participants' definitions in regard to the indie identity. This is the first stage in the cultural mediators' movement from a 'fan' position to professionalisation as a result of their relationship with economic agents. Their definitions of being indie are based on an ideal of autonomy and creativity, which is outside of mass forms of cultural production. However, that autonomy and creativity cannot be understood as an achievement beyond market logics. Those meanings represent individual values through which they sustain their practices. However, those values are negotiated at the moment when cultural mediators begin to relate to market agents, connecting the scene's flows with and within marketplaces. Relating to branding agencies and brand managers is a key stage in individual practices. On the one hand, they have to negotiate their definitions of being indie with mainstream actors interested in the creation of new markets. On the other hand, those negotiations involve the professionalisation of their practices as music mediators. They realise that marketplaces, –represented by brand managers and branding agencies, value the cultural distinctions performed on their sites, as well as digital capital in the form of knowledge of website creation and the ability to congregate audiences. However, some tensions emerge from that exchange process. For instance, being involved with branding agencies represents recognition for cultural mediators and the possibility of achieving a certain degree of independence through the making of websites. Similarly, they realise that collaborating with

advertising agencies have some disadvantages, for instance, becoming specialised consumers who have a central role in the creation and expansion of niche markets.

...

3. Branded music events and cultural mediators: mediating the scene, assembling niche markets

The first part of this chapter focused on the negotiations of cultural mediators' definitions of being 'indie', and the discourses that market agents perform in regard to mediators in order to define them as "specialised consumers". It analysed the different sets of economic and cultural calculations performed by branding agencies and cultural mediators in order to connect brands and consumers on the websites. This involves a different set of negotiations between actors in order to establish a working relationship.

The second part of this chapter looks at how, through websites and social networking sites, they connect the flows of Santiago's indie music scene to different entities that construct marketplaces. This section will specifically analyse cultural mediators' practices of value and meaning assignment in regard to flows at Corona Clash, a marketing event organised by market agents oriented towards a small group of consumers. Events are social spaces where symbolic and economic capitals are exchanged. On the one hand, advertising agents display economic resources that are relevant for musicians and other actors of the scene, in the same way part of the identity of the indie scene is recreated in a particular space. On the other hand, brands become part of the flows of goods of the scene. Cultural mediators play a central role in connecting website audiences with brands, as well as relating those brands to the cultural flows and identities that circulate on their sites. It is in this process that the scene and a particular market niche are assembled through the work of different actors.

The third section analyses how branded music events emerge as a "space of mediation", a bounded space where economic agents, especially cultural mediators, display different resources, particularly cultural classifications that shape and assemble the scene and marketplaces. In terms of the social relations displayed at those events, drawing on Wittel's 'network sociality', "a sociality based on individualisation, and deeply embedded in technology [...] informational, ephemeral, but intense [...] characterised by an assimilation of work and play", (2002: 71) cultural mediators configure and show their 'digital capital', establishing relations and performing a sense of connectivity through the use of digital technologies such as

Twitter, as well as 'networking' with actors from the field of advertising. Thus these events represent a key moment for cultural mediators to reinforce their relations with economic agents from other fields of cultural production, rationalising their practices in a way that the scene and marketplaces are assembled, as a result of a set of economic and cultural calculations that are displayed within those spaces. This section is divided into three parts. The first is a biography of the Corona Clash, the branded music events organised by a branding agency where cultural mediators play a central role in its creation and promotion. The second describes the circuits of people, flows, and discourses through which the scene and the market are assembled into a niche marketplace; exploring cultural mediators' classifications and technological uses during the event. The third part explores cultural mediators' meanings around music events and their role in them.

...

3.1 The biography of a music event: Corona Clash

Corona Clash was a marketing campaign organised by Corona beer between May and November 2011. The idea was formulated and commissioned by the branding agency Alta. The campaign consisted of 10 live music performances, including some of the most prominent music bands of the indie scene, in different places in Santiago and the rest of Chile. The aim of that campaign, according to the Director of Alta and the Brand Manager of Corona, was to provide the bands with a showcase, associating them with Corona, and also to create a campaign that will leave a legacy in the Chilean cultural scene for young people. Alta is well recognised as a marketing agency whose main focus is the organisation of events oriented to niche brands. As an executive of Alta explains:

E: "Corona doesn't want to be involved in massive communication actions associated with other brands [...] we don't want to be part of large music festivals. By contrast, we want to be part of a small group of people, a 'niche', [...] an audience which likes pop-alternative music, with sophisticated taste. In that context, we approached alternative emergent talented musicians that are not necessarily supported". Is this right?

With this in context, Corona Clash was created in order to connect the social and aesthetic world of the indie scene, represented by the selected musicians, with young niche consumers.

The strategy to achieve that is supporting the “creativity” of music production, particularly of musicians who are part of the scene. For that reason, Corona Clash consisted of live performances by different musicians, doing covers of well-recognised Chilean songs of the 1990s. According to executives, the idea was to create ‘experiments’ between different musicians, people who have never established any kind of relation, hence the *clash* concept. In the same way, a British music programme *From the Basement*⁵⁰ inspired the project, especially as, on that show, musicians always performed a special set of songs, sometimes collaborating with other musicians. For Corona Clash, the songs were recorded by Vicente Sanfuentes, a well-recognised Chilean music producer, for an album that was sent as a gift to different people, from consumers that participated in the series of events to different radio stations, as well as the group of cultural mediators that create and maintain websites around local and global music scenes. It was important for brand executives, and for the branding agency, that the concept of the campaign was related to the ‘values of the brand’. In the case of Corona, those values are ‘happiness’, ‘relaxing’, as the brand slogan says ‘Corona can transform people’s moments’. In this sense, branding executives considered that essential for the success of the campaign. As an Alta executive explains:

E: “Freedom and creativity were fundamental for our campaign. We were not making commercial ‘jingles’ or music for TV ads; it was different. We were experimenting and music is an artistic expression. To differentiate and found the personality of our product with that music, we create that campaign openness for the result of the experiment between musicians. Sense of humour and irony were fundamental”.

For promotional purposes, the campaign considered the brand presence on different websites where the indie scene is covered, particularly three that were included in my research (POTQ, Paniko, and Disorder). These sites play an important role in the expansion or communication of the campaign between consumers. Considered as spaces that present ‘new things’, as well as ‘new trends’, those sites go into partnership with the agency and the brand during those campaigns. However, advertising executives know they are betting on the sites and its creators, considering that in the future they may be important people in the business.

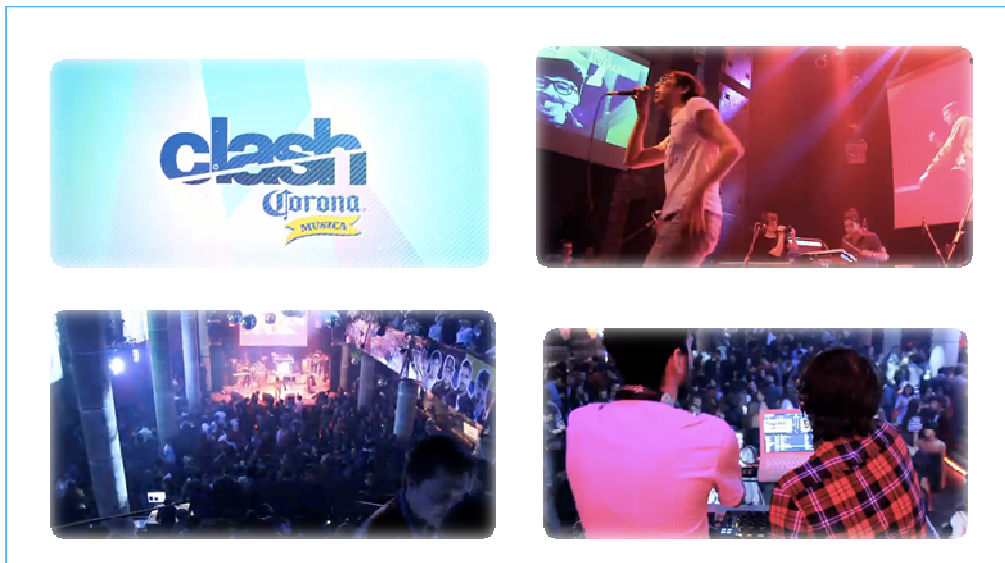
⁵⁰ *From the Basement*, “is a podcast turned television programme created by music producer and engineer Nigel Godrich, that features live performances from various musicians, without a host or audience”. Retrieved from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/From_the_Basement

E: "Those websites are key actors during the campaign. They are individuals who offer information aligned with the brand. At the same time, they are always presenting new things to their audiences, people who are interesting in the brand, too. In the same way, the creators of the sites are people concerned about new things, always looking for something new, interested in new music, searching in different places, - they are s our public-".

Digital technologies had an important position in the campaign, having a practical material role in the events, a networking with consumers. For instance, to promote Corona Clash, the branding agency uploaded a music video to YouTube, a performance between two recognised indie-rock and pop musicians recreating a classic Chilean song of the 1980s, and invitations to the editors and creators of the sites. Music websites operate as a hub where it is possible to connect the brand with specific audiences. The site creates hype around the event as a result of their considerable access to specific, but large audiences (particularly young people). The advertising agency also promoted the event through Corona's Facebook and Twitter accounts. Javiera, the community manager of the agency, executed this task. According to her, a community manager is "the voice of the brand online". Javiera shared links or wrote about the event, uploading videos of the musicians who t will participate, and created limited contests for people to win tickets to the event.

