Pressures to Change

Institutional Politics in Higher Music Education

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Preface

To examine the inner life of an institution is a humbling experience. There are so many people who–once they come together–constitute society, and they can offer critical perspectives on and conversations about modern life. In this doctoral thesis, I build on the premise that knowledge is constructed over time through social negotiations. Thus, I am deeply grateful to those who participated in this study: thank you to all of the twenty-four music performance students and professors who generously shared your time, energy and meaning-making with me during our conversations in 2019. Your contributions have been invaluable to this case study and will provide the field of higher music education with crucial information about the experiences of field members with different affiliations. I would also like to thank the participating institutions (or *organisations*, as they are referred to in institutional theory)–the Norwegian Academy of Music and the Utrechts Conservatorium–for welcoming this investigation into their inner workings. I believe that it is through such acts of transparency that we can learn from one another and develop a broader understanding of how to come together as a field. Thank you all for participating in this project.

One of the most important lessons that I gained from conducting this research project, was how power mechanisms mediate processes of institutional change in higher music education. As an *insider* (given my background as a composer and musicologist), I am therefore grateful to the gatekeepers who have believed in me and supported this PhD project. Thank you to the doctoral committee who gave me the opportunity to grow as a scholar and that, year after year, presents the field with scholars who pose novel and challenging scholarly questions. I believe that this is an exciting time to bring new ideas into the field of higher music education. Consequently, those who occupy positions of power (by virtue of their institutional roles) ought to invite critical thinking and reflective practice into the institution. Thus, I was utterly pleased to be granted the supervisor I was hoping for when I applied for the position in 2018: thank you, Prof. Sigrid Røyseng, for all of your insight and advice, and for always being supportive and constructive. It has been such a fruitful partnership; it is a true joy and privilege to converse and co-write with you. I hope our paths will cross in the future.

There are many things to learn when conducting a PhD project. One of the more challenging lessons for me was how to write an article. In truth, I spent the better part of a year on the first article included in this study. I had two supervisors at the time, including Prof. Sidsel Karlsen whom I would be remiss not to thank for guiding me through the format and its many implicit rules: thank you for your patience and advice during this time. As you know, it ended well, and I look forward to collaborating with you in the future. This brings me to another arena for collaboration: I would like to offer a special thanks to the Centre for Excellence in

Music Performance Education (CEMPE). Over the past four years, I have had the fortunate opportunity to not only follow the centre's activities but to partake in its development by stepping in as deputy leader for a year. I am most grateful for the trust granted to me by the centre's leader, Dr. Ellen Stabell. It has been incredible to follow and get to know the CEMPE team and their institutional work.

Higher music education is built on highly specialised knowledge(s), in so far as institutional members tend to pursue excellence in selected niches. Academic work is no exception, and I have welcomed scholarly input from colleagues across affiliations and institutions. In fact, I contacted scholars with various backgrounds during the pandemic, and these Zoom conversations were both easy to conduct and highly stimulating. Discussions about different theories and experiences are wonderful for gaining perspective. Indeed, I find that the digital tools we now have access to can be put to good use in the years to come. The ability to speak individually with colleagues from around the world is precious. Thus, I genuinely hope scholars will reach out worldwide also post-pandemic, and I encourage anyone who reads this to contact other scholars, including me, for constructive discussions across institutions and borders. To the scholars who accepted my request to converse and generously offered your time, attention and knowledge–you know who you are–thank you so much. Acts such as these constitute knowledge-sharing practices in academia, and they matter.

By the same token, I want to thank my inspiring colleague Dr. Tanja Orning: thank you for including me in conversations and projects, and for producing and co-hosting a podcast series about institutional change in higher music education with me. Knowledge sharing is essential, and my perspectives have shifted during the course of this PhD project due to conversing with you. Similarly, I want to thank my partner, family and friends for supporting me during this intense pursuit of an academic career: I appreciate your patience, trust and kindness. This supportive environment has enabled me to maintain my commitment throughout the project period and to be both disciplined and creative. Finally, I am grateful also to myself: for taking chances and for always following my gut. I have thoroughly loved this intellectual adventure. I hope you enjoy reading about it.

Summary

Is the music student merely a reflection of higher music education, or does higher music education in fact reflect its students? In recent decades, scholars have encouraged institutional renewal to take place in higher music education, often with a firm emphasis on the importance of enabling student creativity. The implementation of genre independent music performance study programmes is one example of how individualised practices are emerging to support the creative development of students. In tandem with societal changes (such as increasing globalisation and digitalisation), it is argued that higher music education must adapt if today's graduates are to be prepared for their professional careers in a dynamic labour market. Yet institutional change sometimes conflicts with the institutionalised hierarchies embedded in higher music education, typically illustrated in research where tension points between discourses and various subgroups of institutional members emerge. How, then, are music students and professors affected by this portrayed friction during processes of institutional change? Further, if the perceived conflicts are to be reconciled through institutional work, what power mechanisms dominate this complex landscape?

This PhD project investigates how underlying mechanisms of power (e.g. discourses, forms of institutional power and pressures) are connected to institutional change in higher music education. The study was designed to explore how members of higher music education experience processes of change and to shed light on the power mechanisms that mediate institutional change. Since its initiation in 2018 and throughout the project period, the doctoral thesis has evolved organically. In 2019, Ski-Berg conducted a comparative case study of the Norwegian Academy of Music and the Utrechts Conservatorium, obtaining institutional documents and conducting qualitative interviews with twenty-four music performance students and professors from classical and genre independent study programmes. The interviews were transcribed, anonymised and then coded in NVivo. The interview guide included questions about three recent cultural shifts targeted by the study to illustrate institutional change: 1) the shift toward *student-centredness*; 2) the endorsement of *entrepreneurship*; and 3) the call for *innovation*. In 2020, the empirical data was examined using Foucauldian discourse theory, and from 2021 to 2022, it was analysed with theoretical frameworks from organisational institutionalism.

The study resulted in three articles: article one explored how the overarching shift towards student-centredness is experienced in higher music education. The article identified four discourses on student-centredness (i.e. *employability*, *artistry*, *craftsmanship*, and *holism*) through a discourse-theoretical reading of the interview transcripts. The discussion centred on how the subject positions of students and professors in higher music education appear to be in flux. Article two built on the forms of institutional power identified in the informant

interviews in an attempt to discuss the call for innovation in higher music education. The article found that innovative practices (e.g. genre independent programmes) have caused some institutional resistance yet also contributed to the institutional renewal that many scholars are advocating. Article three examined how various institutional pressures from the organisational field of higher music education are connected to institutional change. Central to the discussion was how and why institutional changes in higher music education could be better understood by employing organisational institutionalism, a theory offering a critical lens that few have employed in research on higher music education.

Implications from the three resulting articles were synthesised during the final stages of the research project. This synthesis is organised into three articles in the thesis: 1) the pitfalls of decentring authorities; 2) experiences with institutional change; and 3) institutional power and leadership. For instance, it was found that there is *normative* pressure to change higher music education (that is, the norms of the field are changing and should be re-evaluated). Moreover, there appears to be a shared quest for institutional legitimacy among higher music education institutions (or *organisations*, if adhering to terms from instutional theory). It was also found that leadership may 'accessorise' with institutional change, as members' experiences at times differed from the declared strategic plans for institutional change (e.g. career courses were considered to be outdated, yet student employability was given priority in the strategies). Regardless of their affiliation (classical or genre independent), the informants wanted to balance innovation with tradition. Considering these (and similar) findings, the thesis discusses how the rise of student creativity is connected to power mechanisms that both inhibit and drive institutional change.

A balancing act between innovation and tradition–new and old, renewal and continuity–also echoes in the theoretical perspectives chosen for this thesis. Indeed, the power mechanisms that mediate institutional change rest upon a push/pull relationship between *institutional control* (e.g. disciplinary practices such as assessment criteria) and members' initiatives for change (e.g. new projects and teaching methods). It is in this interplay that *institutional politics* unfold. Students and professors are thereby actors who mediate processes of institutional change (e.g. initiatives and resistance, power relationships and discourses) in the face of other forces for or against change (e.g. disciplinary practices, institutional pressures from the field). By combining the empirical data and the theoretical perspectives, Ski-Berg posits that the rise of student creativity is connected to the changing power dynamics within higher music education and to overarching societal developments and pressures for institutional renewal. The notion that higher music education is constituted by its inherent politics permeates the final chapters, leading to a conclusion that offers critical insight into how and why institutional change is unfolding in higher music education, and why it is vital for interested parties to act critically.

Sammendrag (Norwegian)

Er musikkstudenten en refleksjon av høyere musikkutdanning, eller speiler også høyere musikkutdanning sine studenter? De senere tiårene har forskere oppmuntret til institusjonell fornyelse i høyere musikkutdanning, ofte ved å fremheve viktigheten av å legge til rette for studentenes kreative utfoldelse. Implementeringen av sjangerfrie studieprogram er et eksempel på hvordan individualiserte praksiser som støtter studentkreativitet har dukket opp i høyere musikkutdanning. I takt med samfunnsendringer (som for eksempel økt globalisering og digitalisering) argumenterer musikkforskere nå for at høyere musikkutdanning må endre seg dersom dagens musikkstudenter skal bli godt nok forberedt på deres fremtidige kunstneriske virke i et dynamisk musikkliv. Men institusjonelle endringer kan finne på å kollidere med institusjonaliserte hierarkier i høyere musikkutdanning, typisk illustrert gjennom forskning hvor spenningsforhold mellom diskurser og grupper av institusjonelle medlemmer blir portrettert. I lys av dette, hvordan blir musikkstudenter og -professorer påvirket av spenningsfelt som utfolder seg i løpet av institusjonelle endringer? Og dersom spenninger skal bli forsonet gjennom institusjonelt arbeid, hvilke maktmekanismer dominerer dette komplekse landskapet?

Dette PhD-prosjektet har undersøkt hvordan underliggende maktmekanismer (det vil si, diskurser, former for institusjonell makt og institusjonelle press) er koblet til institusjonell endring i høyere musikkutdanning. Siden prosjektets oppstart i 2018 har doktorgradsavhandlingen utviklet seg organisk gjennom prosjektperioden: Ski-Berg utførte i 2019 en komparativ casestudie av Norges musikkhøgskole og Utrechts Conservatorium, bestående av institusjonelle dokumenter og kvalitative intervjuer med tjuefire utøvende musikkstudenter og -professorer fra klassiske og sjangerfrie studieprogram. Intervjuene ble transkribert, anonymisert og deretter kodet i NVivo. Intervjuguiden inkluderte blant annet spørsmål om tre kulturelle skift, spesifikt valgt for denne studien for å illustrere institusjonelle endringer i høyere musikkutdanning: 1) det overordnete skifte mot det *student-sentrerte*; 2) den kontinuerlige innføringen av kurs/fag i *entreprenørskap*; og 3) oppfordringen til å *innovere* høyere musikkutdanning. De empiriske dataene ble i 2020 undersøkt med Foucaults diskursteori og fra 2021 til 2022 analysert med teoretiske rammeverk fra institusjonell teori (organisatorisk institusjonalisme). Målet med prosjektet har vært å undersøke hvordan studenter og professorer opplever institusjonelle endringer i høyere musikkutdanning, samt å kaste lys over maktmekanismer som påvirker (og motvirker) institusjonell fornyelse.

Studien har resultert i tre artikler: artikkel én identifiserte fire diskurser rundt det student-sentrerte (*employability*, *artistry*, *craftsmanship*, *holism*) gjennom en diskursteoretisk gjennomlesing av intervjutranskripsjonene. Artikkelen utforsket hvordan det overordnete

skiftet mot det student-sentrerte oppleves og argumenterte for at subjektposisjonene til musikkstudenter og -professorer ser ut til å være i endring. Artikkel to diskuterte–med utgangspunkt i forskning og institusjonelle strategier–den fremtredende oppfordringen til å innovere høyere musikkutdanning. Ved å bygge på former for institusjonell makt som ble identifisert i intervjuene, fant artikkelen at innovative praksiser i høyere musikkutdanning (som f.eks. sjangerfrie studieprogrammer) har forårsaket institusjonell motstand, men også bidratt til den type institusjonell fornyelse som det blir oppmuntret til i dag av musikkforskere. Artikkel tre undersøkte hvordan ulike institusjonelle press fra organisasjonsfeltet til høyere musikkutdanning kan knyttes til institusjonelle endringer. Diskusjonen satte søkelys på hvordan og hvorfor institusjonelle endringer i høyere musikkutdaning kan forstås bedre ved at forskere benytter seg av institusjonell teori. De teoretiske rammeverkene fra studien har blitt lite brukt i forskning på (høyere) musikkutdanning, og kan bidra med nyanserte og kritiske innfallsvinkler i videre diskusjoner om institusjonelle endringer.

Implikasjonene fra artiklene sine funn ble syntetisert i sluttfasen av PhD-prosjektet. Denne syntesen presenteres i avhandlingen gjennom tre kategorier med hovedfunn: 1) fallgruver ved å desentralisere autoriteter; 2) erfaringer med institusjonelle endringer; og 3) ledelse og institusjonell makt. Det ble for eksempel funnet *normativt* press for å forandre høyere musikkutdanning (det vil si, normene i feltet endrer seg og evalueres), og det ser ut til å være en felles jakt på institusjonell legitimitet blant høyere musikkutdanningsinstitusjoner (eller *-organisasjoner*, ifølge institusjonell teori). Det ble videre funnet at ledere muligens 'smykker' seg med snakk om institusjonell endring, for informantene sine opplevelser med endring og hvordan endring ble omtalt i strategiplanene var tidvis forskjellige (f.eks. karrierekurs ble beskrevet som utdatert, til tross for at arbeidslivsrelevans ble gitt prioritet i strategiene). Informantene uttrykte et generelt ønske om å balansere innovasjon med tradisjon, også på tvers av deres ulike tilhørighet ved institusjonen. I diskusjonen som følger, hevder Ski-Berg at fremveksten av (det økte fokuset på) studentkreativitet kan kobles opp mot maktmekanismer som både bidrar til og motarbeider endring i høyere musikkutdanning, og diskuterer hvilke konsekvenser dette kan få.

Balanseakten mellom innovasjon og tradisjon–nytt og gammelt, fornyelse og kontinuitet–gir gjenklang også i de teoretiske perspektivene som ble valgt for denne avhandlingen. Maktmekanismene som former institusjonelle endringer bygger på samspillet mellom *institusjonell kontroll* (f.eks. disiplinære praksiser sånn som vurderingskriterer) og medlemmers initativer for endring (f.eks. nye prosjekter og/eller undervisningsmetoder). Det er nettopp i dette samspillet at *institusjonell politikk* utfolder seg. Musikkstudenter og -professorer er dermed aktører som forhandler frem endringsprosesser (det være seg deres initaitiver eller motstand, maktrelasjoner eller diskurser) i møte med andre mekanismer for/mot endring

(f.eks. institusjonelle press fra organisasjonsfeltet, disiplinære praksiser ved institusjonen). Ved å kombinere funnene fra casestudien med de utvalgte teoretiske perspektivene, argumenterer Ski-Berg for at endringer i maktstrukturene til høyere musikkutdanning henger sammen med overordnete samfunnsendringer og institusjonelle press for institusjonell fornyelse, som sammen resulterer i fremveksten av (det økte fokuset på) studentkreativitet i høyere musikkutdanning. Idéen om at institusjonen blir til gjennom intern politikk gjennomsyrer de siste kapitlene og renner omsider ut i en konklusjon som gir kritisk innsikt inn i hvordan og hvorfor institusjonelle endringer finner sted på nåværende tidspunkt i høyere musikkutdanning.

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1 Introduction

Institutional change in higher music education is both advocated for and widely recognised by scholars at the present time. It is claimed that our institutions (or *organisations* in institutional theory) are currently facing substantial challenges due to rapid societal change (e.g. globalisation and digitalisation), often linked to massive changes in the labour market that music graduates must navigate (e.g. streaming services, social media platforms). Music students must be empowered, scholars declare. Yet there is institutional resistance to change in higher music education, often illustrated in the tension between various discourses and subgroups of members as changes are implemented. Despite the growing scholarly acknowledgement that the institutionalised power dynamics within higher music education should be transformed to enable student creativity, few studies have dissected the power mechanisms that mediate changes in the institutional setting. This thesis addresses this research gap by examining how institutional change is constituted (and inhibited) by forms of institutional power in higher music education. The first chapter elaborates on this backdrop, explains the purpose of the thesis and my profile as a scholar, presents the overarching research questions, and offers an overview of the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Backdrop

The field of higher music education has for some time been confronted with a 'reality gap': the education of the performer is no longer sufficient for preparing music graduates for careers as professional musicians in the current labour market. From adjustments in curricula to collaborative projects, new teaching methods and individualised study programmes, implementing institutional change in higher music education has been widely encouraged by scholars over the past decade. Among the most prominent topics are approaches to teaching (e.g. Ski-Berg, 2022; Sætre & Zhukov, 2021; Bartleet et al., 2020; Brinck & Anderskov, 2019; Yau, 2019; Carey et al., 2017; Gaunt & Westerlund, 2016, Haddon & Burnard, 2016), career development (e.g. Toscher, 2021, 2020; de Reizabal & Gómez, 2020; Bartleet et al., 2019; Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Bennett et al., 2018; Schediwy et al., 2018; Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015; Bennett, 2014, 2012, 2008; Creech et al., 2008), social (in)equity (e.g. Ford, 2021; Jääskeläinen, 2021; Karlsen, 2021; Kertz-Welzel, 2021; Grant, 2019; Westerlund, 2019; Green, 2012), and the predicament of the institution as society changes (e.g. Gaunt et al., 2021; Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020; Angelo et al., 2019; Bennett et al., 2019; Reid et al., 2019; Rowley et al., 2019; Minors et al., 2017; Duffy, 2016; Haddon & Burnard, 2015; Burnard, 2014; Johansson, 2012).

However, institutional change does not guarantee progress; it only ensures that a transformation will take place, as it already has over the span of centuries (e.g. Gies, 2019; Jørgensen, 2009). In modern society, higher education is characterised by a 'dual institutionalization' in which disciplinary knowledge is perpeatuated while new workers are simultaneously trained to contribute to society (Scott, 2017, p. 858). Because of the aforementioned 'reality gap', this dual mission poses a challenge to higher music education: the education of the professional performer (and other kinds of music students) entails both the transmission of specialised crafts (and other kinds of disciplinary) knowledge and the need for graduates to transition into professional musicians. Indeed, higher music education partakes in the institutional infrastructure from which society is shaped (Hinings et al., 2017). Higher music education institutions (or, as this thesis will eventually refer to them, *organisations*) are therefore also economic actors, often publicly funded in Europe and pressured to fulfil specific criteria from allocation plans (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 158). Through strategic work for institutional change, the 'reality gap' (or 'skills paradox'; see Johansson, 2012) has been addressed by leaders of higher music education. But how do music students and professors experience this institutional work, and why is it taking so long?