As relevant as the centrality of digital technologies for campaign purposes, another device created by advertising agencies is the 'guest list', which is a data base of 'relevant people' who have to be invited to the launch of the event. When I asked the agency about the criteria to be in that list, they explained, "nice people that must be there because they are beautiful, but also as a way to be photographed by the media". As another executive of the agency explains, it is "nice and beautiful people, opinion leaders with Twitter and lots of followers who appear on pictures in magazines and fashion websites". Some of these people are actors, musicians, journalists, and advertisers, but also less well-known individuals who are in databases that meet the criteria of the agencies. I participated in the launch of this campaign, and I interviewed people from Alta, Corona, and the creators of the websites. Through this description, my aim is not to assess the campaign in terms of their efficiency as a marketing tool or event. On the contrary, it is an example of how a branded music event is crafted, performed, mediated, and objectified, based on cultural mediators' practices and discourses, particularly in the form of cultural and economic calculations with people from the field of advertising.

Figure 18. Snapshots of promotional videos of Corona Clash



Source: Collected from fieldwork material

4. Branded music events and cultural mediators: connecting the scene and the market, assembling the scene as a market niche

Branded music events are 'ceremonies of consecration' (Entwistle and Rocamora, 2006: 748) that make the field visible, but are also central to ensuring its continued existence by promoting the work of different players of the field (e.g. musicians, cultural mediators, branding and advertising executives). They are key moments where the indie scene and market places are assembled as a result of different exchange relations between varied actors: branding agents, cultural mediators and their music websites, musicians, and consumers. Through different practices and cultural distinctions performed by people from the field of advertising and the group of research informants through their music websites, branded music events are moments where the scene is recreated and presented to a particular and exclusive group of people, a consumer elite. In this sense, events can be described as 'spaces of mediation' where different actors shape and assemble a bounded space; particularly through the performance of cultural distinctions and technological uses. In the case of cultural mediators, these events represent an opportunity to perform cultural distinctions and taste classifications mediated by their technological uses, but that are also key moments in which to establish social and economic relations so as to accumulate, show, and exchange their 'digital capital'. Through their

practices and sociability at these events, cultural mediators objectify the assembled 'niche' market place on their websites and digital platforms like Facebook or Twitter. In order to explain the circuits of "people, cultural flows, places and discourses" that represent music events, this section will take Corona Clash as an example of a space of mediation through which different actors, particularly music website creators and people from the field of advertising, as cultural mediators, are key actors in the making of a market niche.

4.1 Performing class and cultural distinctions in the making of a branded space

The launch of Corona Clash took place in an old-fashioned locale –a very popular club during the mid 1990s- located in Bellavista, Santiago's bohemian area. The first interesting aspect of the event was being part of the exclusive guest list. Corona Clash is a private event and people have access only through invitation. This represents the bounded character of this space where a select group of actors become related. There were people outside the building trying to get access to the event. For branding and advertisement agents it is very important the ambience of exclusiveness of branded music events. Some people can be part of them, some not. In this context, cultural mediators' websites are windows to show that exclusivity to their audiences. As people from Alta told me, guest lists are essential for these events. On the one hand, they are devices where full ranges of distinctions are objectified (class, aesthetic judgements). On the other hand, guest lists are resources through which an agency validates their work in front of the client, but they also represent the agency's ability to connect a brand and its products with potential and segmented clients. For instance, an event assistant told me that there were no "ugly people" in the place. Similarly, an assistant from the advertising agency said, *"everybody wants to be part of this event, but not all of them are invited"*. He also commented that the agency's seal is their knowledge of Santiago's night life ('La Movida'). This was commented on by the product manager of Corona, especially in regard to the kind of people the agency invites to these events.

Inside the place, it is possible to observe different social positions and connections between participants. I identified three kinds of groups: 1) individuals who provide services during the event (e.g. musicians, technicians, and visual artists); 2) individuals who are related to the brand (e.g. executives, branding agency workers, journalists, and people from the websites included in this study), and 3) invited guests. That night I discovered that the majority of the people who

were providing services were frequent actors, whether – producers or consumers, in the making of Santiago's indie music scene. That is the case of Casa Liebre, two visual artists who create and project videos ('visuales') during musicians' performances. They are always involved in parties organised by the website Super 45, and now Casa Liebre was hired for the event by the agency Alta in order to project their videos during musicians' performances. I spent some time with this group talking about the event and the scene after the bands performed. They were isolated in the party, dancing and talking to each other, not to other people. They were satisfied because these branded events are well paid, but they were also happy because they were going to make an alliance with Alta to provide them with visual creations for different events. This change will be a transition for them, from the indie way of production towards something more professional and mainstream. I realised during our conversation that musicians and visual artists participating in this event were not in their 'natural' social environment, this means that they were sharing the same space with branding executives, as well as an audience which is not the one that frequents the scene's usual spaces.

Aesthetics is an important dimension in the making of these music events and Casa Liebre has an important role in this. During the bands' performances, they projected videos that were shown on a big screen behind the stage. Various images appeared on the screen, for instance, one video is an extract of an old Bollywood film showing a group of Indian women dancing. There is a connection between that video, and the cosmopolitanism that it represents, with cultural mediators' ideas around the indie identity, in the form of being a hipster. For instance, Max, –rom the website Pousta, explains that connection:

M: "('hipster') is an idea imported by Chileans who travel abroad, that are using specific brands, following the work of alternative cinema directors, and music bands...."

Another one shows a young couple driving a car on a highway in the middle of the summer. They stop the car and start walking through a country field. The couple do not look Chilean, but some people at the event are dressed in a similar way wearing clothes with light colours and lenses in the same way as the video's couple. For instance, in the video the man is wearing a light red shirt and grey shorts; the woman is wearing a light dress. Both are using sunglasses, Ray-Ban, the Wayerfayer model. It is interesting that the event is in winter, but the video evokes the summer and relaxation. When I asked Casa Liebre why they present those images, they both said that it was because the brand Corona wanted to be associated with "beautiful moments of relaxation".

Being a Hipster

During the fieldwork it was common to hear the word “hipster” from the mouths of the group of cultural mediators, as well as musicians and audiences at music gigs, and on Twitter or Facebook. In the case of cultural mediators, they used that expression at different times and places, in the content of their sites, on social networking sites, but also at music events. During an interview, I asked Alejandro about the term:

AA. – *What is a 'hipster'?*

A. – *“We should ask ‘saint Google’”...*

AA. – *I read it on Twitter too...*

A. – *“It emerged after the ‘indie’”...*

AA. – *Is it from the U.S?*

A. – *“Yes (looking to his iPhone)... According to the Urban Dictionary, it is a bohemian look. But this is very limited”.*

AA. – *And is constituted by what?*

A. – *“The thing I understand is that it is a guy who listens to bands that nobody knows, from other strange latitudes, from record labels that nobody knows, maybe Sub-Pop or something like that. Very indie and the thickest clothes he wears is a “pitillo”. It is like someone worried about how it looks, without being a metro sexual, wearing lots of flowey clothes [...] colours. Is what you see at (music) festivals abroad [...] like Coachella or Lollapalooza”.*

AA. – *Have you been at those festivals?*

A. – *“I’ve been in Lollapalooza, Chicago”.*

Alejandro made reference to the “hipster” as “the evolution of indie”. In the case of the group of cultural mediators, it was common for them to use the word in an ironic way: to make fun of them, as well as others who are trying to be like the 'hipster' references coming from the US. Interestingly, other research participants, like Alejandro, associate the concept with objects and taste, particularly clothes and music, as well as cultural capital. Camilo, the creator of Disorder, has a clear idea about being a hipster, and how, through his taste and appearance-, he can be defined as one or as a *shuper*, the Chilean version of a hipster.

C. – *“(Shuper) is an evolution of the term. But it’s the same (as hipster). Like people wearing tight trousers, vintage clothes, I could be one. They have bands, are artistic, something like that. They are cool, a little bit junkie... if you see some ‘gringo’ bands like Arcade Fire [...] they are all hipsters. It is a generalisation”.*

As this quote shows, the classification of the indie aesthetic is related directly to the 'hipster' concept. Similarly, it is associated with particular clothes and taste, but also with cultural references from abroad like music bands (e.g. Tame Impala, Deerhunter) or being interested in the latest trend, something that “nobody knows yet” as Camilo explains. For example, during fieldwork it was common for cultural mediators to wear tight trousers, Ray-Ban sunglasses, squared t-shirts, and Converse coloured sports shoes. In this sense, when they were talking about 'hipsters', at the same time, in most cases and with not too many differences in their references, they were referring to themselves. Camilo’s quote, as well as Alejandro’s, is about establishing a difference with others through taste, goods (e.g. clothes), and a sense of belonging to a more creative environment. These values have a central role in music events organised by advertising agencies, adding the dimension of exclusiveness in order to perform the difference as a way of distinction against others. As Nicolas –from the website NNM- puts it; the idea of being Hipster is a concept that has been introduced by music websites, based on people from Brooklyn, particularly Williamsburg who loves indie music as well as movies. For Nicolas, that aesthetic has been imported by these music blogs (like Paniko or Disorder, without make reference to his site) arguing that in Chile it is common importing everything from abroad. He uses an example of a guy who has a music blog, which is dressed like an “Urban Outfitters” catalogue, using lenses without augment.

During the event I met Max at the bar and we started talking. He was excited because that day he had met a Chilean photographer who used to live in New York. Max likes his work, and said that this individual was very important in the alternative circuit, taking pictures at 'wasted' parties. It is interesting that Max has never been to New York, but he is always talking about things that are happening in other countries, considering that we were at the event listening to the bands, who are not interesting to Max. He introduced me to a friend as "a cool guy who's living in London". When I asked Max about the photographer, he said that he is doing everything he wants to do. Partying, taking pictures, living in a global city. I asked him about the difference of being at that event rather than being in New York doing the same thing. For him the difference is the people, *"everybody is different, that's different"*. Observing Max during the event talking to other people, taking pictures for his website, it is clear that this represents his aspirations of being in New York and he is performing that kind of lifestyle, trying to differentiate himself from the rest of the people, as well as being part of the circuit of marketing events and parties.

Figure 19. Casa Liebre's video with an excerpt from Dirty Dancing



Source: Collected from fieldwork material

Like Max, most research participants refer to that difference during various events. It was common for them to talk about similarities between people, as well as differences. For instance, phrases like "everywhere is the same", "always it is the same people" were frequent. However,

behind those judgements, there is a critical view about the events as a marketing instance ('the same people at the same places') but also as an opportunity that represents something conceived as typical of Chileans: the ability to classify and judge others. During events it is common for everybody to be looking at each other. I met Sergio, a cinema director hired by Alta, who produced a couple of videos for the event. I asked him about the phenomenon in which everybody was paying attention to others:

S. – “Marketing agencies work doing niche campaigns, something very representative of Chile and Chileans. I don’t like going everywhere meeting known-people. The reason for me living abroad is that [...] here everybody is paying attention to others, looking at each other... [Chileans are classifying to the others all the time”] comparing themselves to others?

Regarding Sergio’s reflection, music events are spaces where people who are part of it are looking for something, trying to catch the attention of others, as well as being part of an exclusive situation to which not everyone is invited. During the event, and on different occasions, individuals are classifying. Those classifications used to be related to class issues, as well as, taste. Here is an example, which is representative of those moments. Rossana, who works in the net record label Cazador and was with her partner at the event, told me about one of the bands, *Astro*. She said that lots of people make fun of them because it is considered a posh band ('*cuico*')⁵¹, and very similar in terms of the aesthetics and the sounds to a New York group called MGMT. For her, maybe those judgements are true considering the quality of their instruments, and in terms of the band’s sound, which is very similar to MGMT. Rossana also commented that it is funny that we have friends in common at the event, saying the same thing that Max has said: “we are all the same”. Similarly, Max and Pancho say that the event is full of 'hipsters' and 'pelolais'⁵². They both were claiming in a funny way against the people, but they are also part of that event, sharing with the same people. Those classifications (e.g. 'hipster', 'cuico', and 'pelolais') constantly appear at events. After this event, I checked Max and Pancho’s website and I found an article about the Chilean 'hipsters'. Entitled a 'Hipsters, the new Pokemons', Max wrote it in 2009 describing in an ironic way the taste structure of hipsters. For instance, they are individuals who get “*dressed with flower colours, earn lots of money telling*

⁵¹ A slang term that denotes high class. A common expression used by Chileans referring to someone as “posh”. It can be used as an insult.

⁵² “*Pelolais*” is a term referring to women who are considered posh. It is a word that means “*peloliso*” (straight hair in English). The term involves a critical judgement of a person, considering the physical characteristics, in particular a blonde women with long straight hair, sklim and beautiful.

everybody about to buy a 'Lomo' picture camera [...] probably photographers that want to be the next Cobra Snake⁵³".

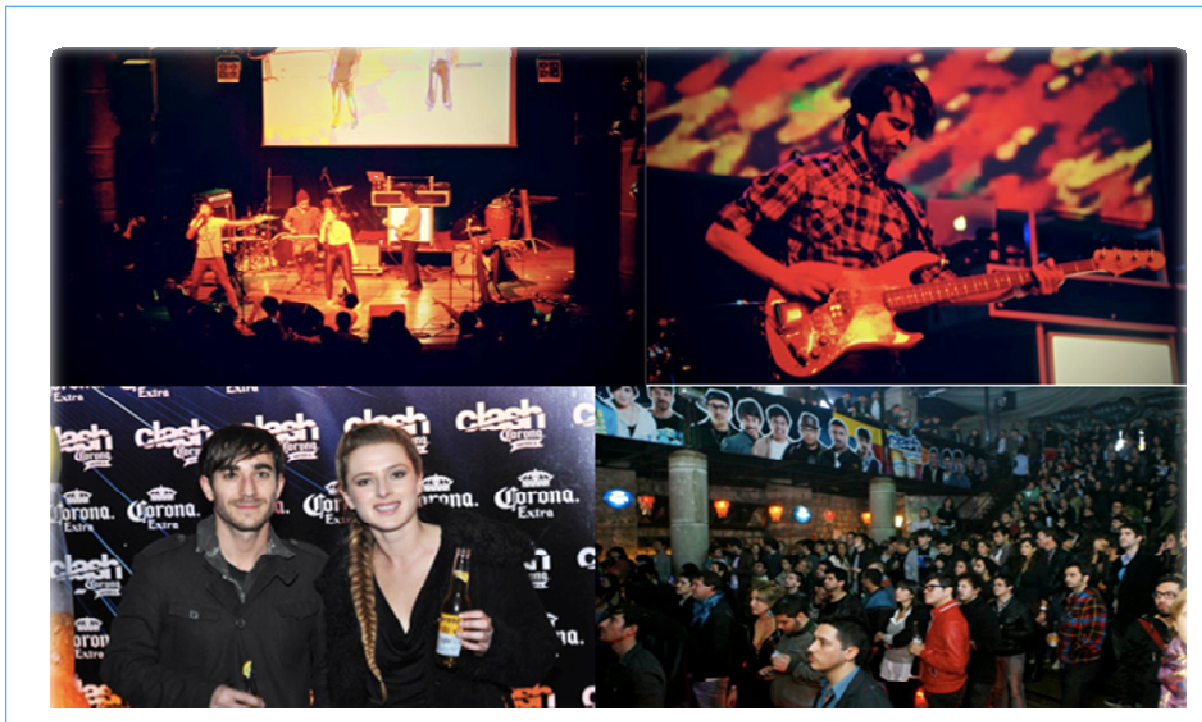
The practice of classifying others has a double meaning. On the one hand, it is a way of differentiating oneself from others, classifying them in terms of difference from the classifier. On the other hand, differentiation from others is a strategy to situate an individual in a particular position within a social space. The positions are relative, but Max and Pancho's classifications are oriented towards being different, as well as, in terms of class compared to 'cuicos' who participate at the event. Max and Pancho's classifications of those at the event are sometimes contradictory. The term 'cuico' is used to denote a critical view of high-class people born with money and opportunities. However, they are always trying to get involved in events like Corona Clash, as well as talking about issues that they consider to be representative of hipsters (e.g. brands, fashion, taste classifications). In this sense, according to their social trajectories, neither Pancho, nor Max can be considered as 'cuicos', but there is an aspiration or a sense that they are better than 'cuicos' from their distinctions, because they are 'different'.

Victor is an individual who used to participate in these events not as part of the guest list, but managed to gain access through contacts or through working at these events. Victor is a journalist who used to collaborate as a freelancer with the company in charge of the online streaming of Corona Clash on the internet. In the middle of the dance floor, Victor made the same distinctions as Max and Pancho, talking about the 'pelolais' as well as 'hipsters' that are taking part at the event. When I asked him why he enjoys those events, he replied that they are *"instances where everybody wants to be"*. His distinctions are connected with class, particularly when he says *"I'm here, a guy from Maipu (a middle class neighbourhood in Santiago), who has to take a two-hour 'colectivo'⁵⁴ to go back home, but I'm here, in the place where everybody wants to be"*. In the cases of Max, Pancho, and Victor, as guests, the event is an opportunity for the performance of class distinctions, in the same way Alta perform and represent class through the guest list and the exclusivity associated with the brand Corona in that social space.

⁵³ Mark Hunter (a.k.a The Cobra Snake) is a fashion photographer based in Los Angeles (U.S). He has been described as a "photographer of hipster culture worldwide". On his website www.thecobrasnake.com he sells his photos.

⁵⁴ "Colectivo" is a kind of taxi used by individuals in Chile, differing from a cab because it has fixed tariffs and trajectories by the city.

Figure 20. Corona Clash, musicians and guests



Source: Collected from fieldwork material

4.2 Digital Technologies

Digital technologies occupy a central position in the event. Websites can be capitalised and sold as commodities by their creators, as well as becoming part of rationalised professional practices. By doing this, branding consultants appropriate the indie music scene, and the scene, through the work of cultural mediators and other actors such as musicians, appropriate market logics assembling into one entity during music events. In this sense, digital technologies such as Facebook or Twitter, make visible economic and cultural calculations in the making of branded music events. During events, it is common that cultural mediators use Twitter to make comments about the bands that are performing, making judgements in terms of the quality of the songs played and their performance. At the same time they comment on their and the sites' accounts. Those comments are usually positive in regard to the bands, but sometimes critical against the people who attend those events, such as those individuals who are not necessarily part of the scene's audience.