There are no simple answers to these questions. However, this thesis attempts to discuss them in the final chapters by arguing that the pressures to change higher music education have resulted in a contradictory landscape for music students and professors. In short, the evolving power dynamics within higher music education have repercussions, and the identified institutional politics in this study suggest that members can serve as significant actors in processes of change and may provide administrators with useful information about crucial pitfalls and tension points. The following conclusion posits that our institutions (i.e. *organisations*) appear to be chasing institutional legitimacy to survive and that this identified quest for survival has implications for how scholars may want to proceed in examining institutional power in higher music education.

To comprehend these segments, the thesis leans on two foundational ideas: 1) it employs a poststructuralist perspective, viewing knowledge as socially constructed and derived from power relationships (Foucault, 1972/2010), meaning that expert authorities are indispensable for expertise to emerge in higher music education (Hakkarainen, 2016); and 2) it leans on the assumption (drawn from the literature referenced above) that power dynamics within higher music education (and the educational sector in general) are changing in tandem with society at large, giving rise to a growing scholarly emphasis on the importance of student creativity. To address this phenomenon, three 'cultural shifts' have been targeted (discussed in Chapter 2) through a case study of two higher music education institutions (i.e. *organisations*). Against

this backdrop, a PhD research project was conducted from 2018 to 2022. However, its seeds were planted a decade prior to this, as presented in the next section.

1.2 Purpose and profile

When I enrolled as a composition student at the Norwegian Academy of Music in 2010, I had been told for many years already that higher music education was changing. As an aspiring composer, I was thrilled. I had been playing the flute since 1998 and was always looking for ways to develop creatively (granted, not all teachers were fond of my creative endeavours). During my composition studies, I spent some time abroad in Estonia and Austria and found that the narrative of institutional change transcended national borders. Indeed, students appeared to be more in tune with their future prospects and with societal changes, perhaps because I interacted mostly with other exchange students who were eager to learn about the world. By sharing stories from our lives as students, a nuanced landscape of higher music education emerged, making it hard to pinpoint exactly what the rumoured changes were meant to entail. Fast forward to 2015, when I enrolled as a musicology student: the amount of research that addressed changes in higher music education was startling. I seized every opportunity to be a student representative on various boards and committees, experiencing first-hand how institutional change was driven forward.

As a music student, one accumulates experience over time, not only alone but together with fellow students and colleagues. One of the educational characteristics that surprised me concerning institutional power during my studies was the similarity between the experiences of younger and older institutional members. I realised that what I had been searching for was not the answer to *what* kind of change would take place but rather *how* it was likely to unfold and *why* it was considered to be challenging by teachers and institutional leaders. When this project began in 2018, there was no need for research to recognise that institutional change was needed in higher music education. Rather, there was a need for theoretical perspectives that could help uncover the power mechanisms that mediate institutional change. The world of music is constructed by people, and so is higher music education when seen through a constructivist lens. Thus–resembling the process of musical composition–I have found that processes of institutional change are as much about *continuity* as about *renewal*. Bringing awareness to this balancing act has revealed itself as the purpose of this written work. The following section elaborates on how this evolution emerged.

1.3 Research questions

Since its initiation in 2018, this thesis has transformed organically by following the process of *abduction*.[1] The original research question was very broad, as I had not yet decided on a theoretical framework for the study. Baked into this original question was a comparison of how music performance students and professors from classical and genre independent study programmes experience institutional change, specifically 'innovative' initiatives (e.g. genre independent programmes). In the aftermath of the three resulting articles (Chapter 5), the title of the thesis was changed to *Pressures to Change: Institutional Politics in Higher Music Education*.[2] The overarching research questions for the thesis now read as follows:

- How do forms of *institutional power* mediate *institutional change* in higher music education?

- How do various *calls/pressures* for *institutional change* from the *field* affect the studied higher music education *organisations*?

- How is do the participating students and professors experience *institutional change*, and what are the implications of their experiences for the *field* of higher music education?

Together, these research questions address the interplay between institutional levels (e.g. the *field*, *organisations*, and *members*)[3] and the balancing act of tradition (i.e. *continuity*) and innovation (to be loosely understood as *renewal*)[4] during processes of change in higher music education. Moreover, the thesis investigates underlying power mechanisms within the institutional setting by targeting three cultural shifts (the shift towards *student-centredness*, the endorsement of *entrepreneurship* and the call for *innovation*, which are elaborated on in Chapter 2) through a comparative case study (explained in Chapter 4) and by analysing the resulting empirical data with *Foucauldian discourse theory* and theory from *organisational institutionalism* (discussed in Chapter 3).

As noted, the thesis has undergone an evolution. Initially, the aim was to examine how the discursive landscape of higher music education was affected by the implementation of genre

1 *Abduction* can be understood as a 'creative inferential process' undertaken by the researcher (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 5). The concept is explained further in Chapter 4 (4.1.1).

2 *Institutional politics* is constituted by the interplay between institutional members (e.g. students, professors, leaders) and the institutional structures that they must abide by (e.g. exam criteria, opening hours), explained further in Chapter 3 (3.2.2).

3 These *institutional levels* are reviewed in Chapter 3 (3.2), then later elaborated on in section 5.4 and subsection 6.2.3.

4 The concept of *innovation* is presented in 2.2.3.

independent music performance study programmes by employing Foucauldian discourse theory (3.1.2). Moreover, I wanted to compare the perspectives of music students and professors and therefore decided to investigate (what I refer to as) the shift towards *student-centredness* (2.2.1). The research question for the first article (5.1) was thereby formulated:

> What are the *discourses* on student-centredness in higher music education, and what *subject positions* are enabled in the unveiled discursive landscape?

Soon after, a follow-up research question with a broader angle was posed for the second article (5.2):

> How do music students and professors from classical and genre independent performance study programmes experience the increased focus on innovating higher music education, and what are the implications of their experiences?

Together, the research questions from these articles addressed institutional change in higher music education from different angles, both theoretically and thematically. However, both attempted to dissect how institutional change was affecting institutional members of higher music education and to analyse these members' experiences by examining underlying power mechanisms. The title up to this point had been *Institutionalizing Innovation: Uncovering the 'Protean' Music Student*.[5] As the thesis progressed, however, a new theoretical approach was added (explained in 5.4, elaborated on in 3.2) to examine the power mechanisms that mediate institutional change.[6] Thus, more research questions were added for the third article (5.3):

> What practices are being called for to change higher music education, and what *institutional pressures* appear to be driving these calls? How are higher music education organisations responding to *pressures* to change, and what are the implications of this unveiled landscape?

Though these research questions are concerned with different theories and data, they point in the same direction: how are students and professors experiencing institutional changes in higher music education, and what are the implications? Ultimately, this thesis approaches institutional change by zooming in on and out of various institutional levels (as accounted for in 5.4) through a bird's-eye perspective to identify the underlying power mechanisms that mediate how and why the field of higher music education is transforming. As will become clear

5 The evolution of the thesis also included a shift from American to British English in order to meet the language requirements of relevant journals.

6 I employ the notion of *power mechanisms* here as an umbrella term for the various structures that have been addressed in this thesis (e.g. *institutional pressures* and *institutional power*, *power relationships* and *power/knowledge*).

in the final chapters of the thesis, institutional politics have been found to both constitute and inhibit institutional change in the studied organisations. This finding is best comprehended by building on the inherent logic of the thesis. The final section of this chapter accounts for its structure.

1.4 Overview of the thesis

This first chapter has presented the background, purpose, profile and research questions behind this thesis. The following chapters contextualise, present, and discuss the research that was conducted during this PhD research project: Chapter 2 situates the study by guiding the reader through the literature on higher music education, including three cultural shifts that have been targeted in this study to illustrate institutional change; Chapter 3 elaborates on the theoretical frameworks that have been employed to analyse how institutional change is unfolding in the two studied higher music education organisations; Chapter 4 explains what methodological decisions were made and why, including how the empirical data was collected and what ethical considerations are connected to the study; Chapter 5 describes the three resulting articles and illustrates how they relate to one another, including an overview of the abductive analysis that was undertaken as the thesis evolved; Chapter 6 presents the main findings from the undertaken case study and the theoretical nuances within the thesis, and then discusses the implications of the findings as well as the thesis's position in the field; and, finally, Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by addressing its overall contribution to the field, including some ideas that may inspire future research, and thereafter offers some concluding remarks.

2 Situating the study

This thesis is grounded in music education research and sociological thought. Chapter 2 builds on this position by presenting three sections: the first discusses higher music education as an institution in contemporary society and the institutional norms that are relevant for this study. Furthermore, members and subgroups of higher music education are briefly presented and described, followed by a short literature review of the prominent student-teacher relationship between music performance students and instrumental teachers. The first section thus serves as a description of the research site–higher music education–building on common threads in music education research. The second section, on the other hand, illustrates how recent cultural shifts appear to be changing higher music education. More specifically, three shifts have been targeted to illustrate institutional change: 1) the shift towards *student-centredness*; 2) the endorsement of *entrepreneurship*; and 3) the call for *innovation*. Scandinavian and Northern European research has been emphasised to address these shifts within the context of this study. Finally, the chapter closes with a section on the research gap that this thesis addresses.

2.1 Higher music education

> Institutions for higher music education have been subject to re-organization and demands for efficiency and relevance; they have also had to take responsibility for the larger part of their funding and adapt to new cultural and media circumstances in the much debated global market for people and products. Some have disappeared; others have prevailed because they reacted constructively to the demand "change or you don't survive!" (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 9)

The field of higher music education is changing. Scholars state that higher music education institutions (that is, *organisations* in institutional theory)[7] are 'undergoing substantial changes' (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020, p. 246) and face enormous challenges, 'from labour to equity, artistic risk to curricular needs' (Schmidt, 2019, p. 54). In recent decades alone, several books have been published on how to develop new teaching and learning methods in higher music education (e.g. Gaunt & Westerlund, 2016; Haddon & Burnard, 2016; Burnard & Haddon, 2015; Burnard, 2014), as well as how to increase the employability of music graduates in the changing labour market (e.g. Bennett, 2012, 2008), and on processes of change in higher music

7 To clarify, what is typically referred to as higher music education *institutions* in music education research would be referred to as *organisations* in organisational institutionalism (a central theoretical framework in this thesis, see 3.2). There will be occasional reminders of this throughout Chapter 2, as institutional terms will be employed in later chapters.

education (Bennett et al., 2019; Rowley et al., 2019; Jørgensen, 2009). Indeed, there has been an increasing academisation of higher music education in recent decades (e.g. Angelo et al., 2021; Georgii-Hemming et al., 2016) and a multitude of research projects have addressed current challenges (e.g. Røyseng et al. 2022; Gaunt et al., 2021; Gies & Sætre, 2019; Minors et al., 2017). To understand these developments in relation to this thesis, higher music education as a site for research is accounted for in this section by describing the *institution*, *institutional members* and *norms* and *student-teacher relationships*.

2.1.1 The institution

In short, *higher music education* is part of the educational system at large, positioned within higher education as the tertiary cycle of music education. According to the extensive literature review undertaken by Jørgensen (2009), higher music education institutions (or *organisations* in institutional theory) vary in size and structure, differ in content and affiliations and attract various student and faculty groups based on their profile and the expertise offered. Within this landscape, Jørgensen presents two traditions from which higher music education is built: 1) the European conservatoire tradition; and 2) the university tradition. The former consists of (mostly) independent institutions (typically named *Conservatoire of Music*, *Academy of Music*, *College of Music, Musikhochschule* or *Musikkhögskole*) that offer a wide range of programmes, often 'with the education of professional performers as their major mission' (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 13). The latter category places higher music education within larger universities (e.g. a *School of Music* or a *Music Department*), often specialising in musicology or the education of music teachers. The two traditions may also be joined (e.g. a conservatoire within a university).[8] In fact, amalgamations have become more frequent in arts institutions during recent decades. Hence, higher music education is shaped by societal changes, as evidenced by its historical roots.

What we know as the conservatoire today may be considered 'an invention of the bourgeoisie', marked by institutions (that is, *organisations*) such as the *Paris Conservatoire*, which was founded in 1794, and the *Leipzig Conservatoire*, which was founded in 1843 (Gies, 2019, pp. 40–41). Before such institutions opened, the transfer of musical knowledge took place in a private setting through apprenticeship or, more systematically, in a church environment. It was not until the nineteenth century that the term *conservatoire* became a 'brand name' and private music academies were rapidly established across Europe. However, the term can be traced back to the sixteenth century, when institutions for orphaned children taught them

8 The two higher music education organisations (adhering to institutional terms) included in this case study have both been merged from older conservatoires. One is now a music academy (see 4.2.1); the other a conservatoire within a university setting (see 4.2.2).

musical craftsmanship (Gies, 2019, p. 40).[9] Central to this tradition is, therefore, the student-teacher relationship (see 2.1.2) and the transmission of crafts knowledge. On the other hand, the university tradition is rooted in academic thinking, as art became an 'object of study' in the eighteenth century, and scholars were identified as the 'guardians of its traditional meaning' (Frith, 1996, p. 116). Focusing less on performance and more on the musical score itself, this tradition is linked to the institutionalisation of musicology. However, what we know as *higher music education* today typically includes both the study of and the practice of various types of music.

While changes in society shape higher music education, the institution also shapes society at large. As accounted for by institutional scholars, higher education occupies a powerful position in 'knowledge society' (Meyer, 2017, p. 839), characterised by a 'dual institutionalization' because academic disciplines must represent their respective institutions while simultaneously adapting to the labour market (Scott, 2017, p. 858). Through this lens, universities are powerful institutions constituted by intellectuals who have 'more influence on our social worlds than is often recognized as they help to shape the structure of organizations and organization fields' (Scott, 2017, p. 859). Thus, the interplay between an institution and the surrounding field is symbiotic: music graduates shape the music industry when they enter the labour market and external actors shape higher music education by providing resources (e.g. stakeholders) and new students (e.g. secondary music education). This nested context is in fact a core characteristic of higher music education, and the need to balance the conservation of musical traditions with the requirement to prepare music graduates for the music industry is often mentioned in research (e.g. Gaunt et al., 2021; Carruthers, 2019; Schmidt, 2019; Burnard & Haddon, 2015; Burnard, 2014; Johansson, 2012; Bennett, 2012, 2008; Jørgensen, 2009).

Due to the symbiotic relationship between higher music education institutions (*organisations*) and the surrounding field, institutional changes affect not only the educational sector but also the music industry. Furthermore, various institutions compete over students, teachers, and funding (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 161). If publicly funded, as many European conservatoires are, the government is the main provider of funding. This resource dependency also affects institutional change, as politicians 'want to ensure that the quality of institutions is up to expectations' when funding conservatoires (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 158). When privately funded, stakeholders who provide the funding may have different or even conflicting agendas (Carruthers, 2019). Regardless of differences in governance and structure, however, higher music education institutions (that is, *organisations*) will inevitably change in tandem with society. During processes of institutional change, a good reputation is crucial to maintain or

9 Originating in Naples, orphanages that engaged in musical training can be traced back to the fourteenth century. However, the term *conservatoire* gained traction centuries later.

obtain. Because conservatoires are 'usually regarded as institutions "of quality" simply because of their eminence and restricted access', their quality will often be judged with reference to their reputation (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 185). The following subsections elaborate on what is commonly expected of higher music education regarding institutional members, norms and the prominent student-teacher relationship.

2.1.2 Institutional members and norms

There are many subgroups of institutional members in higher music education. Jørgensen (2009, p. 47) distinguishes between 'three major groups of people', namely 1) the *students*, 2) the *faculty/teachers* and 3) the *administrative staff*. This thesis addresses all three major groups in so far as it examines the levels of the student and the teacher through empirical data and, implicitly, the level of leadership through institutional analyses. However, these groups of people are often connected or separated by their affiliation(s) within higher music education, typically sorted by musical genre (e.g. classical, jazz), instrument (e.g. strings, woodwinds) or discipline (e.g. composition, music technology, music therapy). Indeed, the number of subgroups is manifold, and subgroups sometimes blur together (e.g. a student of several musical genres). For this thesis specifically, the most relevant subgroup comprises *music performance students* (whereas other types of music students are less relevant due to the fieldwork undertaken in this study). As music performers, this subgroup may be especially aligned with the mission to educate professional performers. Yet the aspiration to become a professional musician usually emerges long before a student enrols in higher music education. Indeed, both students and faculty are (more often than not) socialised into institutional norms from a young age.

Already in early childhood, the relationship to music is highly curated. Some musical guidelines are projected onto children by their parents or teachers, while other activities are filled with children's own expressions of musical co-creation (Vestad, 2014). As children grow, their musical backgrounds influence how they view and relate to music in life and at school. Thus, when students enter higher music education as young adults, they have been taught to appreciate some musical styles over others and to identify specific musical works as *masterpieces*. Musical ideals and norms are perpetuated by the social environment (e.g. family, peers, teachers) and through materials like sheet music, recordings, instruments, and other historical elements.[10] Canonical texts are thereby conserved through formal music education, resulting in a hierarchy of musical works that is historically and geographically biased (Green, 2008). The creation of such canons may be described as an 'intricate socio-political

10 This constructivist lens (including structures such as interpersonal relationships and socially-derived physical artefacts) also applies to the chosen theoretical frameworks for this thesis (see Chapter 3).

process by which pieces of music composed or performed by musicians at certain historical or socio-cultural moments become ranked and codified by others' (Koskoff, 1999, p. 547). New canons take form as emerging musical genres enter the educational system and become institutionalised over time. What, then, are the resulting institutional norms caused by such musical canonisation?

The conservation of musical traditions through the educational system has resulted in normative ideas about music and the 'institutional practices in which some musicians have authority over others' (Frith, 2011, p. 67). When music becomes institutionalised (as in higher music education), the result is a 'fixed hierarchy of creativity' (Frith, 2011, p. 66). For instance, the musical score has been an object of study since the eighteenth century, including the objectification of 'the performance itself', which was 'made the object of repeated performance' (Frith, 1996, p. 116). The idea of the autonomous work unfolded through the 'primacy of composition', in which selected *masterpieces* have been worshipped (Burnard, 2014, p. 78), particularly in the classical canon (e.g. Bull & Scharff, 2021; Leech-Wilkinson, 2016) whose 'domination is overwhelming' in higher music education (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 66). However, many hierarchies have been challenged in recent decades for upholding social hegemonies (e.g. gender inequality; see Burnard, 2019; Green, 2012; Citron, 1990) or for inhibiting creative development (e.g. González-Moreno, 2014; Hargreaves et al., 2012). Yet a sense of 'Platonic idealism' lingers among aspiring and professional musicians alike, with its 'Romantic notions of individual creative vision' (Cook, 2017, p. 65). As such, the *master* teacher serves as an integral figure.

2.1.3 The student-teacher relationship

An important part of conserving musical traditions in (higher) music education has been through its social relationships. As shown previously (2.1.1), the conservatoire is traditionally built on the *master/apprentice* teaching model, in which the music performance student takes on the role of an apprentice while the instrumental teacher serves as a master teacher in one-to-one sessions or group lessons (or *masterclasses*). The transmission of musical knowledge and skills is executed by the student mirroring the teacher's artistic abilities, making the relationship between music performance student and instrumental teacher one of the most central power structures in higher music education. Because the education of performers is inextricably linked to the quality of the institution, the instrumental teacher is given professional authority and is often thought to have the most influential role for music performance students (Yau, 2019). Moreover, formal music education has, throughout the twentieth century, relied on transmissive modes of teaching (e.g. Hargreaves et al., 2012; Green, 2008), and students may therefore have been conditioned to adhere to teacher expectations. This approach, however,

does not only apply to music education but to other subjects as well. According to the central sociologist Bourdieu (1993, p. 37), school perpetuates an 'ideology of "re-creation"' where children are taught by authorities to make 'correct' judgements.