When individuals exchange their thoughts about the event on Twitter, they establish a distinction between them as a distinctive class that was invited to participate in this exclusive

event, and their followers. At the same time, they try to create ties with other people that are part of the event. For instance, it is common to use 'hash tags'⁵⁵ like #CoronaClash at the end of each comment on Twitter. Through this practice, cultural mediators and other people (e.g. event guests, musicians) that use the hash tag start following each other, making a connection as a result of their presence at the event.

Cultural mediators' uses of digital technologies, in this case Twitter, -during and after the event represent a way of extending the performance of the event, as well as the brand, to other audiences. Actors' Twitter followers have access to experience of the event without being invited. Similarly, mediators' practices at the event, -e.g. taking pictures of people and then uploading onto platforms like Facebook, is also a chance to extend the branded event to larger audiences (Moor, 2003). In this sense, cultural mediators are playing the game of being consumers and producers at the event, mediating the brand Corona, consuming the product at the event, but also helping the branding strategy designed by branding consultants through their technological uses. For instance, the work of Max and Pancho during the event, taking pictures of guests and uploading a selection on Facebook, represents a particular use of digital technologies by cultural mediators, producing value at the event, as well as to the brand Corona. Marcelo, an advertiser who works with another beer company, Heineken, explains that value, especially in regard to cultural mediators' technological uses.

M: "Instagram⁵⁶ allows people to touch up pictures converting any activity, common activities, into a 'social event'. Poustá did that before Instagram and that is something valuable for our brand, which is the role of those sites..."

As Moor suggests, the use of social media tools "explicitly attempt to bring the work of consumption and the work of production (or at least mediation) into ever closer proximity" (2003: 51) However, cultural mediators' uses of digital technology through the performance of digital capital are also related to the achievement of social positions during the event, showing them to their audiences on their technological spaces. For instance, there is a common practice among mediators to thank on Facebook or Twitter those who invited them, particularly people

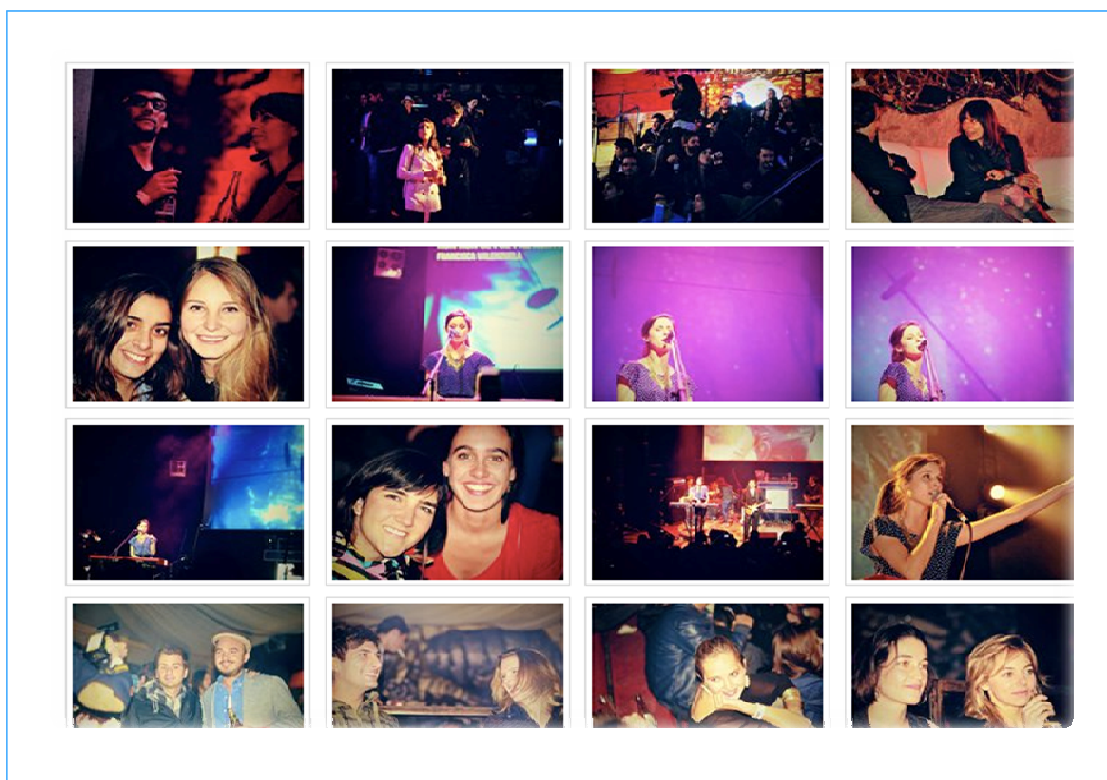
⁵⁵ A "hash tag" is a way to label tweets on Twitter. It is performed by placing # in front of the word that we wish to label our tweet (#coronaclash).

⁵⁶ According to Wikipedia, Instagram is a "is a free photo sharing program launched in October 2010 that allows users to take a photo, apply a digital filter to it, and then share it on a variety of social networking services, including Instagram's own. A distinctive feature confines photos to a square shape, similar to Kodak Instamatic and Polaroid images, in contrast to the 4:3 aspect ratio typically used by mobile device cameras". Retrieved from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instagram>

from advertising agencies. These comments are public and reveal cultural mediators' interest in being invited next time. Similarly, after the event, research informants write reviews on their websites about musicians' performances during the events, as well as, the party after the gig (according to the degree of commitment between the site and the brand, depending on if there is a payment involved or not). In cases where the sites are sponsored by the brand, in this case Corona, their comments are always positive about the events and brands. In reviews and pictures uploaded by mediators it is common to find comments by audiences, some of them criticising the events in the same way as mediators do, using words like 'hipster' or 'pelolais'.

These cases are good example with which to understand the position of technology in the context of the events, but also in the context of mediators' practices. On the one hand, technologies enable individuals to make cultural distinctions, particularly taste and class classifications in the context of the events. During events it is common to see lots of people with Smartphones (e.g. Iphone), using Twitter or Facebook, recording the performances, but mediators use those tools in a way that gives value to the event and the brand, through their cultural distinctions and classifications. On the other hand, through their technological uses, mediators are consumers involved in the event helping to extend the brand identity.

Figure 21. Pictures of Corona Clash taken by Pancho and Max



Source: Material collected during fieldwork from Pousta's Facebook account

When branded music events are not ‘fun’: negotiating ‘digital capital’ and moving between fields of cultural production

Tensions emerge between advertising agencies and cultural mediators regarding the coverage of branded music events that appear on websites. In some ways, cultural mediators negotiate their position within the field of advertising when they are part of branded music events, as guests or as actors involved in the marketing campaign related to the event, when their comments and reviews are not necessarily positive. That was the case of the event organised by Alta to launch Vitamin Water, an ‘energetic water’ owned by the Coca-Cola company. For the event, the U.S. musician Devendra Banhart played an acoustic set in Valparaíso, a port city named by UNESCO as ‘cultural heritage capital’ in 2003. In that context, the website Paniko was a media partner in the event, hired by Alta. After the event, the website published an article reviewing it, qualifying it as a ‘fake’ recreation of a music performance where the artist and their music is part of an exclusive social space where selected people are there not necessarily to listen to the music. On the contrary, to show off and pretend to be in an exclusive party in New York, using Twitter to let ‘your followers know how exclusive you are’. On the one hand, the article made visible the economic relations that the website has with the branding agency, considering that the site was publishing different posts about the ‘upcoming’ event to promote the brand. On the other hand, the critical view the site takes towards this kind of event led to some tensions between the site and the agency. For instance, I uploaded the article on Twitter. I immediately received a message from Alvaro (at that time Alejandro’s partner on the website). He was furious because, as a result of the article, they had lost a couple of well-paid advertising campaigns with the same agency.

This issue raised the question: What are advertising agencies buying to cultural mediators? For Alvaro, the agency is buying him ‘contents’, not ‘audiences’. However, this is contradictory when cultural mediators offer through ‘media-kits’ content, in the form of ‘publi-posts’ and audiences included as a detailed metrics and description of the sites’ audience profile. In other words, advertising agencies buy cultural mediators’ ability to classify flows, a practice related to the flows of local and global music scenes. For Alejandro, this kind of situation reflects the fact that the online advertising market is not well developed in Chile, considering that part of the website’s ‘identity’, as well as his identity as ‘cultural mediator’, is based on having a critical point of view of things. However, Alejandro’s reflection represents the complexity around the relations he has established with advertising agencies, where the boundaries around what is allowed and what is not, in terms of the site’s content and point of view concerning branded music events, is not very clear. However, Alvaro and Alejandro’s conflict with Alta during the Vitamin Water Event reflect how they both use the website to reclaim their position within the field (as independent cultural mediators), but they are also constrained by commercial obligations. In other words, this tension between cultural mediators and advertising agencies demands a trade-off regarding actors’ digital capital. On the one hand, they can achieve a position of distinction within the field of advertising by being submissive with agencies’. On the other hand, by doing this, individuals lose the independence they have in that field, something that their audiences understand and criticise on the websites. Paniko’s article about Vitamin Water’s event was criticised by audiences who are conscious of what they perceive as the ‘intermediary’ position of website creators, being in between advertising agencies, brands and their audiences. In this sense, some of the comments connect the authors’ qualification of the event (as something ‘fake’ and ‘cynical’) with the motivations of the site’s creators as “wanna be resentful. Wanna be hipster. Wanna be fashionistas...”. However, some comments heighten cultural mediators’ critical point of view around branded music events. For instance:

“Through articles like this, I think all is not lost in the world of blogs that are are part of these ‘eventillos’ (non-relevant events)”.

“Very good text, mate. I earned a ticket out there, and I can attest that what is described is what happened, and how I felt [...] an underworld in Valparaíso’s world. For many, Devendra was the best of the day and the event was just about a hippie gig, a crazy guy playing between pure ‘cuicos’. Well, anyway it was worth being there”.

4.3 Music events as meaningful spaces for mediators' practices

Based on the interviews, it is clear that cultural mediators' perceptions of branded music events vary. In the case of Corona Clash, research informants see events as spaces where commercial relations are played out, where they have access to brand managers, and people from advertising agencies. For them, events are fundamental as a means of establishing contacts with advertising agencies because they can talk to marketing people and arrange future meetings in order to promote themselves and their websites. The social and economic relations around the events demand of cultural mediators the performance of a set of social codes that are part of that environment: showing yourself to other people and being part of the happy environment. Felipe explains how he has come to understand and perform those codes:

F: "Years ago I was with a friend at an event and someone stopped us to take a picture and I said, no thanks, I'm not interested in this thing and my friend said –'Don't be -huevón (fool)-, the only way to obtain a sponsorship is showing yourself, putting your face on this thing, you are here and proud of your site'- . That triggered a process of being part of events, to participate on them, talking to people, introducing myself to them. If someone invited you, you talk to him and stay there. Then you meet people from other websites and them introduce yourself to other people".

When I met Felipe at Corona Clash, he was moving around, talking and meeting people. When we started talking during the event, he told me that networking was fundamental at those places, defined as actively meeting people in order to gain contacts and future meetings with advertisers. For instance, some of the most well paid advertisements on his website were crafted during events when he started talking to people, telling them about POTQ, the site's topics and the numbers of visitors. Like Felipe, cultural mediators know and understand that those events are not only oriented towards music fans. On the contrary, they are organised around consumers who constitute market niches. Two interesting things emerge from cultural mediators' reflexivity around those events. Firstly, the way they characterise the people who attend those events can be summarised with the expression "it's always the same people". As discussed before, that "same people" is made up of actors, musicians, advertising agency planners, brand managers, and creators of the music websites, as well as guests derived from databases according to advertising agency criteria (e.g. age, beauty, social class). Secondly, as Alejandro explains, the "same people" represent something superficial, that does not necessarily reflects the spirit of gigs as a meaningful space of creativity. However, it is possible

to obtain economic resources to sustain musicians' and mediators lifestyles. He prefers not going to events frequently. That costs because most of the times advertising executives think that Paniko has only one owner, his partner Alvaro, who does go to events.

A. – What do you think about music events?

Alejandro: “It’s very ondero (superficial). I like gigs, you know, and they (the events) are to meet known people, say hello to friends that are not friends, and it’s like going to a meeting based on contacts... (I don’t know). Appearances... facades, the house of cards that takes form on the internet, like Twitter accounts, you know? But at the end it is the same, it has to exist because they are alternatives to finance some things”.

Alvaro. - “Sometimes you go to events because you like the situation of that event... not only for the music, but also because it may involve something else, something unexpected”.

In this sense, there are contradictions regarding the role of the events, the social positions of cultural mediators, and their uses of digital technologies within those spaces. On the one hand, through their digital capital, individuals are able to participate in these events. Through their websites they establish commercial relationships with brands that organise these events. Cultural mediators promote these events on their websites and receive a payment. Advertising takes different forms: sponsored posts, videos prepared by advertising agencies, and the promotion of the events on the website and through the site’s Facebook and Twitter accounts. On the other hand, through those connections between brands, advertising agencies, and cultural mediators’ it is possible to create instances, such as events, to finance the sites, the work of musicians, but most importantly, to reproduce the music scene in a particular space where the event takes place. Similarly, events like Corona Clash are spaces of a socialisation based on fun and work, intense encounters between people, where digital technologies are also artefacts that facilitate that kind of sociability. As Camilo explains, the mixture of fun and work is evident:

C. - “Events are fun. To go, have a drink, do public relations, you know. It’s not more than that. You talk to the huevones (guys) and meet them, like the people from the other websites... people talk to you. They are full of minas ricas (beautiful women)”.

However, there is a shared tension amongst some cultural mediators about events. Events are opportunities to expand cultural mediators' networks, where actors craft connections with actors from other fields that facilitate the convertibility and exchange of their digital capital. In the same way, events are spaces where cultural mediators display their digital capital in the form of objectifications and classifications around the flows that circulate there. However, at the same time events are instances where they accept that the field of advertising, and the processes through which they are involved in the generation of niche markets, have rules that are out of their control. It is a moment where they have to make decisions about their practices, mainly related to fandom and their love for the music, -in order to be involved and accepted by actors from other fields of cultural production, especially advertising agencies. In some cases, they prefer to organise their own parties, having control of everything (e.g. music, place, etc.), i.e. establishing a direct relationship with their audiences rather than being part of a social context that they sometimes dislike, particularly with regard to audiences for branded music events.

Figure 22. Disorder's and POTQ's representations of branded music events



Disorder • Música •

Corona Clash: El lanzamiento

Por disorder.cl el 26 Mayo 2011

0 tweets

Corona Clash - Estrechez De Corazón



Carlos Cabezas
Francisca Valenzuela
Villa Cariño

El lanzamiento de Corona Clash no pudo haber sido mejor. Muchas bandas reversionando canciones y tocando sus propios clásicos, mezclados con cerveza, un público estupendo y lo más granado del rock nacional. Lo de Corona Clash fue un hit, pero para suerte de todos, se transforma en un ciclo que seguirá girando por Santiago y Chile, durante varios meses y en 10 fechas gratuitas.

Estaremos informando sobre cada una de las fechas. Lo interesante es que unirá gente como The Ganjas, C-Funk, Astro, Denver y Picnic Kibun, con grandes como Valentín Trujillo, Carlos Cabezas y Florcita Motuda.



Home Noticias Artículos Entrevistas Reseñas Conciertos Descargas

+ Tópicos #SalaPOTQ Recitales 2011 Rock In Rio Pearl Jam The Strokes RADK

Una mezcla de artistas nacionales protagoniza Corona Clash

Publicado en May 26, 2011 a las 2:00 pm por POTQ.cl

Me gusta A 18 les gusta una página. Regístrate para ver qué les gusta a tus amigos.

1 tweet 18 retweets



Año a año Corona Música nos entrega un ciclo que nunca pasa desapercibido y para el 2011 nos tienen preparado una serie de shows que mezclan la participación de varios artistas chilenos bajo el nombre de Corona Clash.

Entre los artistas nacionales que destacan entre los participantes están Ángel Parra, Camila Moreno, Dénver, Como Asesinar A Felipe, Gepe, Ana Tijoux, Nano Stern y Pedropiedra, quienes se mezclan

Source: Collected from fieldwork material

The ways that that Camilo (Disorder) and Felipe (POTQ) represent the campaign (see Figure 5), as well as the branded music event, can be labelled very optimistic. On the one hand, they are both promoting the brand and celebrating the party and the music. Both websites also reproduce the official content of the campaign provided by the advertising agency in charge of its production. This includes a video on YouTube with some of the artists rehearsing before the presentation, and a detailed schedule with the upcoming gigs that are open to the general public, contrary to the launch of the campaign, which is a private event.

As a space of mediation, branded music events represent an instance where two social worlds are connected and assembled based on economic and cultural calculations and classifications displayed and performed by actors from the various fields of cultural production. On the one hand, cultural mediators participating at branded music events bring their objectifications of the scene, but also add a set of classifications around different cultural flows that are part of the events (e.g. brands, consumers-audiences, goods). On the other hand, advertising executives and music website creators display a set of cultural distinctions and economic calculations that take part before, during, and after events. As part of these processes, cultural mediators' digital capital is accumulated, displayed, and exchanged. In this sense, actors from Santiago's indie music scene, particularly musicians, cultural mediators through their websites, market agents represented by advertising agencies, and guests at events, collide in that social space. Actors from each world establish social and economic relations that enable the exchange of capital (e.g. economic and symbolic) between them, particularly digital capital from the perspective of cultural mediators. During my fieldwork I found that at branded music events, each actor has an active role mediating, for instance, brands and class distinctions, as well as the identity of the "indie music scene and its cultural flows (e.g. music, musicians' identities). For empirical purposes, as 'spaces of mediation', branded music events can be divided into different moments according to actors' performances, but everything is interconnected in order to be assembled as a key stage in the construction of market niches. For instance, in the case of cultural mediators, at events there is an exchange of economic and symbolic capital in the form of digital capital. On the one hand, some of them receive economic resources to participate in the event, promoting it through their websites. On the other hand, they connect the brand, in this case Corona, as a symbolic good that circulates as part of the flows of goods that individuals mediate on their websites (e.g. music identities, Santiago's indie music scene, as well as digital technologies). In the same way, through their practices at events, cultural mediators deploy a set of practices, particularly

cultural distinctions, through their digital technological uses, that is similar to consumers extending the life of the event. They are curators that validate, through the symbolic capital accumulated in the making of the sites, the exchange of flows in that space. It is the same with musicians who are involved in music events. They are actors receiving economic resources from the advertising agency for performing there, but their presence also mixes their identities with the brand while the brand becomes a part of the musicians' identities.