In recent decades, transmissive modes of teaching have been contrasted with more *student-centred* approaches in the educational system (e.g. Nerland, 2019; Tuovinen, 2018). Sometimes, teaching methods are presented in a dichotomous manner, such as *teacher-oriented* versus *learner-centred* (e.g. O'Neill, 2019) or as *transformative* versus *transfer* pedagogy (e.g. Carey et al., 2013). However, instrumental tuition has been found to vary in method and execution (e.g. Carey et al., 2013; Gaunt et al., 2012; Johansson, 2012; Burwell, 2005; Hays et al., 2000; Jørgensen, 2000). Though most often dominated by the teacher talking and the student listening, some studies have identified more dialogue-oriented instrumental lessons (Jørgensen, 2009, pp. 102-104). Differences have also been identified from affiliations, for instance that jazz students may develop a 'sense of exploration … spontaneity and creativity' during their studies, whereas classical students are 'expected to pursue accuracy' (González-Moreno, 2014, p. 89). With reference to canonical texts in higher music education, it is worth remembering that 'not all musical performance takes creativity in any form as its aim' (Clarke, 2011, p. 17) and that some musicians 'have more creative roles than others' (Frith, 2011, p. 67), both in higher music education and in the music industry. Indeed, some might prefer the transmissive master-apprentice teaching model (Yau, 2019).

The identified differences in instrumental lessons are mostly related to what may be called the *hidden curriculum* of higher music education, in which music students 'learn skills, knowledge and values that are not directly intended in the written curriculum' (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 181). For instance, the force of musical canons has been found to be of such strength that classical students often perfect the required *masterpieces* even if they do not believe that this is fruitful for their future as professional musicians (González-Moreno, 2014). It has also been found that music students often plan their performances 'with a careful eye on the assessment criteria' (Creech et al., 2014, p. 327) and that it can be challenging for music students to communicate their innermost ideas due to a fear of rejection in their social environment (Bennett et al., 2015). Though music students do speak up in instrumental lessons as they age, some find it uncomfortable to exploit the creative freedom that their instrumental teacher is willing to offer them, preferring instead to conform (e.g. Burwell, 2005; Jørgensen, 2000). Indeed, understanding and playing into the dominant discourses of higher music education is an advantageous position for some music performance students to be in, as found by Nerland (2007):

> … students who share the teachers' way of thinking and are familiar with the dominant discourses from, e.g., previous experiences as learners, are likely to benefit more easily from the teaching. Thus, the question of teacher-student relationships in one-to-one teaching is not only a matter of personal relations. It concerns the interface between the discourses that are brought into play more broadly, and the ways in which the participants are discursively positioned in past and present. (Nerland, 2007, p. 413)

In sum, the student-teacher relationship between music performance student and instrumental teacher is essential to the education of the performer in higher music education. However, recent societal changes have challenged the assumption that performer proficiency is sufficient for professional musicians to survive in the industry today (e.g. Røyseng et al., 2022; Gaunt et al., 2021). Consequently, there has been increasing research in recent decades on the student-teacher relationship. For example, while some music students immerse themselves in performance during their study period, others desire a more explorative approach to becoming a musician (e.g. Ioulia et al., 2010; Creech et al., 2008). As Jørgensen (2009, p. 179) notes, 'the areas of artistic, personal, intellectual, social, emotional, professional, and vocational outcomes are wide and far-reaching and highly individual for students' in higher music education. As a result, the student-teacher relationship is nuanced because it consists of individual students and teachers. Thus far, this chapter has positioned such nuances in the social relationships and discursive landscape of higher music education, an institution that has changed over centuries. The next section presents recent scholarly advocacy for further institutional change and, more specifically, describes the three cultural shifts that this thesis has examined.

2.2 Institutional change in higher music education

At present, there is a joint scholarly insistence that institutional change is needed for higher music education to adapt to the changing labour market (e.g. Bennett et al., 2019; Reid et al., 2019; Schmidt, 2019; Minors et al., 2017; Renshaw, 2016; Burnard & Haddon, 2015; Bennett, 2012; Johansson, 2012). From implementing courses on entrepreneurship (de Reizabal & Gómez, 2020; Bartleet et al., 2019; Schediwy et al., 2018) to re-evaluating mandates (Gaunt et al., 2021; Angelo et al., 2019), curricula (Rowley et al., 2019; Carruthers, 2019) and teaching methods (Sætre & Zhukov, 2021; Brinck & Anderskov, 2019; Carey et al., 2017), higher music education institutions (or *organisations* in institutional theory) have been asked 'to consider whether they are still holding a gatekeeper role that is now redundant' (Haddon & Burnard, 2015, p. 272). Central to this encouragement for change is how technological advancements

have affected societies on a global scale (Meyer, 2017). Global changes have altered the music industry in terms of global connectivity (e.g. social media) and accessibility (e.g. streaming services), meaning that new ways of thinking and acting are needed in higher music education (Vinge et al., 2022; Gaunt et al., 2021; Moberg & Georgii-Hemming, 2021; Bennett et al., 2019; Burnard, 2014; Johansson, 2012).

As indicated in the previous section, higher music education institutions (that is, *organisations*) are not only led by the selected leaders but are in fact affected by a comprehensive system of power mechanisms, including external stakeholders, governmental requirements and expectations from various disciplines. How, then, do leaders of higher music education navigate this nested context? While there has been an increasing amount of research on many areas of higher music education in recent decades (with apparent gravitation towards institutional change), the topic of leadership remains ambiguous–there is no universal definition of leadership in higher music education (Bennett et al., 2019). However, it has been found that leaders must 'perform complex navigations between local and global discourses' (Karlsen, 2021, p. 212) and that coping with change is one of the most demanding tasks for leaders in higher music education (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 145; paraphrasing Lancaster, 2006). Leadership may moreover be thrust upon institutional members rather than sought (Bylica, 2019), and their specific background 'informs the kind of decisions and directions that are likely to be taken' (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 145). Finally, leaders and policy makers tend to prefer strongly held assumptions over any message of uncertainty (Schmidt, 2019), and what leaders intend to do and what they actually accomplish may differ (Carruthers, 2019).

Because of the symbiotic relationship between institution and field, recent changes in the music industry will affect higher music education (as presented in 2.1.1). However, according to scholars, what must change? Nearly a decade ago, institutional change was advocated as part of a larger 'creativity agenda' in higher education (Burnard, 2014, p. 78). The notion of 'multiple creativities' was introduced in research on higher music education to challenge the 'singular and individualist discourses which define musical creativity in terms of the Western canonization' (Haddon & Burnard, 2015, p. 262). Scholars still argue that hierarchies of success need to be addressed (Bennett et al., 2019; Burnard, 2019; Bennett, 2007) and that an explorative culture must be fostered in higher music education (Bennett et al., 2019; Renshaw, 2016; Schmidt, 2014). To succeed with this institutional work, scholars contend that higher music education institutions (that is, *organisations*) need to develop process-oriented methods to renew from within (e.g. Ford, 2021; Carruthers, 2019; Reid, 2019; Schmidt, 2019; Johansson, 2012). Scholars now claim that the time is ripe for a 'paradigm shift', a re-conceptualisation of higher music education, rooted in 'a social and moral turn based on embracing musical practices as social process' (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 16).

Within the relevant literature, institutional change seems to be (almost) unanimously encouraged by scholars, yet there is still a lack of clarity regarding leadership in higher music education. The following subsections introduce the three cultural shifts that have been examined through this research project to uncover and discuss how institutional change might unfold in higher music education: 1) the shift towards *student-centredness*; 2) the endorsement of *entrepreneurship*; and 3) the call for *innovation*.

2.2.1 The shift towards student-centredness

The notion of empowering students' voice echoes strongly in research on higher music education (e.g. Nerland, 2019; Moberg & Georgii-Hemming, 2019; van Els, 2019; Carey et al., 2017). Global changes have affected both 'what, how and why we teach what we teach' in higher music education, with an increasing focus on 'the uniquely individual experiences of each student' (Broad & O'Flynn, 2012, p. 4). Many researchers conclude that higher music education institutions (or *organisations* in institutional theory) ought to be '…changing ways of doing things with a firm emphasis … on the student voice' (Minors et al., 2017, 470). Indeed, there has been a gravitational pull in recent years towards what I refer to as *student-centredness* in research on higher music education. This adjustment is not only caused by changes in the labour market for professional musicians; it is also part of an overarching shift in formal education more generally. Indeed, 'student-centredness' is part of a larger movement in which a constructivist lens is now being employed in education to address the power asymmetry between teacher and student (Tuovinen, 2018). In music education, this is most evident in the traditional master/apprentice teaching model, which is now a critically examined area in music education research (as presented in 2.1.3).

Though student-centredness is widely recognised today, the term still presents 'a certain definitional looseness' (Tuovinen, 2018, p. 66). In this thesis, student-centredness is considered 'contextual, context-dependent, and emergent', neither 'an instructional device' nor 'a mere pedagogy', but a 'cultural shift in the institution' (Tuovinen, 2018, pp. 70-71).[11] This concept has been credited to the US psychologist Carl Rogers (1902 to 1987), who embraced a client-centred approach. The original conception was then influenced by societal changes, including the cognitive turn during the 1980s and the rise of constructivism during the 1990s (Tuovinen, 2018). The approach encourages students to 'become their own teachers' while teachers are asked to see 'teaching and learning through the eyes of their students' (Hattie, 2015, p. 79). Consequently, this cultural shift suggests rethinking how student creativity is evaluated and how students partake in such value judgements (e.g. Bylica, 2019; O'Neill, 2019; Carey et al.,

11 This conceptualisation is also consistent with Nerland's (2019, p. 57) assertion that student-centredness 'should be viewed as characteristics of the learning environment and of ways of engaging students in courses and activities'.

2017; Creech et al., 2014). Another challenge facing music educators today is to create a balance between what is referred to as the 'performance agenda' (including 'its standards of measured achievements') and the creative freedom that is offered to students (Burnard, 2014, p. 78).

Because higher music education institutions (or *organisations*) are often built on the recreation of musical works (2.1.2) and a mission to educate performers (2.1.1), student-centred approaches to teaching and learning sometimes conflict with institutional norms. Student-led activities place a higher emphasis on students' abilities to evaluate and collaborate with others (e.g. Brinck & Anderskov, 2019; Fung, 2018; Gilbert, 2016). Thus, student-centredness may be linked to concepts such as *collaborative learning* (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2016), where learning processes are fostered in collaborative environments, and *reflective practice* (Carey et al., 2017), where the aim is to enable autonomous learning for music students. Moreover, the shift towards student-centredness is concerned with transforming the student-teacher relationship, typically illustrated in the renegotiation of 'the Master-apprentice contract' into 'an Apprentice-master setting' (Allsup, 2015, p. 259) or a 'master-apprentice relationship of guided participation' (Sætre & Zhukov, 2021, p. 564). This process occurs not only by experimenting with new teaching methods but by exploring 'the perspective of the protégé' who is being mentored (Hays et al., 2000, p. 12). Indeed, on the websites of Swedish higher music education institutions (*organisations*) the student-teacher relationship is portrayed 'through students' voices' (Moberg & Georgii-Hemming, 2021, p. 35).

In sum, the shift towards student-centredness could constitute a critical change for higher music education. However, the changing power dynamics may also present several challenges for students and teachers (e.g. Ski-Berg, 2022; Christophersen, 2016; discussed in Chapter 6).

2.2.2 The endorsement of entrepreneurship

Another challenge in higher music education is the adequate preparation of music graduates for their future careers. In recent decades, there has been an increasing amount of research on how to ease the transition from student to professional musician in a globally oriented and changing labour market (e.g. López-Ìñiguez & Bennett, 2021; Toscher, 2020; Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015; Bennett, 2014, 2012; Creech et al., 2008).[12] It has been established that most musicians today must be able to adapt to and create work opportunities, as opposed to applying for a permanent position (e.g. Røyseng et al., 2022; de Reizabal & Gómez, 2020; Bartleet et al., 2019). Thus, employability issues are at the core of this line of research, in

12 It was moreover noted that research is needed on what music graduates expect and value once they enter the market, particularly in relation to how 'creative entrepreneurial initiatives and musical autonomy might map on to the economic constructs of the communities in which they are working' (Haddon & Burnard, 2015, p. 270).

which the concept of *entrepreneurship* is often mentioned and understood in various ways. An underlying reason for this change is that higher music education faces a 'skills paradox' (Johansson, 2012) or 'skills gap' (Toscher, 2020): what students are taught during their studies does not adequately prepare them for the realities of the current market. However, despite a continual endorsement of entrepreneurship education in recent decades, this reality gap remains an ongoing institutional problem in higher music education. A cultural shift may be needed for the gap to close.

This cultural shift is thus about endorsing entrepreneurship education for the sake of student employability. The term itself is of less importance to the thesis than the continual endorsement of it. However, the fact that the term is often met with scepticism by members of higher music education is important to note. While some scholars have found that 'creativity and entrepreneurship could be mutually supportive in the journeys that music graduates undertake while making a viable living from music' (Schediwy et al., 2018, p. 624), others remain hesitant due to the concept's neoliberal roots (e.g. Moore, 2016; Allsup, 2015) or have found that students and professors themselves are sceptical (e.g. Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Angelo et al., 2019). Whether entrepreneurship should be taught as elective modules, mandatory courses or through 'a holistic vision in which the entrepreneurial mindset imbues the entire curriculum' (de Reizabal & Gómez, 2020, p. 366) is continually discussed. Such debates can be viewed as 'a normative inquiry' into the teachings of higher music education (Toscher, 2021, p. 346), as the institutionalised Romantic view of the artist as 'a Bohemian rebel … who sacrificed status, money and material comfort for … the imaginative spirit to pursue individual creative expression' (Bain, 2005, pp. 28) opposes entrepreneurial thinking.

Because of the presumed conflict between institutional norms and the entrance of neoliberal concepts into higher music education, scholars have attempted to illustrate how Romantic ideals do not provide a historically accurate picture of the versatile profession of the musician. According to Burnard (2014, p. 78), a hierarchy of 'masterworks' have been considered 'untouchable' in higher music education, emerging as 'facts' of music history, yet Mozart, 'the epitome of "great genius", employed a range of different practices, rather than just one'. Similarly, Bennett (2008, p. 9) introduces the notion of the 'protean' musician who is able to undertake 'multiple roles' as needed. A *protean* career, then, indicates self-directed career versatility (Westerlund & López-Íñiguez, in press). Indeed, for members of higher music education entrepreneurship is not only about business creation but about 'living, working, and creating as a musician' (Toscher, 2021, p. 346). To confront these realities, Bennett (2014, p. 242) has claimed–albeit nearly a decade ago–that music students today need 'to challenge everything they know about being a musician … every barrier they perceive to be in their way' to develop their career creativities. In light of the research connected to this overarching

cultural shift, the concept of *entrepreneurship* is associated with career development and professional practice throughout this thesis.[13]

2.2.3 The call for innovation

The final cultural shift addressed in this thesis is what I refer to as a 'call for innovation' in higher music education (and beyond).[14] Though *innovation* is often referenced ambiguously, higher music education institutions (*organisations*) curate 'research and innovation agendas' (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 2). Underpinning this shift are complex global challenges (e.g. environmentalism; see Vinge et al., 2021) and moral dilemmas (e.g. social inequities; see Kertz-Welzel, 2021; Westerlund, 2019; Green, 2012), all of which are intertwined with the overarching call for innovation. Thus, as in the aforementioned cultural shifts, the term 'innovation' is less important than the shift itself: the *call to innovate*, that is, the insistence that higher music education institutions (or *organisations*) and members need to be(come) more innovative. However, pressures to change are sometimes met with resistance by institutional members, given that 'structural conservatism … lingers' in higher music education (Duffy, 2016, p. 385). Indeed, members of many higher education programmes have 'resisted change as if their lives–and livelihoods–depended on it' (Schmidt, 2019, p. 45). Institutions today, it has been claimed, are 'dismantled in the name of flexibility and innovation', and professional musicians 'are consequently encouraged to innovate' (Moore, 2016, p. 51).

To offer a lens through which innovation can be understood I lean on Joseph Schumpeter (1883 to 1950), known for his conceptualisation of the *creative entrepreneur* and *innovation*. I have chosen a Schumpeterian lens to underline the term's economic roots and to offer intertextuality with other research on higher music education.[15] Compatible (to a certain extent) with the constructivist approach employed thus far, Schumpeter considered there to be symbiosis among economic, historical, political and social aspects of society. He regarded the *entrepreneur* as an 'agent of innovation' and an *innovation* to be 'the introduction of something new in the economy' (Sogner, 2018, p. 327). Furthermore, in his system of economic thought Schumpeter claimed that the 'chief activity' of some groups of society is 'economic conduct or business', whereas for other groups, 'the economic aspect of conduct

13 The concept of *entrepreneurship* is drawn from the French word *entreprendre*, that is, 'to underake', which emerged in the eighteenth century. To learn more about the concept, see deReizabal and Gómez (2020) or Toscher (2021).

14 The call for innovation can also be identified in society at large. For instance, the *Creative Europe programme* from the European Commission has funded innovative projects in higher music education (e.g. Gaunt et al., 2021). It is also worth mentioning that *individualised* study programmes (e.g. genre independent programmes in higher music education) are treated as 'innovative' in this thesis because they recruit new student groups and defy institutional norms, yet the *individualisation* of study programmes stems from pressures in the educational sector (see e.g. Aurini, 2006).

15 Many music scholars employ Schumpeter (1934) for his work on innovation and entrepreneurship (e.g. Angelo et al., 2019; Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Schediwy et al., 2018; Moore, 2016).

is overshadowed by other aspects'; thus, economic life 'is represented by a special group of people, although all other members of society must also act economically' (Schumpeter, 1934, p. 4). Linking this sentiment to Bourdieu's (1993) theory on cultural production,[16] I propose that economic conduct may, for many musicians and members of higher music education, be overshadowed by artistic pursuits. The call to innovate could therefore evoke resistance, given that the term has economic connotations that some institutional members may find unpalatable.