However, considering the exchange of capital between different actors, branded music events are not about the scene. They are the creation of an experience by different actors, particularly from the field of advertising, where the actors (e.g. musicians, and cultural mediators and their websites) are part of that social space where an imaginary of the indie identity is performed and reproduced at every event. In this case, the brand Corona and those imaginaries around the indie identity are mixed in a dialectical process of qualification, the performance of cultural distinctions and digital technological uses by cultural mediators and individuals from advertising. As Moor (2003: 53-55) suggests, this event is based specifically on the role of music in order to create an experience, but also a place where producers and consumers can 'play'. In this 'playing' between participants, the event evolves into a space where cultural distinctions take shape, mediated principally by cultural mediators through their use of technology, but also where different worlds interact. On the one hand, it is one formed by musicians, producers, and audiences. On the other hand, it is one formed by advertising executives, cultural mediators, brands, and companies.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how cultural mediators connect the flows of the scene as a field of cultural production with the field of advertising in the construction of a niche market. The focus has been upon the construction of networks and objectifications in the form of a website that constitutes exchangeable capital. Specifically, it has focussed upon the form of digital capital – that is, cultural distinctions around music, trends and global flows from other music scenes performed on websites and social networking sites, a practice seen to be valuable by advertising agents as part of their value chains. It is in this context that cultural mediators' digital capital is exchanged and circulated in market conditions. This process involves a series of tensions and negotiations for mediators in regard to make a living through their websites, and at the same time involving a pay-off in terms of being part of a context based on market conditions. Digital technologies, specifically their websites and social networking sites enable cultural mediators to connect the scene to different entities that construct marketplaces. Branded music events are the bounded spaces through which cultural mediators' objectifications of the scene are assembled into a whole set of relations, especially economic, commodifying the scene's cultural production. It is in this context that cultural mediators are the "transmission belt" (Bourdieu, 1984) between producers and consumers, connecting the real of production and consumption, by a set of mediations in the form of particular qualifications of flows and cultural forms that are objectified on their websites. Cultural mediators also shape the flows that circulate at these events – people, brands, and identities – converting them into something valuable for consumers and producers through their representation of events on the websites.

In terms of the sociability that emerges at branded music events, it is based on economic exchanges and social interaction performed especially by cultural mediators and people from the field of advertising (Wittel, 2002). This sociability is produced and visible at two interacting levels. On the one hand, cultural mediators make contact with actors from the field of advertising, as a form of networking in order to promote themselves and their sites. On the other hand, they use digital technologies, –particularly social networking sites, in order to make visible those contacts, and to show their ability to network in those spaces. In this context, cultural mediators' digital capital is continuously crafted through its accumulation by actors' involvement in a set of cultural and economic calculations regarding the organisation of branded music events. By doing this, cultural mediators make visible those calculations on their

websites, as well as social networking sites, constituting them as something exchangeable and desirable for actors within the field of advertising and consumers involved at those events.

Finally, regarding the mediations performed by cultural mediators, they qualify branded music events, –and the flows that circulate in those spaces, on their websites, as a result of reflexive practices and negotiations with actors from the field of advertising. By doing this as part of a set of relations with different actors, cultural mediators are involved in the assemblage of cultural flows and distinctions around them that are part of the constitution of market niches. In this sense, as Entwistle (2006) suggests, these processes of qualification of cultural flows are not linear, drawing on Cronin's (2004) 'multiple regimes of mediation', as varied mediations and actors involved in the qualification of cultural flows. In Particular, cultural mediators connect the indie scene they objectify on their websites to the construction of market niches performed by different actors, particularly related to the field of advertising. They do this by describing events on their websites, performing a sociability based on networking at those events, as well as converting their digital capital into economic capital as a result of the economic relations their establish with advertising agencies. In the same way, they bring together the realms of production and consumption, by promoting the brands' identity, as well as the event as a desirable object of consumption amongst website audiences. Similarly, cultural mediators also connect the realm of 'culture', that is, the production of meanings around flows, in this case a brand, and the 'economy', by exchanging their digital capital in order to add value to a particular object of consumption.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

This thesis has examined the experiences of a group of individuals who create and maintain websites about music scenes, with a special focus on Santiago's indie music scene, analysing what it means to be a cultural mediator in contemporary Chile. During this exploration, making websites was seen to be a process that involves different mediations, through which people give meanings to varied flows of information, images, and identities, facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs), and then valorised as forms of labour across different fields. By taking a bottom-up approach, processes of cultural mediation are understood as an assemblage of actors' categorisations of different types of flows through practices, discourses, and objects – particularly digital media – that are part of a network of actors and institutions that make up a local creative industry. Against this backdrop, the thesis examined how those mediations are the results of the interplay between different types of agencies (human and non-human) that are defined as 'digital capital'. Digital capital is an assemblage of different mediations of capital and associations between actors, practices, discourses, and digital media. The following paragraphs will briefly review the main findings described in the three empirical chapters. Then, the second section will offer a final reflection exploring the links between being a cultural mediator in the making of a creative industry and the role that digital capital plays in such people's lives in contemporary Chile.

The three empirical chapters of this thesis focused on the development of cultural mediators' 'digital capital' through the analysis of three intertwined processes that configure the concept: 1) the role of digital technologies on cultural mediators' practices; 2) cultural mediators' strategies for operating across different fields; and 3) cultural mediators' connection with the field of advertising.

The first empirical chapter (Chapter 4) explored how digital technologies are artefacts that help situate cultural mediators in networks of cultural flows (e.g. information, images, and identities). Taking a practice approach (Schatzki, 1999; 2002; 2003), it analysed the making and maintenance of websites as practices through which cultural mediators objectify their positions within those networks, in the same way websites were found to be representations of the scene and its flows. Through this, cultural mediators display different types of socio-technical

knowledge, uses of digital media, emotions and activities that are stabilised and assembled on websites, but also in social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1990) 'habitus' concept, I have described how through their uses and appropriation of digital technologies, cultural mediators configure and display a 'digital habitus', which is a disposition that structures ways of being and doing towards digital objects within fields. It was discussed how through the exchange of information in practice with digital media, cultural mediators accumulate and display their 'digital capital'. Hence, it was argued that in the making of websites, digital media are mediated and assembled through a set of practices and discourses. Actors' relations with digital media in the making of websites allow them to construct networks where cultural flows circulate; in the same way the websites are spaces where cultural mediators objectify their position within those networks, as well as the representations of the scene's flows. because they are considered as 'experts' in the use of ICTs by actors from different fields (e.g. the field of the music scene or the field of advertisement), cultural mediators' digital capital begins to be converted, and exchanged for positionality, recognition, and economic capital across those fields. This process is not exempt from tensions as a result of cultural mediators' professionalisation and valorisation of their knowledge and position within networks where flows circulate. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are central platforms through which cultural mediators' digital capital is produced, accumulated, and shown. They are tools to accumulate audiences by sharing content from their websites, but also to curate informational flows. Drawing on Riles (2001) the 'inside-out' of cultural mediators' practices is described: through their appropriation and uses of digital technologies, cultural mediators' websites become paths that trace their relations with cultural flows, objects, and actors from other fields; in the same way they are representations of those relations that are understood as 'the scene'.

The second part of chapter 4 moves on to analyse cultural mediators' relations with different types of metrics and measurement techniques around their sites, as well as their social networking profiles. These devices are non-human agencies that shape cultural mediators' practices by tracing their actions (Latour, 2011), but they are also a by-product of connections and interactions accumulated by digital technologies (Savage, et. al 2010). I argue that metrics (e.g. Google Analytics or Twitter and Facebook statistics) are representations of cultural mediators' digital capital: their ability to manage content and audiences in order to establish economic relations and alliances with brand consultants. In this context, metrics are 'inscriptions' (Latour, 1987) that mobilise a set of events that are represented in the output,

making visible cultural mediators' digital capital as cultural expertise and digital skills. Measuring audiences and the performance of cultural mediators is a strategy to accumulate digital capital and to convert it to obtain recognition, prestige, and economic capital across different fields, especially within the field of advertising. Considering all these elements, Chapter 4 concluded by arguing that the networks of audiences, downloads, likes, or re-tweets constructed by cultural mediators assemble their cultural and technical expertise, which is also visible on their websites and social networking profiles. Furthermore, varied metrics are the first stage for the accumulation, valorisation, and exchange of actors' digital capital.

Chapter 5 deals with cultural mediators' strategies for operating across different fields in order to distinguish themselves along multiple axes. In the previous chapter 'digital capital' was described as a set of socio-technical skills oriented to achieve positions of recognition in digital networks. This chapter analysed the strategies of cultural mediators for moving across different fields, based on their ability to curate and qualify cultural flows for the accumulation of digital capital. By following and discussing with them their movements and practices across three different fields, I realised that cultural mediators are always in an ambivalent position, trying to work with different actors and audiences. Similarly, they are trying to distinguish themselves across those fields by displaying different uses of taste to curate and circulate cultural flows on their websites and social networking sites. As a result of their strategies, meanings of the 'global', the 'commercial', and the 'political' are configured and performed. Cultural mediators' uses of taste operate as judgments about the aesthetic qualities of cultural flows and activities of actors across fields, also working as a 'weapon' to demarcate boundaries between social groups (Bourdieu, 1984; Warde, 2008). The chapter examined cultural mediators' movements across three different fields: mainstream media, global music websites, and the local music scene.