Nevertheless, *creativity* and *innovation* are inextricable linked in so far as both challenge the status quo and may defy 'those whose power rests on the preservation of the status quo' (Sogner, 2018, p. 337). In fact, Frith (2011, p. 69) suggests that, rather than 'assume that musical artists are either rational investors in their own talent or irrationally oblivious to economic forces', *musical creativity* may be defined by the tension between artistic freedom and material necessity (that is, between *arts* and *commerce*). Though it is quite common to think of musical creativity in terms of expressiveness or style, the term may also include qualities like 'inventiveness, the discovery of *newness*, and enabling and enacting new reflective practices with imagination and originality' (Burnard, 2014, p. 80). Nevertheless, the more 'innovative' aspects of music education may be about 'students finding their own artistic voice', including perhaps 'innovative creativity and pushing the boundaries of art' (Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019, p. 408). Institutional strategies in higher music education today highlight the implementation of 'innovative practices' within new projects (e.g. REACT, 2022; RENEW, 2022; Duffy, 2016) and study programmes (e.g. NAIP European Master of Music, 2022) as developing new ways of reaching audiences and developing student creativity. However, what makes these initiatives 'innovative'?[17]

Rather than discussing the degree to which something is innovative (or not), this thesis focuses on the implications of 'challenging the status quo' to innovate higher music education, which includes an economic dimension.[18] As mentioned, this third cultural shift concerns the insistence that higher music education must be(come) more innovative, indicating that some parts of higher music education have grown too conservative. If we posit that the conventions of performance practice are governed by 'fluid boundaries' in the relationship between novelty and acceptability (Clarke, 2011, p. 21), then the three cultural shifts presented in this section

16 Bourdieu (1993) posits that the cultural sector possesses an *inverted economy*, in so far as the value of an artwork (including musical works) is typically not dictated by economic measures but, rather, by its *symbolic value*.

17 Without going into too much detail, new study programmes and projects in higher music education may be described as *incremental innovations*. They add something new to the economy (of higher education) in so far as they may recruit new groups of students (which is profitable) or may attract funding.

18 This economic dimension is drawn from organisational institutionalism (3.2.1), in which institutional change is often interlinked with organisational survivial.

can serve as arenas where the status quo of the education of the performer is transformed. The conversion may take place through new study programmes, teaching methods, student initiatives or original artistic expression. Nonetheless, this project is more concerned with the underlying power mechanisms that drive the aforementioned cultural shifts, a research gap in the current literature on higher music education.

2.3 Research gap

Considering the state of research on higher music education (with an emphasis on the Scandinavian and Northern European literature), this thesis could occupy a significant space moving forward: new theory and new theoretical frameworks for data analysis are introduced,[19] and empirical data have been extracted from multiple institutional levels within the field of higher music education.[20] Many studies on (higher) music education are limited in scope and target specific subgroups from the same institution (*organisation*). Scholars typically research students (e.g. Schediwy et al., 2018; Carey et al., 2017; Creech et al., 2014; Gaunt et al., 2012) or teachers (e.g. Carey et al., 2013; Johansson, 2012; Nerland, 2007; Burwell, 2005; Hays et al., 2000), sometimes both (e.g. Sætre & Zhukov, 2021; Zhukov & Sætre, 2021). Researchers may also concentrate on members of different programmes (e.g. González-Moreno, 2014) or institutions (*organisations*; e.g. Angelo et al., 2019; Nielsen et al., 2018; Ioulia et al., 2010). The comparative levels of this study (accounted for in 4.2) set it apart from more targeted studies. Yet the thesis is also part of an emerging trend of researching institutions (or *organisations*) across national borders (e.g. Karlsen, 2021; Jääskeläinen et al., 2020; Minors et al., 2017). However, what makes this particular case study interesting besides its international dimension?

The increasing globalisation in recent decades has been accompanied by a need to understand how higher music education is affected by various pressures to change. Scholars have thus far reflected upon the changing power dynamics within (higher) music education regarding, for instance, instance social (in)equity (e.g. Ford, 2021; Kertz-Welzel, 2021; Grant, 2019; Westerlund, 2019; Green, 2012; Koskoff, 1999), teaching methods (e.g. Yau, 2019; Christophersen, 2016), and processes of academisation (e.g. Angelo et al., 2021; Angelo et al., 2019; Dyndahl et al., 2017). Unfortunately, few have discussed how power relationships

19 The employment of theoretical frameworks from *organisational institutionalism* (3.2) is, to my current knowledge, a novel contribution to music education research.

20 The case study consists of three comparative levels (music students/professors, classical and genre independent study programmes, and institutions (*organisations*) from Norway and the Netherlands. The case study is explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

evolve during processes of change or examined the underlying power mechanisms driving calls for change.[21] As noted in the previous section, the three cultural shifts targeted in this thesis (2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3) already appear in the relevant literature. Therefore, it is not *what* changes are taking place but rather *how* change unfolds in higher music education that is of interest to this study, specifically how pressures to change are interlinked with the internal politics within higher music education and how this interplay serves as a force for (or against) institutional change.

In short, it is the theoretical foundation of this thesis that sets it apart from other studies on higher music education. Though the study is positioned within music education research, its theoretical perspectives also align with studies on (mechanisms of power within) the higher education sector more generally (e.g. Stevens & Shibanova, 2021; Stensaker et al., 2019; Sauder & Espeland, 2009; Aurini, 2006). The next chapter elaborates on the overarching theoretical perspectives that have been employed in this thesis: *Foucauldian discourse theory* and *organisational institutionalism*.

21 Exceptions are mostly related to historical analyses and literature reviews of higher music education (e.g. Gies, 2019; Dyndahl et al., 2017; Jørgensen, 2009).

3 Theoretical frameworks

This thesis leans on a poststructuralist theoretical approach in which the perspectives of music performance students and professors are seen through an epistemological lens. The theoretical frameworks have been chosen based on a case study of two higher music education organisations, building on their strategic plans and the unfolding empirical data. Two overarching perspectives have been particularly useful for analysing these data: *discourse theory* and *organisational institutionalism*. Both embrace a constructivist approach to the construction of knowledge, building on Foucauldian concepts and theories on power as a social construct. This chapter elaborates on the context of these overarching perspectives in relation to research on music education, as well as on how key concepts from Foucauldian discourse theory and organisational institutionalism have served as analytical tools in the thesis and the resulting articles.

3.1 Discourse theory

Discourse theory is multifaceted. Whereas linguistic scholars employ discourse analysis to dissect how language or conversations unfold in detail, sociologists may view the evolution of discursive practices on a much broader scale. Indeed, there are many approaches to discourse analysis, which appear on a spectrum from the individual to the collective (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Music education research is often sociologically oriented, but it remains a challenge for music scholars to achieve intertextuality. Scholarly terms (such as *discourse*) may be interpreted in numerous ways in research on music education, resulting in common misconceptions and a lack of consistency in terminology (Rolle et al., 2017). Similarly, underlying norms (also referred to as *musical ideologies* in some music education research) are often taken for granted by various members of (higher) music education, scholars included. Therefore, music scholars must relay their decision-making process and thoroughly explain their selected methods and analyses. This section aims to do precisely this by accounting for the chosen discourse theory and discussing how this lens relates to other research on music education.

In a review article by Rolle, Angelo and Georgii-Hemming (2017), some of the methodical issues presented above are presented using examples of how discourse theory has been employed in research on music education. The authors identify several categorisations, including research *object* (e.g. 'research on higher music education') and research *focus* (e.g. scholarship practices, educational practices, policy practices). Furthermore, the authors

define distinct theoretical foundations of discourse theory (as employed in music education research): poststructuralist theories (in which historical discontinuities and epistemology are of interest), normative-deliberative theories (in which successful communication and argumentation are of interest) and critical-realist theories (in which social problems and issues of power are of interest). Though the presented categories were given as suggestions for how music scholars may analyse the ways in which discourse analysis has been employed in music education research, the review article also reveales emerging trends within Nordic music academia. One such trend is referred to as 'the Norwegian tradition':

> The discourse-theoretical approach in what might be called the Norwegian tradition … helps to examine what kind of knowledge, competences and research activities are established in higher music education, and how these develop. Unlike many other discourse studies referring to Foucault this approach demonstrates a way of including not only written texts or pictures but also interviews and other data from ethnographic observations in the field and of taking them into account as data material for discourse analysis. (Rolle et al., 2017, p. 158)

The 'Norwegian tradition' of employing discourse theory in research on higher music education may include ethnographic fieldwork through observations and/or qualitative interviews as the object(s) for analysis. Building on the categories presented above, this thesis falls under this 'Norwegian tradition' and can be further categorised as a study of the educational practices employed within higher music education through the lens of poststructuralist theory. Though the study has included other theoretical perspectives as well, its starting point was to investigate 'what kind of knowledge' is established in higher music education regarding the shift towards student-centredness (2.2.1). For this, I lean on Foucauldian discourse theory, similar to other Norwegian studies (e.g. Ellefsen, 2014; Nerland, 2003). The following subsections elaborate on this theoretical framework by presenting the central concepts of *discursive formation*, *subject positions, power relationships* and *power/knowledge*.

3.1.1 Discursive formation

In short, *discourse* is constituted by social practices and conceived as a way of knowing and doing (Foucault, 1972/2010). Foucault defined discourse not in terms of language but as a system of representation, including both discursive practice and materiality in its formation. The concept of discourse is, therefore, 'not about whether things exist but where meaning comes from' (Hall, 2001, p. 23). Specifically, Foucault brought forward the idea that discourses were not only 'groups of signs', which was the typical approach within linguistics, but also 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972/2010,

p. 49). Discourse, then, is 'constituted by a group of sequences of signs' and can be defined as 'the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation' (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 107). At this macro level, Foucault set out to analyse the *formation* of discourses, that is, to establish a law of rarity in which the regularity of discursive practice is determined, by identifying the *dispersion* of statements that resulted in a single discursive formation:

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation* … (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 38)

According to Foucault, a 'statement' is always an event that neither language nor meaning can quite exhaust (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 28). It is unique yet subject to repetition and transformation, linked to the gesture of writing or articulation of speech, not only to situations that provoke it but also to the statements that follow (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 28). Because the formation of discourse is constituted by such 'statements' from social practice, it is not only through language but also in other social forms of expressions that statements may reside (e.g. as *oeuvres* in the physical manifestation of the artistic work of a painter, composer, or author). Foucault further explained that the formation of discourse involves the formation of objects and concepts of discourse, as well as its enunciative modalities (Foucault, 1972/2010). The formation of objects is 'made possible by a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation, and specification' (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 44). It is thus the relations that characterise the discursive practice that must be located:

> … it is not the objects that remain constant, nor the domain that they form; it is not even their point of emergence or their mode of characterization; but the relation between the surfaces on which they appear, on which they can be delimited, on which they can be analysed and specified … (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 47)

The *discursive relations* between the objects of discourse are central, as they delineate the rules for discursive formation, that is, the regularity of discursive practice as objects are dispersed, and the 'nexus of regularities that govern their dispersion' (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 48). In other words, these are 'the groups of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them' (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 46). However, Foucault did not believe that 'the same phenomena would be found across different historical periods'; instead, 'in each period, discourse produced forms of knowledge, objects, subjects and practices of knowledge,

which differed radically from period to period, with no necessary continuity between them' (Hall, 2001, p. 74). Throughout history, he argued, there have been *discursive shifts*, in which discontinuities have resulted in radical breaks between one period and another (Hall, 2001, p. 75). Building on this argument, one discourse may be replaced by the formation of a new one, constituting a shift in discourse. Connected to this process are also the *subject positions* that are constituted by discourse, as explained in the next subsection.

3.1.2 Subject positions

Though the formation of discourse is central to Foucauldian theory, this thesis is foremost concerned with Foucault's conceptualisation of the *subject*. In short, subjects 'personify the discourse', and institutions have practices 'for dealing with the subjects' (Hall, 2001, p. 76). Indeed, the rules of discursive formation 'operate not only in the mind or consciousness of individuals, but in discourse itself', as a 'uniform anonymity, on all individuals who undertake to speak in this discursive field' (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 63). Thus, the positions of the subject are defined by the situation that it is possible for the subject to occupy in relation to various domains, groups of objects or information networks. This conceptualisation concerns 'a field of regularity for various positions of subjectivity':

> Thus conceived, discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his dis-continuity with himself may be determined. (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 55)

In other words, Foucault believed the subject to be constituted by discourse. Accordingly, all discursive formations constitute subjects, yet it is not inevitable that all individuals will become subjects of a particular discourse, for the subject must first be *subjected* to discourse. This proposition means that 'it is discourse, not the subjects who speak it, which produces knowledge' (Hall, 2001, p. 79):

> The subject can become the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces. It can become the object through which power is relayed. But it cannot stand outside power/knowledge as its source and author. (Hall, 2001, pp. 79–80)

Without discourse, the subject alone will not make sense. A concrete example helps elaborate this concept: because discourses are culturally established modes of doing and thinking that exist in all fields, we may speak of *subjects* in higher music education. For instance, there is not an indefinite number of ways to be a 'music student'. The term signifies an individual who

is enrolled in a study programme and is therefore also dependent upon what programmes are provided in higher music education. Indeed, music students occupy distinct *subject positions*, such as 'music performance students' or 'composition students' (or, indeed, '*female* composers'[22]). Thus, the subject positions of music students and professors are enabled by the discourses that constitute them and in which they partake. Moreover, some subject positions will be deemed more favourable than others within the discourse, constituting an 'ideal' (or 'normal') subject for music students or professors. Identifying subject positions is, therefore, paramount when investigating the changing power dynamics within higher music education.

3.1.3 Power relationships

Another central element of Foucauldian theory is how *power* is conceptualised. According to Foucault, power is a productive force rooted in the social nexus, and it 'exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action' (Foucault, 1994/2020, p. 340). A *power relationship*, then, is 'a mode of action' resulting from the actions of others, in which 'the other' is recognised as a subject 'who acts', and where 'a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up' when the subject is faced with relationships of power (Foucault, 1994/2020, p. 342). Foucault claimed that the term *power* designates relationships between *partners*; that is, power 'brings into play relations between individuals (or between groups)' (Foucault, 1994/2020, p. 337). Moreover, he believed that power relationships are malleable:

> Power relations are rooted in the whole network of the social. This is not to say, however, that there is a primary and fundamental principle of power which dominates society down to the smallest detail; but, based on this possibility of action on the action of others that is coextensive with every social relationship, various kinds of individual disparity, of objectives, of the given application of power over ourselves or others, of more or less partial or universal institutionalization and more or less deliberate organization, will define different forms of power. (Foucault, 1994/2020, p. 345)

Foucault further considered power and *freedom* to present a much-complicated interplay, in which 'freedom may very well appear as the condition for the exercise of power', suggesting that 'at the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom' (Foucault, 1994/2020, p. 342). Through this lens,

22 Subject positions do not necessarily correlate with institutional structures (e.g. roles found within study programmes), though they sometimes do. Rather, they personify the subjects that are constituted by discourse, such as 'woman composer' (e.g. Bennett et al., 2018) or 'jazz pedagogue' (e.g. Angelo, 2015).

power 'is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are "free" … subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available' (Foucault, 1994/2020, p. 342). The power relationship between music performance student and instrumental teacher, for instance, aligns with this notion because both subjects are 'free' to react in a multitude of ways. Considering collective subjects, however, Foucault explained that 'if we speak of the power of laws, institutions, and ideologies, if we speak of mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others' (Foucault, 1994/2020, p. 337). Thus, power may also be rooted in the (socially constructed) institutional structures of higher music education, as explained in the next subsection.

3.1.4 Power/knowledge

Joining the Foucauldian concepts already presented, it becomes evident that discourse constitutes not only subject positions but also relationships of power. According to Foucault, 'we know quite well that we do not have the right to say everything … that not everyone has the right to speak of anything' (Foucault, 1981, p. 52). Indeed, he believed that power and *knowledge* are inextricably linked, that there can be no power relation without a 'field of knowledge', 'nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations' (Foucault, 1977/2020, p. 27). This construction is often referred to as the concept of *power/knowledge*. Furthermore, when knowledge is used to regulate the conduct of others (e.g. as is often the case in a classroom setting), it 'entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practices' (Hall, 2001, p. 76). Thus, Foucault viewed education as 'a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry' (Foucault, 1981, p. 64). Through this lens, discourse may be viewed as 'a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them' (Foucault, 1981, p. 67), an approach that can be applied in higher music education.

For the purpose of this thesis, a higher music education context encompasses subject positions and power relationships that are constituted by discourses over time. In turn, the discourses within higher music education continuously constitute knowledge from which individuals become disciplined through various educational practices (e.g. exam/audition criteria). However, as the thesis progressed this theoretical perspective could not fully explain how relationships of power unfolded in the complex interplay among subject, institution, and institutional context (see 5.4 for a fuller explanation). Consequently, a second theoretical perspective was added to address how *institutional power* unfolds in higher music education. The following section elaborates on key concepts and frameworks from this perspective.

3.2 Institutional theory

Institutional theory is foremost about 'how social choices are shaped, mediated and channelled by the institutional environment' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 55). In short, institutions may be viewed as overarching social orders that constitute society at large. Institutional scholars investigate these social orders, considering how institutions are affected by the organisational field in which they are positioned (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) and how they might respond to various pressures from the field (Oliver, 1991; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Thus, institutional scholars attempt to 'understand the basis of social order' (Scott, 2017, p. 853), defining *institutions* as 'enduring patterns of social practice' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 477).

Institutional theory is broad, containing many theoretical lenses through which social orders are studied, and this thesis relies on what is called *organisational institutionalism*. Similar to how *discourses* are constituted by social practices (including physical artefacts) in Foucauldian discourse theory (as explained in 3.1.1), an *institution* is, for the purpose of this thesis, considered to be socially constituted as well as constructed by the 'built environment, including mechanical and technological systems' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 499). This lens is drawn from a constructivist approach to what is referred to as *new* or *neo*-institutional theory.

Historically, institutional theory is divided into old institutionalism and new or neo-institutionalism. During the 1970s, old institutionalism was 'driven into marginality' by the rise of 'conceptions of social life as made up of purposive, bounded, fairly rational and rather free actors' (Meyer, 2017, p. 832) in tandem with ascendant neoliberal ideologies (Scott, 2017). Early neo-institutionalism focused on *isomorphic* processes (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; see also 3.2.1), but this literature was soon criticised for its inability to explain institutional change. The focus of neo-institutionalism thereby shifted, from studying isomorphism, legitimacy and institutionalisation to investigating processes of change, agency and conflicts in the evolution of 'organizational fields' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 498). This overarching shift in institutional theory aligns with a broad shift in research from realism to constructivism more generally,[23] in which emphasis has been placed on the dependence of modern organisations on their environments (Meyer, 2017). Consequently, neo-institutionalism views 'the social environment as affecting the identities, behaviours and practices of people and groups now conceived or constructed as bounded, purposive and organized actors' (Meyer, 2017,

23 As noted in 2.2.1, the rise of constructivism also affected the educational system (Tuovinen, 2018). This interplay between higher music education and society at large is emphasised by leaning on theories drawn from organisational institutionalism.

p. 833). Thus, organisational institutionalism complements Foucauldian discourse theory by investigating the agentic quality of socially constructed actors in institutional environments.

However, the interplay between organisation and environment differs in institutional theory, depending on different schools of thought. In a realist approach, actors are viewed as the creators of their surrounding networks (Meyer, 2017, p. 834); in a sociological approach, actors are considered to be constructed, that is, 'not simply as influenced by the wider environment, but as constructed in and by it' (Meyer, 2017, p. 835). Because this thesis builds on sociological thought (e.g. Foucault, 1972/2010; Bourdieu, 1993), I focus on institutional theories that operate within the sociological realm of neo-institutionalism. This is a constructivist lens of institutions which has been reinforced in neo-institutional theory by worldwide changes in recent decades. As the passive bureaucracies of the nation-state have become 'filled with agencies that are to function as autonomous and accountable organizations' (Meyer, 2017, p. 839), social movements and institutional entrepreneurs have become significant areas of research (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2017). There has also been an increasing interest in institutional agency (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017) and organisational identity (Glynn, 2017), including the micro-foundations of institutions (Powell & Rerup, 2017) and the role of emotions in institutions (Lok et al., 2017). However, the theoretical divide presented above indicates that not all institutional scholars employ the approach chosen for this thesis.

Regardless, a central element of analysis in the constructivist lens is what is called the 'organizational field', commonly understood as 'the domain where an organization's actions were structured by the network of relationships within which it was embedded' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 56). The organisational field is constituted by a multitude of networks formed among and within various organisations, and such organisational networks shape societies. The embeddedness of organisations within the field is an essential attribute of what can be referred to as *institutional infrastructure*. This infrastructure is 'the set of institutions that prevail in a field' (Hinings et al., 2017, p. 167), typically the political, legal and cultural institutions 'that form the backdrop for economic activity and governance' in society at large (Hinings et al., 2017, p. 166). In short, institutional infrastructure reflects the structuration of fields that occurs through interactions and institutional activity amongst different actors in the organisational field. [24] Further complicating this landscape, tertiary education institutions are often globally oriented and compete with each other over student enrolment (Höllerer et al., 2017). However, they can also be part of transnational fields in which competition surpasses

24 As noted in Chapter 2, higher music education exists in a 'nested context' and is affected by the institutions that prevail in society.

national borders (Scott, 2017), such as newly founded international study programmes in higher music education.[25]

At this point, it must be noted that what is often referred to as higher music education 'institutions' in music education research would more appropriately be referred to as 'organisations' within the educational sector by institutional scholars. I employ the term 'higher music education *organisations*' throughout (most of) this thesis, thereby adhering to institutional terms. The *institution* that is higher music education, however, may be considered a constellation of higher music education organisations within the organisational field. Similar to Foucauldian discourse theory (3.1.1), this theoretical realm operates mostly on a macro level. To examine institutional change in higher music education, I lean on analytical tools and concepts from the constructivist lens of organisational institutionalism that has been presented thus far. The following subsections elaborate on selected key concepts within the chosen theoretical frameworks.

3.2.1 Institutional isomorphism and institutional pressures

The first concept is drawn from the classic text *Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony* by Meyer and Rowan (1977), which posits that an institution's survival depends on its ability to reflect the constructed reality. The second concept is drawn from the classic text *The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields* by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), where mechanisms of isomorphic change in institutions are presented as *institutional pressures*. When combined, these concepts clarify how actors are constructed by the field and how organisations might respond to pressures for institutional change and legitimacy. In fact, recent studies indicate that there has been a growing need for legitimation work in arts organisations (e.g. Kann-Rasmussen, 2016; Larsen, 2013). Moreover, because institutional legitimacy is necessary for organisational survival, higher music education organisations can only exist as long as they reflect societal beliefs and behaviours. This theoretical framework thereby complements Foucauldian theory, focusing not only on how institutions are socially constituted (as in discourse) but also on how organisations attempt to morph with (or respond to) their surroundings to survive.

In short, *institutional isomorphism* concerns an organisation's ability to conform to and be legitimated by institutions in the surrounding environment by *morphing* with the feld. The concept was central to the early theory development of neo-institutionalism, as it was claimed that institutions needed to not only meet efficiency needs but also gain legitimacy in the organisational field (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Consequently, it was claimed that institutions

25 One example is the NAIP European Master of Music (2022).

create myths of formal structure, which in turn shape the organisations that constitute the organisational field. In organisational institutionalism, social acceptability and credibility are considered necessary for institutions to survive (Höllerer et al., 2017), a premise that contrasts with the more economics-oriented notion that survival is achieved when organisations meet their efficiency needs. Thus, this concept posits that the taken-for-granted culture in organisations may be less about meeting the efficiency criteria of the market and more about appearance and *institutional legitimacy* (Höllerer et al., 2017). Foregoing ceremonial rituals to promote organisational efficiency, for instance, has been found to undermine a sense of 'ceremonial conformity' that provides legitimacy for an organisation in its respective field, thereby threatening its social acceptability (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341). During change processes, leaders must obtain credibility in the field while upholding a sense of membership within the organisation.[26]

Studies are ambiguous as to how change occurs in institutions (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). Institutional isomorphism also presents a paradox, for organisations that seek legitimacy through isomorphic processes may become increasingly similar in their attempts to adapt to the environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In other words, if organisations only survive by morphing with their surroundings, then the organisational field will become more and more homogenous, and organisations will thereby undermine their own adaptability. Moreover, seeking legitimacy may be a driving force for developing the 'organizational identity' (Glynn, 2017). Part of this complex picture can be helped by DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) analytical framework, which delineates *coercive*, *mimetic* and *normative* pressures. For instance, higher music education organisations are sometimes *coerced* into meeting governmental requirements or adopting specific political stances due to resource dependency on groups of stakeholders. They can moreover meet *mimetic* pressures to imitate successful counterparts (that is, even more successful higher music education organisations), often during times of uncertainty. Finally, they can be pressured to follow new *norms* that define moral duty if and when the mandates of the profession change. These pressures may exist simultaneously and even present conflicting agendas (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Indeed, the 'nested' context of higher music education organisations is central to the frameworks presented thus far. Modern society is filled with bureaucracy because relational networks have become increasingly complex. Thus, the growth of institutional structures has made formal organisations more common and more elaborate (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341). Post-industrial society has emerged 'out of the complexity of the modern social organizational network and, more directly, as an ideological matter' (Meyer & Rowan, 1977,

26 As mentioned in Chapter 2, music scholars recognise that administrators at higher music education organisations currently face such challenges.

pp. 345–346). Consequently, elements of the formal structure have become institutionalised over time, serving as 'rationalized myths' for organisations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 347). In Meyer's (2017, p. 839) recent work, it is moreover claimed that a 'new society' unfolded before the millennia, 'filled with human persons who assume the posture of empowered actor, and have the capacity to create and participate in collective organizations formed as social actors'. This notion of *actorhood* posits that 'in an expanding and globalizing world society, people and groups everywhere seem to be eager to be actors' (Meyer, 2017, p. 845), including organisations. To gain legitimacy in the field, powerful members may also 'put more effort into being actors than into acting' if their actor identity does not match their actor capability (Meyer, 2017, p. 845).[27]

Because myths of formal structure shape organisations, higher music education organisations may seek legitimacy in the organisational field by adhering to *rationalised myths*. Institutional change in higher music education could therefore be indicative of what 'myths' our organisations attempt to 'morph' with at the present time. However, it is worth noting that studies on institutional isomorphism are portrayed as ambiguous and that institutional scholars from different schools of thought seldom reflect upon their theoretical divide. In fact, few empirical studies embrace DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) constructivist definition of the 'organizational field as socially constituted' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 83). Fundamental ideas of institutional isomorphism 'did not become subject to empirical investigation until much later, if at all' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 79). Yet organisations must face the potential problem that 'competing and mutually inconsistent rational myths can exist simultaneously' when pressured to adapt to rationalised myths in society (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 80). Moreover, organisations can respond to institutional pressures in a variety of ways (e.g. Oliver, 1991). They may solve the dilemma of contradictory demands by meeting 'some demands by talk, others by decisions, and yet others by actions', resulting in 'organizational hypocrisy' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 88). In the next subsection, such internal mechanisms are discussed.

3.2.2 Institutional power and institutional politics

Another central idea in institutional theory is that 'actors are subject to forms of power that are disconnected from the interests and actions of specific others' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 484). This argument aligns with Foucault's (1972/2010) sentiment that actors occupy distinct subject positions when they engage in discourses and where they are subjected to different forms of power (Foucault, 1994/2020). Through this lens, *power* is defined as

27 As noted in 2.2, what leaders of higher music education organisations intend to do and what they actually accomplish sometimes differs (Carruthers, 2019).

a productive force and a relational phenomenon (as opposed to a commodity), seen not as a capacity for effect but rather as 'the aspect of relationships in which there is an effect' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 480). In short, some actors have an advantage over others due to their institutional role (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2017). Though seeking institutional legitimacy in the field is crucial for organisational survival, it is also important for organisations to maintain their ceremonial elements in order to provide individuals with a sense of membership. Accordingly, some institutional scholars claim that 'at no time are institutions more fragile when people no longer feel what institutions prescribe them to feel' (Lok et la., 2017, p. 592). As noted previously, leaders must secure institutional legitimacy in the field while simultaneously maintaining organisational membership.

Internal conflicts within organisations can be caused by a multitude of reasons and result in power shifts. How to act in an institution 'is not a choice among unlimited possibilities but rather among a narrowly defined set of legitimate options' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 55). Lawrence and Buchanan (2017) present a framework for identifying what they refer to as *institutional politics* by building on two forms of *institutional power*, namely *institutional control* and *institutional agency*. The former is systemic, described as 'power that works through routine, ongoing practices to advantage particular groups without those groups necessarily establishing or maintaining those practices' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 480). An institution's *disciplinary practices* are particularly relevant here, drawn from Foucauldian theory (3.1.3, 3.1.4). A constructivist lens of institutional power also highlights the significance of *subject positions* in institutional settings, not only as it connects to Foucauldian theory but also to Bourdieu's (1993) conceptualisation of fields (Hinings et al., 2017, p. 165). *Institutional agency*, on the other hand, is more episodic, working through influence and force, described as 'relatively discrete strategic acts of mobilization initiated by self-interested actors' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 480). In contrast, the systemic power of *institutional control* unfolds through institutional discipline and domination.

The interplay between these two forms of power (that is, institutional control and institutional agency) is referred to as *institutional politics*, the 'role that power plays in shaping the relationship between institutions and actors' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 480). Institutional politics operate within an organisation, whereas institutional isomorphism (3.2.1) unfolds in the interplay between organisation and field. For instance, institutional politics can emerge between the different subgroups of an organisation because distinct actors often adhere to different disciplinary practices. Indeed, organisations often govern members with sanctions and other disciplinary practices that lead to shame, an emotional experience that acts 'as a social disciplinary mechanism' (Lok et al., 2017, p. 602). Members of higher music education organisations can be considered 'disciplined actors' in so far as they have internalised the

demands of the institution (Lawrence & Buchanan 2017, p. 486). In this way, power can even work through conformity. Indeed, disciplinary practices can result in a socially constructed image of the 'normal' or 'ideal' subject (3.1.2) that moves music students and professors toward uniformity (e.g. how to play an instrument) while punishing deviants (e.g. sanctions for not performing well). As illustrated, this framework aligns with Foucauldian discourse theory, yet emphasises internal processes of change and conflict.

Regarding internal conflict, I have already noted a couple of times that leaders must balance the organisational need to obtain legitimacy and uphold membership. Because I rely on organisational institutionalism and a constructivist approach in which institutions are socially constructed, I would be remiss not to mention the importance of individual members. Building on sociological thought, institutions are socially constituted by social practice and therefore 'sustained, altered and extinguished' by a 'collection of individuals' (Powell & Rerup, 2017, p. 311). Furthermore, if we consider emotions to have a transpersonal ontology, to 'exist in interactions that are constitutive of, and structured by, institutional orders' (Lok et al., 2017, p. 601), then the meanings associated with institutional routine and order may 'only become manifest or concrete in interactions with others who can employ the same system of meaning in interpreting interactions and constructing social realities' (Lok et al., 2017, p. 597). Alternatively, dissecting this sentiment with Foucauldian terms, playing into the dominant discourses of an institution will enhance membership. Thus, institutional politics can also be spurred when ceremonial rituals that members depend upon are altered (e.g. changing the exam/audition format in higher music education).

Finally, a constructivist approach to institutional theory also informs us that institutions 'exist to the extent that they are powerful–that is, the extent to which they affect the behaviors, beliefs and opportunities of individuals, groups, organizations and societies' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 477). Therefore, institutional politics can also be caused by differing opinions about how an organisation fits into the organisational field or cause institutional resistance to any alteration of an 'organisational identity' (Glynn, 2017). Change that actors or groups of actors initiate through institutional agency also 'opens up more room for resistance and more potential for creativity in effecting forms of resistance' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 495). There has been a renewed focus on this 'flux' in the institutional literature, centring on the concept of institutional agency (Lawrence & Buchanan, p. 498). Researchers have, however, largely overlooked the relationship between power and institutional control. Thus, Lawrence and Buchanan conclude that the 'analysis of power and institutions remains underdeveloped' and recommend that future research examines institutional systems that appear neutral and apolitical in terms of power (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 501).

3.2.3 Institutionalisation and the decoupling of contested practices

The final concepts borrowed from institutional theory centre around *contested practices* and how these are *institutionalised* or *decoupled*. Building on the key principles found in the constructivist lens of institutional theory (in which an institution is constituted by social practice and needs legitimacy in the field to survive), certain practices become *contested* whenever they run 'counter to institutional norms' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 86). Professional groups within an organisation are often carriers of norms and may therefore resist such practices. Institutional resistance can vary among members and often constitutes a complicated institutional landscape (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017). To uphold ceremonial efficiency (e.g. maintaining organisational membership) while still morphing with the field, organisations may engage in *decoupling*, that is, they 'abide only superficially by institutional pressure and adopt new structures without necessarily implementing the related practices' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 80). Decoupling can occur in one or several areas of an organisation to various degrees, making it challenging to study. However, decoupling is always characterised by a deliberate disconnection between the organisational structures that enhance legitimacy and the practices believed within the organisation to be technically efficient (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). Furthermore, what was initially decoupled may become *coupled* as institutional norms change in the field.

Building on Bourdieu's (1993) theory on cultural production, it is by gaining recognition from the field (and, notably, *gatekeepers* in the field) that musical works achieve not only visibility but *symbolic value* and that participants can gain field membership. Aligning with Foucauldian theory (3.2.2), *governance* in the field can be described as the formal mechanisms that maintain the 'rules of the game' (Hinings et al., 2017, p. 163). According to Wooten and Hoffman (2017), institutional norms are socially negotiated in the organisational field over time. For instance, members of higher music education organisations may participate in what is referred to as *field-configuring events* (e.g. festivals), where participants 'fight for the creation of categories particular to their genre to legitimate their status as field members' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 65). Field-configuring events in the music industry sometimes invite new musical expressions to enter, causing 'the boundaries of the field to become contested' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 65). This development could result in a *disruptive event* in which current field members (i.e. musicians) develop 'a new collective rationality about which artists belong within the field and which do not' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 65). Notably, what is considered 'contested' in higher music education depends on the affiliation of members.

What, then, is a *contested* practice within higher music education? In short, any practice that runs counter to institutional norms.[28] Contested practices may be forced onto organisations, yet it is only when the practice in question is adopted for legitimacy reasons–that is, taken for granted within the field–that it becomes *institutionalised* (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 92). Actors who have experience with the contested practice or have been exposed to fields where the practice is legitimate (that is, no longer contested) play a crucial role in adapting such practices (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 86). Moreover, organisational members do not like to play the part of pawns, and decoupling from contested practices may sometimes lead to 'corrective action' over time (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). Indeed, institutional scholars argue that organisational fields matter 'because actual people must deal with the consequences of their outcomes on a daily basis' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 69). During a period of decoupling, organisations must avoid close inspection (lest they be exposed as frauds), for institutional decoupling 'carries with it a risk of detection where it would no longer confer legitimacy, but probably shame, on the organization' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 87).

Whereas field formation manifests at the intersection of organisations, the process of *institutionalisation* concerns the formation of a single institution (e.g. higher music education) and therefore operates on a smaller scale (though still a part of the field). Over time, the 'enduring patterns of social practice' that constitute an institution (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 477) will become hierarchised and start to 'take on a rulelike status in social thought and action' (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341), resulting in the process of institutionalisation. As already noted, this includes not only social practices but also their physical artefacts (e.g. instruments, musical scores), aligning with Foucauldian theory (as in Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017). Contested practices are institutionalised only when they have become part of the taken-for-granted culture, meaning that the role of time is central in their institutionalisation. It has been found that organisations decouple if they experience strong coercive pressure to implement a new practice, particularly if they distrust the actor or group that asserts pressure on them (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). Yet even when subjected to similar pressures, some organisations decouple whereas others do not, and internal dynamics have been identified as a significant variable (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). The framework of institutional politics (3.2.2) could therefore help uncover processes of institutionalisation.

From the macro level of field formation to the intricate interplay between the field, the organisations that constitute the field and the institutional politics within organisations, organisational institutionalism contains a broad scope of analysis to address 'the basis of social order'

28 The three cultural shifts discussed in Chapter 2 (2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3) are, for the purpose of this thesis, treated as *contested practices* because they challenge institutional norms and subgroups of higher music education organisations tend to resist them.

(Scott, 2017, p. 853). As illustrated throughout this chapter, the two theoretical perspectives differ yet can also be combined to investigate institutional change in higher music education.

This constructivist framework examines processes of change by identifying the subject positions available to various actors and reveals how these are connected to the changing power dynamics within higher music education. It also illustrates how organisations have responded to institutional pressures from the field. Thus, the frameworks presented in this chapter are employed to analyse the experiences of individual music students and professors, who are both constituted by discourse and, in turn, constitute the institution we know as higher music education through their social practice. These frameworks also shed light on what these individuals' experiences signify in terms of institutional change. The following chapter accounts for the methodological decisions that were made to examine these areas of interest.

4 Methodology

This thesis employs a combination of ethnographic methodologies and epistemologically directed poststructuralist theory. The research design aligns with other discourse-oriented studies on music education but is also inspired by the notion of *abductive analysis*, in which the research unfolds through the continual interplay between empirical data and theoretical frameworks. To examine institutional change in higher music education, the empirical data builds on qualitative interviews with twenty-four music performance students and professors from classical and genre independent study programmes and institutional documents from two higher music education organisations in Norway and the Netherlands. This comparative case study unfolded organically throughout the project period, and this chapter explains the methodological decisions behind the chosen design by describing the data collection and analysis processes. Finally, ethical considerations and intertextuality are discussed.

4.1 Research design

As presented in Chapter 2, this thesis is positioned within the realm of sociological research on music education. Moreover, it builds on poststructuralist theory (described in Chapter 3) and ethnographic methodologies. In the epistemology of poststructuralist theory, *language* is positioned as central for our 'constitution of reality' (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 115). The world still entails an ontological dimension, in so far as human beings are made up of physical bodies and create physical artefacts and buildings for our institutions. Indeed, the chosen theoretical frameworks include physical entities (e.g. musical scores, concert halls): 'Foucault does *not* deny that things can have a real, material existence in the world' (Hall, 2001, p. 73) but claims that it is through *discourse* that their meaning is constituted; an *institution* is constituted not only by its social relationships but also by the 'built environment' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 499). Thus, it is recognised throughout this thesis that the world has a material form, but it is more interested in the epistemological dimension–how that world is understood by members of higher music education.