The first part of Chapter 5 described the dynamics and uses of taste displayed by cultural mediators regarding various cultural flows. Relying on observation of websites and interviews with them, I described here how they curate those flows then put them into circulation on their websites. By curating cultural flows and circulating them across fields and audiences, cultural mediators make of their websites spaces where those flows are qualified (Callon, et. al 2002). Thus, by curating flows, cultural mediators manipulate the attributes of those images, identities, and information in order to promote them on their websites. Through digital technologies, these processes of qualification are facilitated and displayed in order to

access, select and circulate flows of tastes around music, musicians, brands, and other types of flows that circulate across different fields. By doing this, cultural mediators shape their connections with actors from those fields to accumulate, valorise, and exchange their digital capital. Based on these descriptions, and the relations between uses of taste, curation, and processes of qualification of cultural flows, are another dimension of cultural mediators' digital capital. The strategies through which individuals move across fields are based on the ways they select, qualify and circulate flows as crucial activities for the accumulation of digital capital. Digital capital is a form of capital that legitimates a way of curating and circulating meanings around flows using digital media across different fields, distinguishing the website owners as cultural mediators.

In the second part of chapter 5 I described how, by promoting the local scene's artists on their websites, cultural mediators move across the field of mainstream media contesting forms of taste that are consecrated and validated by mainstream newspapers and magazines. They are trying to legitimate cultural flows that are considered as 'alternative culture'. In the case of cultural mediators' movements across the field of global music websites, they share aesthetic dispositions towards translocal forms of taste (Kuipers, 2012). In that context, they distinguish themselves by showing access and competences to curate flows of taste and contents that are circulating online, but also through their travels to global cities like New York or London. Central to their strategies within this field is the role of digital media in constructing cultural scales (Slater and Ariztia, 2008; Slater, 2013). Thus, cultural mediators feel part of a network of circulation of global references constituted by information, images, forms of taste, and varied mediated music scenes. Lastly, in the field of the local music scene, cultural mediators distinguish themselves through their abilities to discover new bands and sounds, in the same way they are capable of connecting the scene's cultural production to other fields (e.g. international music scenes and music websites).

The sixth and final empirical chapter focused on one specific and crucial interface where cultural mediators negotiate their sense of distinction as 'indie' by moving across the field of advertising and connecting it with the flows of the music scenes they mediate on their websites. By being active actors in a set of branded music events, cultural mediators are the 'transmission belt' (Bourdieu, 1984) between producers and consumers. They embody an 'ethos of fun and pleasure' (Smith & Mathews, 2010: 408), producing needs for products and themselves. This chapter showed that cultural mediators' digital capital involves the extent to which they control

digital flows. They are actors that shape the flows that circulate at branded events – people, brands, and identities – converting them into something valuable for consumers through their representations of those events on their websites. From this starting point I analysed how cultural mediators' digital capital is seen by different actors from the field of advertising (e.g. branding and marketing agencies, as well as executives) as an essential part of their value chains. Digital capital is objectified on cultural mediators' websites and on social networking sites where classifications and uses of taste are represented and distributed through the networks the cultural mediators create. By doing this, they connect various fields of cultural production by mediating them on their websites. Against this backdrop, cultural mediators' music websites are spaces that make visible social and economic relations through their ability to connect different fields, such as the music scenes they mediate and the field of advertising. In this chapter I traced empirically how cultural mediators' uses and appropriations of digital media are central to connecting the scene to varied entities in order to construct marketplaces based on different cultural and economic calculations (Slater, 2002). Thus, digital capital operates as valuable knowledge that people from the advertising world incorporate into their value chains, but is also a resource for cultural mediators to make a living and position themselves within fields.

The first part of Chapter 6 dealt with cultural mediators' definitions and meanings of being 'indie' in order to understand to what extent they represent those definitions on their websites. They are conscious of being part of an independent field of cultural production, which is trying to make a living by making and maintaining websites. However, they negotiate those definitions considering that the scene, as well as themselves as cultural mediators, is in transition from working without private sponsorship to the presence of private agents (e.g. advertising agencies) interested in providing funding for musicians and cultural mediators. Advertising agencies create 'branded music events' where musicians play for a specific group of consumers. They also pay cultural mediators to advertise brands as part of the content of their websites. It is in this context that cultural mediators are experiencing a process of professionalisation, dealing with their sites first as a hobby, then as professional output, thus causing different tensions to emerge during that process. The second part of Chapter 6 explored the different cultural calculations and qualifications (Callon, et. al 2002) performed by cultural mediators and advertising executives to establish commercial and economic relations. Through those relations brands become part of the flows of the scene represented on the websites, and at the same time cultural mediators become part of advertising campaigns in the

form of branded music events. Finally, the third part of Chapter 6 analysed how the scene and the market are assembled by looking at one branded music event, the 'Corona Clash'. It was discussed how cultural mediators qualified branded music events as a stage through which they can make sense of their practices, as well as their relation with market agents represented by advertisement and branding agencies. There, by describing the events on their websites and circulating in the form of content the different mediations and qualifications where they are involved, cultural mediators convert their digital capital into economic capital as a result they establish with advertising agencies.

Digital capital as an assemblage of different mediations

The standpoint of this thesis was to explore processes and experiences of cultural mediation and the role that digital media played in them, taking a bottom-up approach. This approach involved tracing associations between actors, meanings, and objects (especially digital technologies) that are involved in the making of a creative industry. Against this backdrop, the choice of a music scene as the site for this study – and particularly the role of a group of cultural mediators within it – came from the possibility of understanding how cultural goods are not only produced, but also rendered with meanings and values in modern economies and societies (Hesmondhalgh, 2008). In other words, this involved exploring how the realms of culture and economy are produced and intertwined (Du Gay and Pryke, 2002). Key actors in this process are a group of music fans who create and maintain websites about music scenes. By looking at their practices it was possible to understand their role as mediators between cultural production and cultural promotion in the changing dynamics of connectivity and digital reproduction. The group of music fans included in this study were explored as cultural mediators in the making of a music scene, through calculations and qualifications (Callon, et. al, 2002) of different cultural flows, and the material practices involved in the management of music websites. This group of people cannot be treated as mere consumers of the flows coming from the different scenes they mediate. On the contrary, they are key actors in the transformation and circulation of those flows, attaching meanings to them. As 'cultural mediators', this group of people curate, categorise, and circulate the scene's flows based on varied practices, discourses, and a set of digital media, transforming those flows and distributing them to different audiences on their websites and social networking sites.

In this context, how did the story of these people and the processes they are involved in evolve into a concept labelled 'digital capital'? How do their experiences of mediation of

cultural flows and digital technologies operate as forms of labour that are valorised and exchanged across different fields? Chile's 'indie' music scene is a useful case study of a non-fixed entity, a creative industry which is the result of a set of associations between groups of entities (e.g. musicians, audiences, producers, record labels, brands, and advertising agencies) and music websites that connect those flows with other actors. The massive increase in Chile's access to digital technologies over the last decade (UNPD, 2006) and the emergence of a creative and productive music scene (Tironi, 2009; 2012) represent a solid ground to focus on one particular issue: the material arrangements and symbolic production around flows, but most importantly, the role of digital media as a set of technologies that are mediated by people, but also as key devices in the production of culture and economy. Drawing on Tironi (2012: 206), what is the role that different 'socio-technical mediators' have in a music scene that is an assemblage of different spatialities, productive networks and actors? In other words, the thesis considered the different mediations (e.g. of cultural flows and digital technologies) in which website creators were involved, taking into consideration the importance of digital media and digital skills, to give an analytical and empirical account of the scene.

As described within the chapters, an account of processes of cultural mediation as part of a set of associations between actors and objects that are involved in the making of a music scene is not separate from digital media and digital skills. Bennett and Peterson's (2004) definition of music scenes as spaces that shape processes of cultural production between musicians, producers, and fans that share common tastes was a good point of entrance to understand two aspects in particular: the dynamics of music scenes as micro-economies based on processes of production and consumption of cultural goods (McRobbie, 2002); and the 'indie' character as a commercial organisation of cultural production that valorise autonomy and independence of commercial constraints (Hesmondhalgh, 1999). However, contrary to Bennett and Peterson's (2004) approach to exploring the role of digital technologies in the making of 'virtual' scenes – a label that this thesis criticises, in view of the 'non-virtual' character of cultural mediators' practices and discourses in making websites – the scene represented on the sites can be described as the result of a set of mediations performed by different actors, including a group of music fans, through which its flows are connected to different fields and audiences where digital technologies play a central role. Following Molloy and Lerner's (2010) study of the New Zealand fashion market, the scene as a creative industry is created and produced by the activities of mediators as much as musicians or – in their case – designers.

Against this backdrop, the contribution of this thesis to the vast literature and empirical studies of cultural mediation, particularly about the role of ‘cultural intermediaries’ (Bourdieu, 1984) in different types of markets and regarding different types of flows and goods (Entwistle, 2009; Nixon & Du Gay, 2002; McFall, 2002; Nixon, 2003; Negus, 2002; Cronin, 2004), is in the role that digital media plays in processes of assigning value and meaning to cultural flows. The practices of the group of cultural mediators described across the chapters are structured and shaped by the presence of digital media. The group of music fans as cultural mediators conceive their social order based on the assemblages of possibilities that these artefacts offer to them: for instance, to access, curate and circulate cultural flows. Digital media or ICTs mediated by these group of individuals help them to travel across virtual and actual networks where those flows circulate (Urry, 2002), constructing ‘cultural scales’ (Slater & Ariztia, 2008). This positions them as part of the same category of non-Chilean mediators that have websites and mediate the cultural production of different scenes through them.