This research project was initiated in 2018 to examine institutional change in higher music education through the employment of discourse theory. However, though this worked well dissecting the discursive landscape of higher music education (see Ski-Berg, 2022), the collected data (twenty-four qualitative interviews) revealed unforeseen theoretical and methodological possibilities. The process of *abduction* entered the thesis at this point, leading to secondary data and added theoretical frameworks for analysis. In sum, the project consists of a comparative

case study of two higher music education organisations from which ethnographic data sources in the forms of qualitative interviews (with twelve informants from each orgaisation) and institutional documents (such as strategic plans and web pages) have been gathered. In the following subsections, the decision-making and meaning-making behind the study's research design are accounted for, first by explaining the concept of *abductive analysis* and then by briefly connecting the thesis to its site of research in terms of methodological intertextuality.

4.1.1 Abductive analysis

The research design behind this study has developed organically throughout the project period (2018 to 2022) by leaning on the concept of *abductive analysis*. The process of *abduction* is understood as the following:

> Abduction occurs when we encounter observations that do not neatly fit existing theories and we find ourselves speculating about what the data plausibly could be a case of. Abduction thus refers to a creative inferential process aimed at producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence. (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 5)

Tavory and Timmermans (2014) introduce 'an alternative map for constructing empirically based theorizations' (p. 4) by building on the notion of *abduction* as employed by Charles S. Peirce (1839 to 1914). The authors claim that 'theory generation requires us to move away from our preconceived notions and to create new narratives about the phenomenon we are trying to explain' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 5). By abandoning both strict *inductivism* (the idea that theory is something which emerges out of the empirical data) and strict *deductivism* (the notion that we can engage in research only when we know what we expect to find), they follow Peirce's argument that creativity is inherent in the research process. Thus, the 'discovery-justification division' is wrong because researchers theorise on the go (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). The complementary relationship between observation and inference is built into Peirce's *semiotic triad*. 'Meaning-making', they explain, consists of 'three interlinked parts' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 23):

1. a *sign* (a 'signifier', in 'the same way that smoke signifies fire'),

2. an *object* ('any entity about which a sign signifies'), and

3. an *interpretant* ('a transformation that the interpreter undergoes while making sense of a sign').

Following the process of abductive analysis, meaning-making is considered to occur 'in action'; that is, it is not 'an abstract but a practical achievement' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 23). Accordingly, during research, the collected data may reveal new hypotheses or objects of examination, which could spiral on. The notion of *spiralling semiotics* has inspired the articles from this study (see 5.4), in which 'each semiotic triad is potentially connected to the next iteration of meaning-making, as each interpretant may operate as the sign for the next iteration of meaning-making' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 29). Key to this process is the assumption that surprising observations are strategic in so far as 'they depend on a theoretically sensitized observer who recognizes their potential relevance for the broader community of inquiry' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 41). To do this, abductive reasoning demands a broader scope of theor*ies* (as opposed to a singular theory) of the researcher, which the authors claim presents 'a radical shift from qualitative researchers' traditional reluctance to engage with theory' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 41). Further,

> abduction should be understood as a continuous process of forming conjectures about a world; conjectures that are shaped by the solutions a researcher already has or can make ready to hand-immediately available as a schema of perception and action. (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 40)

In this research project, the process of abductive analysis has aligned with the poststructuralist ideas presented in Chapter 3. According to Tavory and Timmermans (2014, p. 40), the precondition for *abductive reasoning* is 'not natural instinct but socially cultivated and cultivatable ways of seeing', based on 'positional knowledge that can be deepened and marshaled for the purpose of theory construction'. In sum, the notion of *abduction* has played a significant role in the continuous interplay between observation and inference from the empirical data and has allowed this thesis to unfold creatively.

4.1.2 Intertextuality and delimitations

The case study was initially intended to collect empirical data for the purpose of a discourse analysis. In terms of intertextuality, this positions the thesis in a Nordic context of music education research where such an approach has become more common in recent years.[29] It is moreover common in research on music education to utilise ethnographic approaches to data production (e.g. qualitative interviews, field observations). That is not to say that a quantitative approach would be less valid, as both interview surveys and text analysis could be applicable methods for gathering empirical data in this study. Because music education is

29 As found in Rolle et al. (2017). See e.g. Ellefsen (2014), Jordhus-Lier (2018), or Nerland (2004) for similar research designs.

considered to be constituted not only by social practice (e.g. through social relationships and ceremonial rituals) but by physical artefacts (e.g. books, musical scores and instruments, curricula), a quantitative approach could have worked well in this project. Indeed, a quantitative approach would have been suitable for the theoretical frameworks selected from organisational institutionalism (3.2). When this was discovered (through abductive analysis), institutional documents from the studied organisations (e.g. strategic plans) were added as a secondary data source to further the interplay between theory and empirical data.

As noted, delimitation has been an ongoing process to design a fruitful study on institutional change in higher music education. It is worth noting, then, that even though higher music education has become an increasingly researched area in recent decades, there has been a lack of consistency in developing methodologies (Rolle et al., 2017). This development is not necessarily surprising, however, for music education is interdisciplinary in its content and execution, with one hand placed on music and other institutional knowledge, and the other placed on theories of the profession and pedagogical considerations. In addition to the educational context, music students are also exposed to new kinds of music outside of school, and informal peer learning is often seen an essential part of studying music. Because music is such a natural part of contemporary everyday life, it can be hard for music scholars to separate the music from its cultural roots, just as it can be challenging to separate the music pedagogue from the artist within (Angelo, 2015). As portrayed above, methodological decisions offer intertextuality in the growing corpus of music education research but must be thoroughly explained and accounted for to make a solid contribution. The rest of this chapter intends to do so by elaborating on the methodology behind this thesis.

4.2 Comparative case study

A *case study* is a research process that gathers information about one or few entities such as an organisation (or parts of an organisation) or a discourse (Andersen, 2013), in this case two higher music education organisations. The starting point of this comparative study was the decision to compare recently introduced music performance study programmes to well-established music performance study programmes. For this, two organisations were selected to participate on behalf of their newly established genre independent bachelor programmes, namely *FRIKA* in Oslo, Norway, and *Musician 3.0* in Utrecht, the Netherlands. These programmes presented the study with a *deviant case* (Silverman, 2014, p. 99) in so far as being genre independent deviates from the institutionalised norms of higher music education. Furthermore, this added a comparative level between the selected organisations regarding

their national context (see e.g. Kleppe, 2016). Notably, the comparative design was chosen to ensure several target groups, selected deliberately through *theoretical sampling* (Silverman, 2014, pp. 97–100) based on common subgroups found in research on higher music education (e.g. 'student' versus 'teacher'; 'classical' versus other musical genres). Informants where thus selected to represent various subgroups and institutional roles within higher music education, resulting in three levels of comparison:

1. music performance bachelor students (coded 'S') versus professors ('P'),

2. study programmes in classical music ('C') versus genre independent music ('F' for *FRIKA* or 'M' for *Musician 3.0*), and

3. the Norwegian Academy of Music ('NMH') versus Utrechts Conservatorium at the University of the Arts Utrecht ('HKU').

The three levels of comparison were intended to offer greater nuance because of the inherent contrasts among them (Andersen, 2013, p. 111). For instance, the student-teacher relationship is considered to embody institutionalised power dynamics (2.1.3), and established study programmes in higher music education are often considered to be embedded with discourses (2.1.2). Higher music education is reputed to be 'characterised by extensive individualisation of teaching and learning, and by a high degree of specialisation' (Nerland, 2007, p. 399), and so several target groups and a large number of informants could offer more validity to a qualitatively oriented case study. Similar studies (combining discourse theory with ethnographic data collection) have also included field observations over time (e.g. Ellefsen, 2014; Nerland, 2003). Though this study could have benefitted from a longitudal approach (that is, following a few students and/or professors over time as they experienced a new study programme), a comparative design was prioritised due to the necessary delimitations of a PhD project. The study could also have examined the national contexts of the chosen organisations more in-depth (e.g. with Esping-Andersen's schematic models of welfare regimes; Esping-Andersen, 1990), but I selected theoretical frameworks from organisational institutionalism for their applicability and contribution to the field. The studied organisations are briefly described below.

4.2.1 The Norwegian Academy of Music: *FRIKA*

The *Norwegian Academy of Music* (or *Norges musikkhøgskole*, NMH) is a publicly funded music academy located in Oslo, Norway. Its roots can be traced back to a school for organists founded in 1883 by the Lindeman family, which later expanded into the *Oslo Conservatoire of Music* and then, in 1973, merged with the newly established *Norwegian Academy of Music*.

Today the academy offers study programmes specialised in music performance in genres such as classical and contemporary music, traditional folk music, improvised music and jazz, and a Bachelor of Music with individual concentration (*FRIKA*). Other programmes that are offered specialise in, for instance, conducting, composition, and music education.

The bachelor's programme *FRIKA* has been examined specifically in this case study due to its student-centred focus. The programme enrols students who wish to undertake their own 'creative musical projects', particularly projects that combine 'performing and creative elements' and cannot be adapted to the other Bachelor of Music Performance programmes (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2022a). Key to this programme is the expectation of 'independence and originality' among FRIKA students.

4.2.2 Utrechts Conservatorium: *Musician 3.0*

The *Utrechts Conservatorium* is currently one of nine schools under the larger higher education organisation *Utrechts School of the Arts* (*Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht*, HKU), located in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Historically, the conservatorium opened already in 1875; in 1987, it merged with the *Dutch Institute for Church Music* and *Carillon School*, becoming the *Faculty of Music of the Utrecht School of the Arts*. The *Utrechts Conservatorium* may be described as a conservatoire within a university setting. The conservatorium is privately funded and offers study programmes in music performance, such as classical music and historical performance practice, jazz and pop music, and *Musician 3.0*, to name a few. Other programmes that are offered include music education and choir conducting.

The bachelor's programme *Musician 3.0* has been explicitly examined in this case study due to its student-centred focus. The programme enrols students who are 'always pushing and shifting boundaries', who like to 'work with other artists' and who have 'a keen eye and ear for cultural and social trends' (HKU University of the Arts, 2022). To be trained as 'Music Performance Artists', it is expected that the students will take charge of their own development and be open to working 'with musicians playing a variety of instruments' and 'across different artistic and other disciplines' (HKU University of the Arts, 2022). Key to this programme is the exploration of the artistic voice and 'new, original musical avenues'.

4.3 Data collection

Through ethnographic data collection two sources of data were gathered for this study: 1) primary data consisting of twenty-four qualitative interviews with informants from the two participating organisations; and 2) secondary data consisting of institutional documents (e.g. strategic plans, websites, allocation agreements). The aim of the study was to recruit informants who could provide information on and collect secondary data that could shed light on institutional change in higher music education. Thus, the target groups (the comparative levels described in 4.2) were selected based on the idea of *purposive sampling* (embedded into the *theoretical sampling*), as the interview candidates were purposively selected to provide relevant data that could help answer the research problem (Silverman, 2014, p. 62). This in-depth case study approach was supplemented by applying a comparative design, building on the different affiliations of the informants. A balance in instruments, ethnicity and gender was also encouraged, but it was not always possible to achieve (see 4.5.3). Before starting the data collection process, the study was approved by the *Norwegian Centre for Research Data* (NSD), including an ethics review (appendix 1). The following subsections elaborate on the fieldwork that was undertaken thereafter.

4.3.1 Qualitative interviews

After receiving approval from the NSD, a selection of informants was made through a chain referral with the assistance of a few professors from the participating higher music education organisations. It was specified that applicable interview candidates should be 'innovative' (though they were free to interpret this subjectively) and, moreover, be bachelor's students in music performance from classical or genre independent study programmes (second to fourth year) and professors affiliated with these programmes who had experience teaching bachelor-level students. The number of informants was divided evenly amongst the target groups, three in each, with a total of twelve informants from each organisation.

The fieldwork consisted of twenty-four qualitative and semi-structured interviews, conducted individually during 2019 as open conversations in which the informants shared anecdotes, experiences and perspectives on institutional change in higher music education. The only exception was one of the professors from HKU, who preferred to be interviewed over e-mail, which was approved due to her prominent profile. Compared to the spoken interview, e-mail interviewing is, by default, asynchronous. Moreover, it allows interviewees to 'construct their own experiences with their own dialogue' and to 'control … the flow of the interview' (Meho, 2006, p. 1291). The informant responded to the same interview guide (appendix 2).

Drawing from the literature on higher music education, the interview guide (appendix 2) from this study is also based on theoretical sampling (Silverman, 2014, pp. 97-100). The informants were primarily asked about two topics: 1) their experiences with the three cultural shifts drawn from the literature on higher music education (discussed in 2.2); and 2) how they thought other students/professors had experienced these shifts. They were also given opening and ending questions for added reflection. Each interview opened and closed with the same questions but was flexible in the order of the questions. Except for the one e-mail interview, the remaining twenty-three interviews fall under the 'life world interview' category, which simulates a normal conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 47) about the interviewee's *life world*, that is, 'the world as we encounter it in daily life' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 324). Still following an interview guide, this form of interview is flexible and allows the interviewer to be guided by intuition, flexibility, and creativity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 104). The spoken interviews lasted about forty-five minutes each; the e-mail interview was responded to the day after the interview guide was sent out.

Before the interviews, all participants received a document with information about the study and signed a consent form (appendix 3), following the guidelines for ethics in research provided by NSD. The first few minutes of each interview were spent introducing the study and myself, with the purpose of creating a welcoming atmosphere that would allow the individual informant to ask questions if necessary. Though all interviews were conducted during 2019, the informants from NMH were interviewed in spring, whereas the informants from HKU were interviewed in autumn. Each interview took place at a different location (of the informant's choice) and was recorded (with the exception of the e-mail interview).

All interviews were translated into English for the purpose of this thesis: interviews with the informants from HKU were conducted directly in English, the informants' second language; interviews with the informants from NMH were conducted in Norwegian and translated into English later. The language translation could have affected some of the knowledge drawn from the spoken interviews. However, all of the informants were given the opportunity to confirm that their selected quotations were authentic before any publication.

4.3.2 Institutional documents

The secondary data was collected throughout the research process, following the evolution of the abductive analysis used in the project (4.1). This data consists of excerpts from the web pages of the two higher music education organisations, their strategic plans for 2019 and the allocation plan between NMH and the Norwegian government from 2019.[30] The secondary data is also in

30 These sources are all listed in the references under 'internet sources'.

English, gathered from the English web pages and strategic plans for the studied organisations. The only exception is that the allocation plan between NMH and the Norwegian government is written in Norwegian–its exerpts have been translated into English. As noted throughout this chapter, secondary data was gathered following the introduction of organisational institutionalism as a theoretical approach (3.2). Indeed, institutional documents function as a tool to build institutional legitimacy (e.g. Stensaker et al., 2019). Therefore, it is worth noting that one of the participating organisations had published a more extensive strategic plan than the other, resulting in an unequal amount of secondary data. Even so, these documents are treated as tools for building legitimacy in the field (3.2.1) and are based on the organisations' output.

4.4 Data analysis

After the primary data from the qualitative interviews had been collected in 2019, the recorded interviews were transcribed with the help of an assistant. Thereafter, all twenty-four interview transcripts were anonymised and coded with the software NVivo. This coding process followed the interview guide (appendix 2) thematically at first, developing categories for further examination to re-familiarise myself with the material and to achieve a complete overview. After this step, the interview transcripts were analysed using three distinct frameworks: 1) a discourse-theoretical reading that identified discourses (3.1); 2) an analysis of institutional politics, resulting in identified forms of institutional power (3.2.2); and 3) an analysis of isomorphic mechanisms, leading to categories defined as institutional pressures (3.2.1) and contested practices (3.2.3). The latter analysis also included secondary data (i.e. strategic plans from the participating organisations). As illustrated briefly here, the coding process was repeated throughout the project period for different purposes, following the logic of abductive reasoning (4.1), where an overarching goal is to construct new knowledge and generate theory (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). The three analyses correlate with the three articles that resulted from this thesis (see Chapter 5), and the thematic coding functioned as a primer for them all.

4.5 Considerations

Some of the most prominent considerations for this thesis stem from the constructivist lens used to write it, including my own bias as a researcher, the validity of the research and its ethical dimensions. As noted in the previous subsection, the empirical data analyses have largely been based on categories from theoretical sampling and coding based on specific

frameworks to secure reliability. Even so, I acknowledge that findings from empirical data are 'partial, incomplete, and always in a process of a re-telling and re-membering' (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. viii). The final subsections of this chapter account for these methodological considerations.

4.5.1 Constructed findings

Through a poststructuralist, constructivist lens, the findings presented in this thesis cannot be isolated from the frameworks and analyses from which they were extracted, nor from the theoretical assumptions connected to the thesis's underlying research questions. Being aware of my agenda throughout the project has offered new insight in line with the principles of abductive analysis. According to Tavory and Timmermans (2014, p. 41), we 'must recognize the crucial import of the scope and sophistication of the theoretical background a researcher brings along'. Indeed, when analysing empirical data, researchers must *interpret* the material to construct knowledge. Coding and interpretation are thereby intertwined, affected by the researcher's own ideas and background. Interpretation may, through a constructivist lens, be compared to a traveller who wanders around in a foreign country where the journey can 'lead the interviewer to new insight' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 67). Though the comparative design chosen for this case study has brought with it certain expectations about where to find answers to the posed research problems, the overarching comparative levels were also included to identify divergence and inconsistencies by reflecting upon 'why one story is told and not another' (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. ix).

Throughout the project period, many methodological decisions have shaped the material: how to select informants (e.g. deviant case and theoretical, purposive sampling), how to collect empirical data (e.g. conducting qualitative interviews), how to recruit informants (e.g. chain referral) and so forth. All of these preliminary decisions were informed by the explicit guidelines of how qualitative research ought to be conducted (e.g. Silverman, 2014; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). However, by questioning my own bias after each analysis of the empirical data, I have endeavoured to confront my presumptions. Indeed, the in-depth nature of a case study is more about the falsification of, as opposed to the verification of, the researcher's preconceived notions (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 311). I recognise that a core issue in sociological research is that 'the researcher is part of the world of the people she studies', thus leading to what may be called a 'question of positionality' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 40), further discussed in the next subsection.

4.5.2 Validity and reliability

Research on music education is often rooted in constructivist theory, the inherent considerations of which are mentioned above. Another dimension that must be explicitly stated is that music education research is often conducted by *inborns*, meaning researchers who can 'identify with the participants so strongly that it is hard to maintain a professional distance' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 92). Because most music scholars have a music education background (which is also typically a criterion for PhD candiadates), I acknowledge that the majority of music education research is conducted by scholars who delve into a *discourse of familiarity*, including myself. As Bourdieu (1977) stated, the researcher may be 'subject to the censorship inherent in their habitus' (p. 18). Thus, my own affiliation with one of the organisations adds a crucial bias to the study, as does my background as a music student. Offering intertextuality with additional research on higher music education has therefore been a priority, and one of my goals was to reach a general understanding for the sake of validity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 247), whereas the thorough explanation of the methodology is intended to offer reliability. The relatively large number of informants also increases the validity of this study, as does the findings' alignment with external research.

4.5.3 Ethical dimensions

I also prioritised the protection of the twenty-four informants who participated in this study. Twenty-three of the interviews were recorded on tape and had to be treated confidentially following the fieldwork. While the researcher may organise and work with the empirical data, the storage of personal details is not allowed without explicit permission, and I adhered to the guidelines of the *Norwegian Centre for Research Data*, as required by law. All informants had to sign a document of written consent that explained the implications of the study, including their rights as participants in the project (appendix 3). In this document, the informants were promised anonymisation in their interview transcripts for themselves and any third partiy discussed (except for the titles of their organisation and affiliated study programme). Before this step, I considered conducting group interviews, but I decided to leave more space for nuanced replies and turn-taking among the respondents through individually conducted interviews. Moreover, an environment where students would not seek affirmation from professors or peers, nor professors from their respective colleagues, was deemed the most fruitful for this particular study. This approach also offered greater anonymisation and space for reflection.

Research is generally coloured by the interests of the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 285). Consequently, the distinction between the reconstruction of the world that is being researched (the data gathered and interpreted from qualitative interviews), and the first-hand

experience of that world (the respondents' lives) has been important to keep in mind both during the fieldwork that was undertaken in 2019 and in the interpretation of the empirical data afterwards. Due to the asymmetrical power balance between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 52-53), the informants were given the opportunity to review their selected quotations before any publication. Thus, the ongoing evolution of the thesis has been transparent and respectful throughout the project period.

Moreover, I have attempted to be inclusive in the recruitment of informants while still prioritising applicable interview candidates. Whenever a balance in gender, ethnicity and instrument was out of reach, it was commonly a reflection of the status quo within the target groups or the result of chain referral. Ultimately, though, the findings have been synthesised to present shared experiences across the selected target groups. The following chapter summarises these findings in their respective contexts.

5 Article summary

The three resulting articles from this research project all address institutional change in higher music education (referred to as HME in the articles). In Article 1, discourses on (the shift towards) student-centredness have been identified through a discourse-theoretical reading of the interview transcripts, and the discussion centres on how the positions of music performance students and professors appear to be in flux. In Article 2, organisational institutionalism was introduced to employ the analytical framework of institutional politics. Forms of institutional power were identified within the two studied organisations, and the discussion revolves around how music students and professors are affected by the balancing act between innovation and tradition during shifts in the evolution of higher music education. In Article 3, institutional change has been addressed at the level of the organisational field by identifying institutional pressures put on higher music education organisations. The discussion concerns how higher music education organisations need (and chase) legitimacy in the field to secure organisational survival. Thus, the three articles provide an overview of changes in higher music education at different institutional levels yet are bound together by the case study that they build upon. A synthesis is presented in the final subsection of this chapter.

5.1 Article 1

Article 1 was sent to the journal *Music Education Research* for review in June 2021. It was accepted and published in Open Access format in January 2022 as *'Blazing the trail or exposing the gaps?' Discourses on student-centredness in genre independent and classical music performance study programmes in Norway and the Netherlands*. In the article, I refer to 'the shift towards student-centredness', building on one of the notable changes in higher music education organisations (that is, decentring the student-teacher relationship) and the literature that had addressed this change. Central to the article is the claim that power dynamics will persist in student-centred environments. Consequently, music scholars and institutional leaders must take this into account when promoting the decentring of authorities in higher music education. The abstract of the article reads as follows:

> Student-centredness is being advocated for in research on higher music education (HME), yet its perils have been largely neglected by scholars. While issues of employability are important to address in order for music graduates to thrive in a neoliberal world, this article asserts that the underlying power mechanisms that are being criticised for stifling creative development in students may continue to exist also within

> student-centred environments. By turning to a discourse-theoretical Foucauldian framework, the article presents empirical data from a comparative case study of two HME institutions. The findings suggest that there are four discourses (of employability, artistry, craftsmanship, and holism) on student-centredness in HME. Moreover, tension points between students, professors, study programmes, and discourses may be softened if student-centredness is allowed more nuances. Finally, the article discusses how the subject positions of music performance students and professors are transformed by student-centredness, and how this transformation is affecting HME institutions.

Article 1 posits that *student-centredness* (2.2.1) is introduced in the literature on higher music education with 'a lack of caution' and in ways that tend to portray this overarching shift as 'an antidote to transmissive teaching' (Ski-Berg, 2022, p. 32). In other words, the power dynamics of student-centred environments have, to a large degree, been left unexamined by scholars, despite the charged encouragement to implement student-centred teaching methods. As such, this article was designed to address how student-centredness affects power relationships in higher music education. The article's central research question reads as follows:

> What are the discourses on student-centredness in higher music education, and what subject positions are enabled in the unveiled discursive landscape?

To answer this question, the theoretical framework for this article was built on Foucauldian discourse theory (3.1). The formation of discourses was examined by comparing the interview transcripts from the case study that this thesis builds on with other articles on student-centredness in higher music education (and beyond). By recognising the dispersion of statements in the discursive practices of higher music education through a discourse-theoretical reading of these transcripts, four discourses (on student-centredness) were identified. The discourses were named and described as follows:

1. The *employability* discourse: student-centredness as the pathway to employability; characterised by the notion that higher music education must transform if graduates are to be adequately prepared for their careers; critical thinking and flexibility are emphasised; may be traced back to the enforcement of market terminology onto higher music education; music students are constituted as potential arts entrepreneurs.

2. The *artistry* discourse: student-centredness as a tool for artistic development; perpetuates a firm belief that music students ought to develop artistically and that higher music education must adapt to support this development; emphasis on creativity and artistry; music students are constituted as artists.

3. The *craftsmanship* discourse: student-centredness as the guardian of craftsmanship; conserves musical traditions and ceremonial rituals; emphasises the development of the musical craft; music students are constituted as aspiring instrumental virtuosi.

4. The *holism* discourse: student-centredness as a venue for the holistic musician; higher music education is viewed as an essential part of society; emphasis on students' human needs and the contextualisation of higher music education; music students are constituted as citizens.

The findings section outlines these four identified discourses, illustrated with quotations selected from the informant interviews. Moreover, tension points among the discourses and between the target groups in the study are presented briefly. In short, it is suggested that student-centredness contains many nuances of musicianship, varying slightly between the target groups and the identified discourses. Thus, music students may be overwhelmed by the different expectations regarding what a musician is about in current society. When the subject positions of music students and professors are transforming (e.g. from 'master' to 'mentor'; from 'apprentice' to 'mentee'), repercussions must be critically discussed. If power is omnipresent (following Foucauldian theory), then it is inevitable that power relationships will also exist in student-centred environments. The article discussion centres on this argument.

Throughout article 1, the two studied higher music education *organisations* are referred to as *institutions*, as is typical within music education research. Article 2, however, adheres to institutional terms from organisational institutionalism, examining the institutional politics (3.2.2) connected to institutional change.

5.2 Article 2

Article 2 was sent to the journal *Nordic Research in Music Education* in December 2021 under the following title: *Between innovation and tradition: The balancing act of the 'protean' music student*. It has been accepted by the journal, and the abstract reads as follows:

> Innovation is being called for to renew higher music education (HME) due to substantial societal changes, yet the implications of this trajectory remain unclear. By turning to institutional theory and Foucauldian theory, this article investigates how innovation is perceived in HME. Drawing from a case study in which twenty-four music performance students and professors were interviewed in Norway and the

> Netherlands, the findings suggest that the call for innovation is enmeshed with institutional politics. Indeed, innovative practices (e.g. genre independent programmes) have caused institutional resistance but also fostered necessary renewal. Thus, the balancing act between innovation and tradition is discussed.

A central premise throughout the article is that there may be friction between arts and commerce. Similar to article 1, where the shift towards student-centredness is presented as an institutional change in higher music education, article 2 discusses what I refer to as the 'call for innovation' (2.2.3). Thus, the backdrop is institutional change as it relates to the concept of *innovation* in higher music education, and the article's introduction notes this landscape. In short, innovation is often associated with the labour market, but has also been referred to in the literature on higher music education as part of teaching methods, research, or new musical expressions. Moreover, while some studies have found music students and professors to be reluctant to market terminology, others suggest that the creative aspects of career courses are embraced. Considering these discrepancies, the focal point of article 2 is to discuss the implications of the increased focus on innovating higher music education. The research question reads as follows:

> How do music students and professors from classical and genre independent performance study programmes experience the increased focus on innovating HME, and what are the implications of their experiences?

To answer this research question, the theoretical framework for this article is built on key concepts from organisational institutionalism. Specifically, the idea that institutional politics (3.2.2) affect institutional change is central. During the analysis of the interview transcripts from the case study, forms of institutional power (building also on Foucauldian theory on power) have been identified in the informants' experiences with innovation in higher music education. From this analysis, four overarching categories emerged:

1. Institutional agency for innovation: the informants' experiences with (and *for*) innovation in their institutional role; innovation associated with 'newness', artistry, and more creative risks.

2. Institutional control for innovation: the informants' experiences with innovation in their higher music education organisation; the genre independent programmes were considered innovative; examples of 'innovative' disciplinary practices (e.g. programme renewal).

3. Resistance to institutional control for innovation: the informants' resistance to how innovation has been encouraged in higher music education; internal conflicts and

discrepancies in the organisational culture (e.g. leadership says one thing, does another).

4. Resistance to institutional agency for innovation: the informants' experiences with how innovation has been resisted at their higher music education organisation; career courses not considered innovative; stories about internal tension in other members.

The findings section discusses these four categories by elaborating on the forms of institutional power that were identified in the informant interviews. In short, the informants gave examples of innovative ideas and practices from their organisations and spoke of a required balancing act between innovation and tradition in higher music education. The findings are illustrated using selected quotations and sorted into two larger segments of the findings section, namely *Innovating higher music education* and *Institutional resistance to innovating higher music education*. Throughout the article, the concept of innovation is treated as an economically rooted concept by building on a Schumpeterian lens (see 2.2.3). For instance, if processes of change turn out to be profitable for the educational organisation (e.g. recruitment of new student groups), as I argue in the article, such institutional change constitutes an *incremental innovation* (e.g. new study programmes).

As evidenced in the research question, the focus of the article is split between the informants' experiences with innovation in higher music education (which are often internal to music education), on the one hand, and the implications of their experiences (in terms of institutional politics and organisational survival), on the other. The implications of the informants' experiences are at the centre of the article discussion, building on identified institutional politics within the two studied organisations. Whereas the findings section illustrates how various forms of institutional power were affected by the overarching call to innovate in higher music education, the discussion concerns how institutional politics are connected to institutional change. Notably, the informants' desire to balance innovation with tradition is emphasised in this section to illustrate how new study programmes can both constitute and be constituted by institutional politics. Moreover, I propose that resistance to change can be informative for leaders at higher music education organisations. Considering the informants' experiences, some pitfalls connected to innovating higher music education are also discussed, specifically how new programmes could construct a new 'normal' subject (building on Foucauldian theory; 3.1.2).

The article concludes with a remark that it would be wise to constructively discuss how to innovate higher music education, given that music students and professors may be positioned within a contradictory discursive landscape (e.g. expected to be both 'disciplined' and 'disruptive' actors in their organisations).

5.3 Article 3

Article 3 was sent to the *International Journal of Music Education* for review in June 2022 under the title *'Chasing legitimacy?' Institutional change in higher music education.* This article is co-written with my colleague and supervisor, Prof. Sigrid Røyseng, building on the case study from this thesis. The article has recently been accepted, now entitled *Institutional change in higher music education — A quest for legitimacy.* The abstract reads as follows:

> Institutional change is being called for to renew higher music education (HME). But what institutional pressures, specifically, are driving these calls, and how are HME organisations responding to pressures to change? By turning to institutional theory, we lean on the concept of institutional isomorphism to shed light on how HME organisations may be navigating pressures to appear legitimate in the field to secure organisational survival. Drawing from a comparative case study of two HME organisations from Norway and the Netherlands, in which strategic plans and interview transcripts with students and professors have been analysed, we discuss how change processes are intertwined with an organisational quest for legitimacy. The findings suggest that there are overarching pressures to change in the field of HME, and that variables in the institutional environment indicate how processes of change may unfold. Finally, implications of this unveiled landscape are discussed.

Whereas the first two articles focus on specific institutional changes (that is, *student-centredness* and *innovation*), article 3 addresses institutional change in higher music education from a bird's-eye perspective. A central premise is that organisations need legitimacy in order to secure organisational survival in the field. Furthermore, in recent decades, organisations within the cultural sector have been put under exceeding pressure to assert their legitimacy. Though the literature on higher music education has not yet employed institutional theory to examine processes of institutional change, the aforementioned claims still echo in scholarly encouragement to both change and defend the field of higher music education (as portrayed in 2.2). Building on this backdrop, the article's research questions read as follows:

- What practices are being called for to change HME, and what institutional pressures appear to be driving these calls?

- How are the participating students and professors experiencing institutional change in HME?

- How are the participating HME organisations responding to pressures to change, and what are the implications of this unveiled landscape?

To answer these research questions, the theoretical framework for this article is built on key concepts from organisational institutionalism. Specifically, the idea that institutional pressures (3.2.1) affect institutional change is central. During the analysis, the three cultural shifts from the study (2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3) are treated as *contested practices* (3.2.3) because they run counter to the institutional norms of higher music education. The interview transcripts were coded, and the informants' experiences with these practices were identified during the coding. Furthermore, the strategic plans from the two studied organisations were coded to identify the emerging practices and institutional pressures that might be causing institutional change. Finally, a broader analysis of the field was undertaken by investigating recent literature on higher music education and identifying how institutional pressures are put on organisations. These findings were substantiated by identifying the correlation between the three contested practices and institutional pressures from the field also in the *European Association of Conservatoires* (AEC).

Because of the scope of the findings and the requirement to write a compact article (6,000 words maximum, including the reference list), the findings are divided into two larger sections titled *Identified contested practices* and *Identified institutional pressures*. These sections are then divided into three parts, resulting in six subsections that present the findings. In short, the first three subsections present the targeted contested practices as 'strategy and experience' in the two studied organisations, illustrated with excerpts from the strategic plans and quotations from the informant interviews. The latter three subsections illustrate how the identified practices are connected to institutional pressures from the field by building on examples from literature. Together, the findings depict how institutional change is encouraged in the field. More interestingly, they illustrate how various institutional pressures can lead to processes of change in different areas of higher music education organisations:

1. *Mimetic pressure* to embrace student-centredness.

2. *Coercive pressure* to implement entrepreneurship and innovation.

3. *Normative pressure* to contextualise higher music education.

Building on these findings, the article discussion centres on how organisational institutionalism may provide valuable frameworks to further investigate how processes of change unfold in higher music education. Moreover, we propose that institutional pressures to change

may be better understood by considering how the resulting institutional changes relate to *context* and *time*. For instance, a major difference between the two studied organisations is that the Norwegian music academy is publicly funded and is located in a social-democratic state. In contrast, the Dutch conservatorium is privately funded and is positioned in a more liberal state. These nuances may explain some of the discrepancies within the findings, such as why the Dutch informants appeared more open to all three contested practices while the Norwegian informants were more sceptical of them. However, it could also be that the Dutch conservatorium has worked strategically with the three cultural shifts over a longer period than the Norwegian academy, indicating that institutional change needs to be given time. Due to the delimitations of this study, we could offer no conclusion in this area. Rather, we acknowledge that more research on institutional change in higher music education is necessary.

In sum, the article illustrates that contested practices in higher music education appear to surface from an overarching shared quest among organisations to respond to pressures for institutional change. Considering this, we conclude with the remark that frameworks from organisational institutionalism could be fruitful for further examinations of institutional change in research on higher music education.

5.4 Synthesis

The three articles presented in this chapter examine institutional change in higher music education at various institutional levels and employ different theoretical frameworks. *Table 1* gives a brief overview.

	Article 1	**Article 2**	**Article 3**
Focus	The shift towards *student-centredness*	The call to *innovate* higher music education	Chasing institutional legitimacy in the field
Framework	*Discourse theory* (Foucault, 1972/2010)	*Institutional politics* (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017)	*Institutional pressures* (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)
Data	Interviews	Interviews and web pages of the studied organisations	Strategic plans and interviews
Level	Actors within the organisational field	Subgroups and members of the organisations	Organisational, the organisational field

Table 1. Article Summary

These articles result from a continuing abductive analysis of the empirical data from the case study, written to generate new theory and with a 'sense of intellectual adventure' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 7). In short, the premise of the first article is based on a research gap in existing research on higher music education. This premise is questioned in Article 1, resulting in new findings and a discussion of their implications. At this point, I had initially planned to write a discourse-theoretical thesis. Due to the amount of research on higher music education that discusses student-centred teaching (albeit sometimes implicitly), the thesis was meant to provide a critical lens of this cultural shift by employing discourse theory. However, the findings from Article 1 illuminated another research gap, namely that students and teachers in higher music education might resist this cultural shift due to its inherent pitfalls. Yet discourse theory could not fully explain the mechanisms behind the changing power dynamics, nor how institutional resistance has surfaced in higher music education. Thus, I built on this emerging research gap from Article 1 and employed the theoretical framework that could offer the most insight into this matter by delving into organisational institutionalism in Article 2 and Article 3.

As noted, the abductive analysis undertaken for this thesis is based on Peirce's *semiotic triad* (4.1). Inspired by the notion of *spiralling semiotics* (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 29), the three articles are built on top of each other, as exemplified in *Figure 1*. Each triangle has been given four letters. The bold A1, A2 and A3 indicate which article the triangle represents. The remaining letters symbolise the *signifier* ('S'), the *object* ('O'), and the *interpretant* ('I') in the triad. The *object* equals the article's object of examination, signified by the *signifier* (e.g. 'student-centredness' signifies a 'cultural shift in teaching methods'). Each article uncovered new research gaps within the findings, which then led to the *signifier* for the next article, as illustrated in *Figure 1*.