By making websites mediating different scenes and their flows, and representing those mediations on the sites, cultural mediators are reproducing a set of values that are shaped by digital technologies, which are central in the valorisation and exchange of their practices as bringers of meanings to cultural flows (Entwistle, 2009). This dimension of cultural mediators’ practices regarding the mediation, uses, and appropriations of digital technologies expands Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of ‘cultural intermediaries’ as no more than ‘tastemakers’ or ‘shapers of taste’ (Nixon & Du Gay, 2002: 297) through the accumulation of cultural capital. For that reason, this thesis theorised mediation as a process of meaning and value assignment, which results from the interplay between different types of agencies. Identifying the role that human and non-human agencies play in shaping actors’ practices in the curation, qualification, and circulation of flows through digital technologies is the key contribution of this thesis to the discipline of and studies on cultural mediation. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu (1984; 1990) and Latour (1987; 2007), I propose from a bottom-up approach the concept of ‘digital capital’ as a form of mediation, which results from the interplay between different types of agencies.

The digital capital concept grasps three intertwined mediations. Firstly, the mediation of digital technologies, which allows cultural mediators to accumulate socio-digital skills in order to create - and situate themselves within - networks where flows circulate. In this context, cultural mediators’ websites are the paths that trace their relations with cultural flows, objects and actors from different fields. In the same way they are representations of those relations in the

form of 'the scene' (Riles, 2001). By mediating digital technologies, cultural mediators accumulate digital capital as skills. By managing their positions within the technological space they create, they accumulate audiences through the curation and circulation of flows. Secondly, by moving across fields through different strategies to distinguish themselves, cultural mediators display different uses of taste that are central in the curation, qualification, and circulation of flows objectified on their websites and social networking sites. Digital capital operates as a form of capital that involves the control of digital flows as a result of processes of curation, qualification, and distribution across networks and fields by means of digital technologies, through which individuals distinguish themselves as cultural mediators. Thirdly, through the construction of networks and objectifications in the form of websites and social networking profiles, individuals accumulate digital capital, which is valorised and exchanged across different fields, particularly within the field of advertising.

As a concept that emerges from fieldwork and empirical observation, taking a bottom-up approach, digital capital is an assemblage of actors, practices, objects, and discourses, which is valorised and converted into economic capital. Its richness as a concept rests on that empirical work, following a group of actors and their connections to flows, their uses of digital technologies, and their movements, as well as positionality across networks and fields. Digital capital enables us to understand how actors produce networks and fields of cultural production. These are the result of processes of meaning-making and circulation through digital media, and movements across those fields and networks. They are not merely a consequence of individuals' social backgrounds or fixed properties of objects, particularly digital technologies, and the cultural flows they are dealing with. Thus, this concept does not operate as a function of cultural mediators' knowledge of the digital and their levels of cultural capital. It does not describe the mediation of flows and technologies, or the positionality of actors across fields and networks as a system of inputs and outputs or causes and effects.

By exploring processes of cultural mediation and the role of digital technologies in them, I believe that the processes of distinction and positionality where cultural mediators are involved, as a result of their accumulation and exchange of digital capital, raises the question of how the production and circulation of meanings are commodified, valorised, and exchanged in markets. The practices of this group of cultural mediators explored throughout this thesis are situated in a process of professionalisation and commodification; their digital capital is valorised and exchanged in markets, as a result of the connections that cultural mediators facilitate

between different fields. In the same way, their digital capital is central to the production of those markets. In this context, the bottom-up approach to understanding processes of cultural mediation presented in this thesis is a point of entrance to explore how varied 'cultures of mediation' are performed in contemporary Chile. The concept of 'cultures of mediation' involves understanding that processes of cultural mediation and the objects involved in them – especially digital technologies – can be produced by actors in different ways and through varied strategies. In the same way digital technologies can shape the meanings that are produced and circulated by actors. Contrary to Bourdieu's idea of the role of cultural intermediaries as key actors connecting the realm of culture and the economy in different fields as a result of their family ties or social positions (Benzecry, 2012), the case of the group of cultural mediators included in this study, as well as the concept of digital capital, is the result of a set of practices and categories, through which people produce meanings, and where different material arrangements are involved in order to commoditise culture as consumable goods.

There is a connection between the concept of 'digital capital' and the notion of a 'digital divide' amongst young people, concerning their consumption practices and their use of ICTs (Hargittai, 2010). 'Digital divide' is defined as the gap between individuals in terms of their access to ICTs and internet user, as well as their knowing how to use them (Hargittai, 2003). As Hargittai (2010: 92) suggests, drawing on quantitative data in the U.S., 'even when controlling for Internet access and experiences, people differ in their online abilities and activities', reproducing socio-economic inequalities between individuals. Even 'digital capital' is a concept that emerges from the practices of digitally 'savvy' individuals, who are able to accumulate and exchange that capital in different fields. It also draws a line between individuals who have these abilities and knowledge and those who have not. There is a social distinction and valorisation (in economic terms, by different actors) of cultural mediators' digital capital. They are a group of consumers who distinguish themselves from other types of consumers through their practices and their ability to promote and exchange flows through digital networks. The connection with the notion of digital divide is related to how their technical expertise allows them to establish connections with other fields of cultural production (e.g. advertising), achieving positions of distinction, and becoming experts as consumers and recommenders of consumer goods.

Similarly, in a recent book titled 'The Daily You' (2011), Joseph Turow from the Annenberg School for Communication (University of Pennsylvania), describes how the 'rise of digital profiling and personalisation has spawned a new industrial jargon that reflects potentially

grave social division and privacy issues' (Turow, 2011: 7). For him, the customisation of content and advertising driven by the use of digital technologies (e.g. data mining) has consequences for how we see ourselves and our world, as well as how companies see us as consumers, as 'targets or waste'. In this context, the role of cultural mediators and their use of digital media connecting fields of cultural production (e.g. the music scene and the field of advertising), but most importantly, being in between the processes of production and consumption, reveal how their contribution - adding meanings to flows; putting them into circulation to different consumers - can contribute to alerting their audiences about their social position. If some of them are constantly promoting products or services to a niche group of high-class consumers on their sites, while others are in a similar way promoting different products to lower-class consumers, they are contributing to reinforcing class differences and how we see ourselves in the world. Against this backdrop, this thesis has presented the tensions and negotiations where cultural mediators in the context of Santiago's indie music scene are involved. Similarly, in a study exploring the 'social media scene' in Silicon Valley, Marwick (2013) found that actors involved in that scene – workers in start-up companies - used social networking sites to make visible their contacts, taste classifications, and projects to achieve positions of distinction within the scene. In her view, the use of digital technologies by a group of people in that scene produces ideal neoliberal selves, whose everyday social relations are based on market logic, 'rewarding those who adopt such subjectivities' (Marwick, 2013: 6).

The digital capital that cultural mediators accumulate and exchange in the context of Santiago's indie music scene, as well as other fields of cultural production, operate as a form of distinction between individuals, particularly as consumers. They are part of a network of relations that gives rise to a music scene: brands, consumers, websites and online social media. Digital media (such as websites and social networking sites) emerge as tools and spaces where cultural mediators compete for distinction based on their use of taste, and the number of 'likes' and followers they accumulate, in order to draw the attention of brands interested in financing their activities. The online presentation of the members reflects different strategies for building prestige and accumulating followers, both in the social media scene in Silicon Valley and in the independent music scene in Santiago. It can be argued that individuals' digital capital, rather than generating a democratising effect, often operates as a mechanism to reproduce inequalities between individuals.

Concluding remarks

This thesis, as a study of cultural mediation and the role that digital media played in those processes, was based on only one case study: Santiago's indie music scene and the social life of 12 cultural mediators who create and maintain websites about that scene, as well as global music scenes. This analysis can be extended to similar creative industries that are represented and objectified through digital media by different actors. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 3, it is possible to understand the relationship of cultural mediation and digital media, but most importantly, the role that cultural mediators and their uses of digital media have in the circulation of meanings around flows. How much of this analysis is applicable to similar creative industries such as fashion design or the art market? To what extent are the calculations and qualifications of the group of cultural mediators included in this study similar to the ones that are part of the making of other fields? How does the digital capital concept fit with those creative industries and the practices of cultural mediators that are part of those fields? This thesis can be seen as an initial effort to continuing exploring the connections between the realm of culture and economy in a context of digital reproduction and connectivity.

When I started working on this thesis I moved across different research questions, topics, and assumptions. However, there were a couple of ideas that were always present. On the one hand, it was my intention to understand how people's uses of digital technologies allows them to be part of the circulation of different types of information flows, images, and identities, especially those available on the internet and social networking sites. On the other hand, music has been an interest all my life, and when I looked at the websites that were part of this study, I always had questions regarding the people behind them, their imaginaries and lifestyles, but most importantly, their ability to curate and circulate different types of flows, moving across different fields. With that in mind this thesis started. After four years working on it, and a considerable number of words, I think that at the very least I have related a story of a group of people in contemporary Chile through one question: 'what are the connections and associations between technical knowledge, cultural flows, social positions, and conversions of capital, behind someone who is using Facebook, Twitter or making a website about a music scene?

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