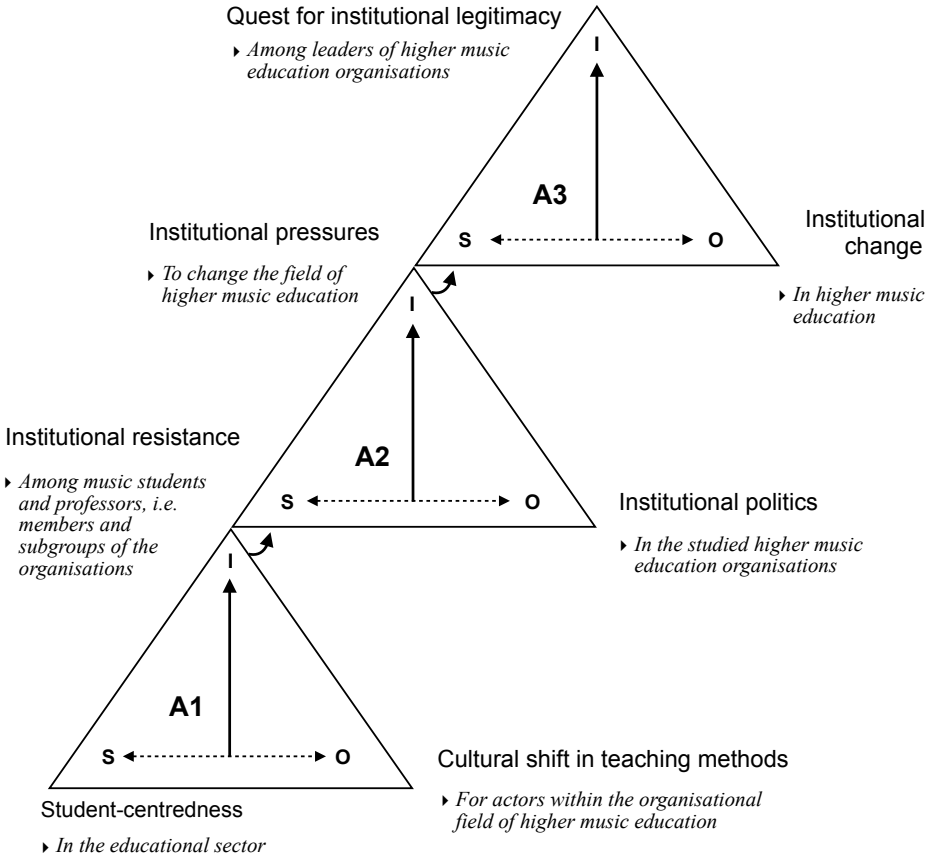

Figure 1. Spiralling Articles

The *abductive analysis* occurred in this push/pull relationship between empirical data and theoretical analysis. Because the articles were written at different points in time, the evolution of the thesis was also affected by changes in the field. The undertaken abductive analysis offered a trajectory of the organic interplay between observation (e.g. fieldwork, empirical data, intertextuality with other research) and inference (analyses, the findings from each article). However, the relationship between the *signifier* and the *object* can be understood in a variety of ways (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014) and was therefore shaped by this research project specifically. In other words, the *interpretants* of the three articles were constructed by me, the researcher, through interpretation, a 'transformation that the interpreter undergoes while making sense of a sign' during the abductive analysis (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 23). For the sake of transparency, I will explain this process in detail.

Article 1 was built on a research gap drawn from existing literature on higher music education: student-centredness was conceived as ambiguous yet widely encouraged by music scholars (2.2.1). When condensed, this gap reads as follows:

> If student-centredness is ambiguous yet widely encouraged in the field, how do different music students and professors experience this cultural shift?

After writing and submitting Article 1 during the spring semester of 2021, another research gap was identified within the article's findings: resistance to institutional change. Building on how student-centredness (the *signifier* of the *object* in Article 1) was found to cause institutional resistance,[31] this finding became the *signifier* for Article 2, drawn from its position as the *interpretant* of Article 1. This choice of interpretant was a deliberate decision.[32] I had originally planned for a discourse-theoretical thesis, and the two subsequent articles were intended to identify discourses on the two remainding cultural shifts targeted by the study, namely the concepts of entrepreneurship (2.2.2) and innovation (2.2.3). However, I found that discourse theory (3.1) could not fully explain how relationships of power unfolded in the interplay among subject, institution, and institutional context. Organisational institutionalism (3.2), on the other hand, offered many frameworks for institutional analysis. Thus, I selected the *signifier* that would allow me to delve into the institutional politics framework (3.2.2) to examine how institutional change was constituted in higher music education. Hence, the *object* of examination for Article 2 was institutional politics, *signified* by the identified resistance–the *interpretant* ('I')–from Article 1.

The carefully selected research gap from the findings of Article 1 turned into the *signifier* for Article 2, and a similar process was repeated for Article 3. Whereas Article 1 had been concerned with the discursive landscape of higher music education on a macro level (actors within the organisational field of higher music education), Article 2 was more concerned with the two studied organisations and how they were affected by institutional structures. When condensed, the selected research gap from the findings of Article 1 reads as follows:

> If there is resistance to institutional change in higher music education, how do different music performance students and professors experience it? Moreover, how do such experiences shape higher music education organisations?

31 Disclaimer: as accounted for in 5.1, student-centredness was also found to be embraced by many of the informants (see Ski-Berg, 2022).

32 For example, other *interpretants* could have been one (or several) of the identified discourses or tensions in Article 1, then employed as the *signifier* for Article 2.

Article 2 was written during the autumn semester of 2021, analysing the same data as Article 1 (that is, twenty-four informant interviews) to construct new findings. The findings from Article 2 revealed, among other discoveries, that the two studied organisations appeared to be under pressure to change. This result–the *interpretant* from Article 2–was the most applicable *signifier* for Article 3 for several reasons: relevant literature on higher music education shared similar findings (that higher music education organisations are under pressure to change); the same empirical data (as in Article 1 and Article 2) could be analysed with the framework of institutional pressures (3.2.1); this framework was novel in music education research and could contribute to the field in a meaningful way; and, finally, all three cultural shifts in this study (2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3) could be investigated by employing this new framework. Thus, another carefully selected research gap drawn from the article findings (of Article 2) became the *signifier* for the new article (Article 3):

> If institutional change is perceived as ambiguous by the informants and there is institutional resistance to change in their organisation, then how (and why) are higher music education organisations being pressured to change? Furthermore, how do organisations respond to such pressures?

Notably, the *institutional levels* targeted in the three articles emerged from this ongoing process of abductive analysis. The comparative case study had already targeted several *subgroups* in higher music education (e.g. *student* and *teacher*; *classical* and *genre independent*; *Norwegian* music academy and *Dutch* conservatorium). However, the institutional levels discussed in the three articles were first drawn from the analytical tools selected deliberately during the abductive analysis to examine the identified research gaps within each article's findings.

Were the triads to continue to spiral, the next object of examination for a fourth article could have been to investigate the quest for institutional legitimacy among leaders in higher music education. For example, this *signifier* could have been paired with the framework of *organisational responses* (Oliver, 1991), but I did not have the time available at this point. Article 3 was written during the spring semester of 2022, and the thesis was completed that summer. This synthesis forms the backdrop for the entire thesis, and the next chapter will discuss the main findings from the three articles in a more nuanced and in-depth manner.

6 Discussion

This chapter discusses the synthesis of the articles and their main findings. For this purpose, three overarching categories are presented, introducing eleven main findings that are briefly listed and explained. Nuances within the findings and their theoretical angles are also briefly discussed in relation to other research on higher music education. The concept of power is one focus, as it presents nuances from different theoretical perspectives. Accordingly, the chapter also concerns the institutional levels examined in this study and the role that such levels serve when discussed in research on higher music education. The delimitations of the thesis are also discussed, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the study. Finally, the synthesis of the articles is reviewed through the lens of the three overarching findings categories. These are connected to important implications and to relevant research, resulting in an in-depth discussion of the thesis where institutional politics concerning student creativity serves as its centrepiece.

6.1 Significant findings

This thesis includes several theoretical perspectives and has addressed a variety of institutional levels and subgroups of members within higher music education. Nevertheless, the three resulting articles share many similar findings. This section will account for the shared findings and link these to the relevant secondary literature on higher music education. In particular, three overarching categories have been identified based on the findings' theoretical foundation:

1. *The pitfalls of decentring authorities*: Presents three key findings from the analysis of the interview transcripts with Foucauldian theory on discourse (3.1.1) and power (3.1.2). The findings concern the changing power relationship between students and professors in higher music education, presented in Article 1 and Article 2.

2. *Experiences with institutional change*: Presents four key findings from the qualitative method more generally. These findings are drawn from the informant interviews and concern the comparative levels between the different target groups in the study. Presented in all articles, but mainly Article 2.

3. *Institutional power and leadership*: Presents four key findings from comparing primary (that is, interview transcripts) and secondary data (that is, strategic plans). The analysis

of these findings was further elaborated with central concepts and frameworks from organisational institutionalism (3.2). Presented in all articles, but mainly Article 3.

In alignment with the evolution of this thesis (5.4), the three categories also offer a chronological presentation of the main findings. However, the discussion of these findings was written in the aftermath of the articles and will therefore include more recent research on higher music education than some of the article discussions. The following three subsections discuss each findings category on its own merits, leading up to the main discussion in section 6.3.

6.1.1 The pitfalls of decentring authorities

Foremost, the findings that are discussed in this first category confirm some of the pitfalls that have already been shared in other research on music education. Even so, these pitfalls need to be addressed critically and are seldom discussed comprehensively. *Table 2* presents the three findings, their article affiliation, and their implications for higher music education.

No.	Pitfalls of decentring authorities	Article	Implications
1	Power relationships will also exist in student-centred environments. The responsibility for the changing power dynamics could be put unfairly on music students.	Article 1; Article 2	Critical discussion is needed if authorities are decentred.
2	A new 'normal' subject (for music performance students and professors) and authoritative constructs (in the form of new teaching styles) could be constituted by recent cultural shifts (e.g. the shift towards student-centredness; the call for innovation) where new disciplinary practices are employed.	Article 1; Article 2	New disciplinary practices require critical thinking if they are to deliberately promote a cultural shift in higher music education.
3	The subject positions of music students and professors appear to be 'in flux', which could constitute a contradictory discursive landscape in higher music education.	Article 1; Article 2	Music students and professors may need added support, as this confusing landscape can cause internal tension.

Table 2. Main Findings (1–3)

These findings are presented as theoretical claims in the article discussions. However, several of the informants in this study argued that students may be burdened with too much freedom in their educational journey.[33] One of the Norwegian professors in classical music stated that 'we have seen in student feedbacks that some students think it's too much responsibility, that they want more guidance and become confused when the teacher only asks questions' (NMH-PC3, Article 3). This shift may, in turn, be demanding for teachers. In the genre independent

33 Due to the delimitations of the article format, I could not include all of the rich material from the empirical data behind this thesis (explained further in 6.2.1).

Musician 3.0 programme, one of the professors stated that it could be 'quite hard actually to find the right teachers' (HKU-PM3, Article 2). However, this pitfall concerns not only learning outcomes for students and available teaching resources but the responsibility for institutional change. For instance, the perpetuation of social inequities through musical canons (e.g. Green, 2012, 2008) must be thoughtfully addressed if (higher) music education is to counter this issue. Even though students today are more interested in leadership for a sustainable future than previous generations (O'Neill, 2019), how much responsibility is (and should be) put on students for cultural shifts to unfold? Moreover, as power relationships transform, to what extent will teachers and administrators avoid such responsibility?

Building on the Foucauldian notion that power relationships will always exist, the subsequent pitfall concerns which new authorities will emerge when higher music education organisations attempt to decentre the student-teacher relationship. Tuovinen (2018, p. 71) asserts that institutions should 'critically view how the "student" is constructed within the institutional culture, and what the potential obstacles for individuals are to complying with the norms'. Indeed, because the shift towards student-centredness is transforming power relationships, a new 'authoritarian construct' where 'a certain type of student profile' is promoted could be constituted (Tuovinen, 2018, p. 71). Indeed, students and professors are moved towards a 'normal' subject; that is, they attempt to meet the social expectations that are enforced upon them by disciplinary practices (e.g. exam criteria).

Similarly, in a study on law school rankings, sociologists Sauder and Espeland (2009, p. 79) assert that 'processes of normalization and surveillance change how members make sense of their organizations, their work, and their relations to peers'. By combining Foucauldian theory and organisational institutionalism, the authors explain how organisational members internalise school rankings over time. By the same token, music students and professors adapt to new expectations from the field, often as disciplined actors who internalise new requirements from authority figures or authoritative constructs.

Finally, the third pitfall is the outcome of an increasingly complex discursive landscape caused by institutional changes in higher music education. For what happens when music students and professors internalise different or seemingly opposing requirements due to processes of change? Importantly, this concerns the health of institutional members.[34] While studies on higher music education have focused increasingly on music performance anxiety (e.g. Nielsen et al., 2018) and the workload of music students (e.g. Jääskeläinen et al., 2020), little attention has been given to how students and professors experience their roles as institutional members

34 This could also have implications for the organisation. Institutions are at their most fragile 'when people no longer feel what institutions prescribe them to feel' (Lok et al., 2017, p. 592), as discussed in Chapter 3.

during periods of change and how it affects them personally. In this study, internal tensions that result from institutional change was mentioned implicitly in several of the informant interviews (e.g. 'mixed feelings', NMH-SF1, Article 2; 'scary project', NMH-PF1, Article 2; 'not everyone wants it', HKU-SC1, Article 1; 'that's what I miss a lot', HKU-SC3; Article 2). This third main finding indicates that students and professors may be(come) confused about what is expected of them during times of change, as their subject positions appear to be in flux (Ski-Berg, 2022).

6.1.2 Experiences with institutional change

The next four findings are drawn from the experiences of the twenty-four participating music performance students and professors who were affiliated with classical and genre independent study programmes in Norway and in the Netherlands. *Table 3* describes these four findings, their article affiliation, and their implications for higher music education.

No.	Experiences with institutional change	Article	Implications
4	Career courses are experienced by music performance students as outdated, another facet of the conservatism in higher music education.	Article 2	Career courses need to be updated and better communicated to students.
5	Institutional change in higher music education is enmeshed with institutional politics: students and professors partake in the institutional work that constitutes processes of change (e.g. lobbying for new study programmes).	Article 2	An awareness of institutional politics may help scholars explain and leaders navigate institutional change in higher music education.
6	The Dutch informants appeared to be more open to institutional change than the Norwegian informants.	Article 2; Article 3	Organisations may respond differently to institutional pressures to change. Context and time could play a role.
7	Both music performance students and professors in classical and genre independent study programmes desire a balance between conservation and creation of new content and methods in higher music education.	Article 1; Article 2; Article 3	1) Institutional change requires a balancing act between new and old content/methods. 2) Students subject themselves willingly to institutional knowledge.

Table 3. Main Findings (4–7)

Importantly, the existence of new content and methods in higher music education organisations does not guarantee that renewal is occurring. When such elements are institutionalised, hierarchies emerge that music students and professors will internalise over time. The fourth main finding concerns this mechanism, for student informants considered career courses yet another part of the 'reproducing' status quo of higher music education. It is suggested in

Article 2 that there could be some resistance to neoliberal terms, and professors who employ them may communicate better with students if the emphasis shifts to the social impact of the music performer (as suggested in Angelo et al., 2019). Moreover, the remark that career courses were 'outdated' (NMH-SC2, Article 2) indicates a need to update the content.[35] However, replacing the content may not offer salvation. As Christophersen (2016, p. 80) suggests in a chapter on the dynamics of power within collaborative learning, new methods are not devoid of hierarchies and 'may leave little room for change in some situations, functioning instead as vehicles for maintaining the status quo' (in this example collaborative music-making, where collaborative students might become favoured over independent or rebellious students). Indeed, new disciplinary practices must be introduced with attention to the transformation of hierarchies to provide institutional renewal.

The following findings also offer theoretical implications. The fact that processes of change can be constituted by institutional politics suggests that it is not only at the level of leadership that organisations are formed. In fact, both students and professors can be disruptive actors who, individually or collectively, 'create, transform, maintain and disrupt' their organisation (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 480). For anonymisation, I have not included specific examples of how the informants have constituted change within their organisation (e.g. leaders of study programmes, festival founders, student representatives). However, research on institutional change in higher music education would be remiss not to examine how the institutional work of students and professors constitutes institutional change. The acknowledgment that these institutional groups play a valuable role during processes of change has also been asserted by other scholars in recent decades (e.g. Gaunt et al., 2021; Angelo et al., 2019; Minors et al., 2017; Haddon & Burnard, 2015; Johansson, 2012). As for the sixth finding–why the Dutch informants seemed more open to change than their Norwegian counterparts, it could be due to their organisational culture (including their strategic plan) or national context (see e.g. Kleppe, 2016), as discussed in Article 3. This finding is offered but not stated conclusively.

Finally, the implication of the seventh main finding is twofold: firstly, nearly all informants explicitly stated that higher music education needs to develop a balance between the conservation of musical traditions and the creation of new content and methods, musical and otherwise. As a comparative study, this is an interesting finding because both classical and genre independent informants appeared to seek equilibrium. As stated in Article 1, classical informants (who were used to conservative musical traditions) 'desired more artistic freedom', whereas the genre independent informants 'emphasised the crucial role of boundary-setting' (Ski-Berg, 2022, p. 38). Secondly, this finding makes sense considering that students tend to

35 A recent study on Finnish composers reported a similar finding, that the realities of composers' livelihood are recognised as a missing area in professional education (Westerlund & López-Íñiguez, in press).

willingly subject themselves to the dominant discourses of higher music education to learn (e.g. Yau, 2019; Nerland, 2007). In both Foucauldian theory and organisational institutionalism, familiarity with institutional knowledge provides music students and professors with a sense of belonging (that is, discursive familiarity, field membership). However, various subgroups of higher music education are often contrasted with one another in research (e.g. classical musicians are conservative, whereas jazz musicians are creative).[36] Thus, this seventh finding offers more nuance to such comparisons, given that *all* students and professors in higher music education must balance new and old institutional knowledge as field members.

6.1.3 Institutional power and leadership

The final four main findings concern the interplay between the institutional levels presented thus far. Drawn from the comparison of informant interviews and the organisations' strategic plans, these findings illustrate how the field of higher music education is transforming, how organisations may be responding, and how the informants reacted to organisational responses to pressures. *Table 4* describes the last four findings, their article affiliation, and their implications for the field of higher music education.

No.	Institutional power and leadership	Article	Implications
8	Leadership in higher music education organisations may say one thing but do another (e.g. innovation as a 'façade' or 'accessory').	Article 2; Article 3	This could suggest that *decoupling* is taking place in higher music education.
9	Different institutional pressures from the field constitute different institutional changes in higher music education (e.g. coercion of neoliberal terms; mimicking other organisations by employing new teaching methods).	Article 3	An awareness of such pressures could help scholars explain and leadership navigate change in higher music education.
10	Overall, there is normative pressure from the field to radically change higher music education, and the studied organisations respond to this pressure.	Article 3	1) There is pressure to change higher music education to protect the survival of the profession(s); 2) Organisations are chasing legitimacy in the field.
11	Institutional resistance to change may be informative for higher music education administrators, allowing for more nuance and balance during processes of institutional change.	Article 1; Article 2; Article 3	Research on processes of change in higher music education ought to be conducted, as this could provide administrators and educators with valuable data.

Table 4. Main Findings (8–11)

36 References regarding differences across affiliations mentioned in research were accounted for in Chapter 2 (see e.g. Bull & Scharff, 2021; Leech-Wilkinson, 2016; González-Moreno, 2014; Clarke, 2011; Frith, 2011; Jørgensen, 2009).

The eight main finding hints at the notion of *decoupling* (3.2.3). In particular, the Norwegian professors seemed frustrated with their organisation because the music academy 'accessorised' with the concept of innovation (NMH-PC1, Article 2), leading to a 'façade' (NMH-PF3, Article 2). More examples can be drawn from the comparison between the strategic plans and the informants' experiences. For instance, one of the Norwegian students asked, 'why don't we educate students to become freelancers?' (NMH-SC1, Article 3), whereas the strategic plan claimed that 'students who are about to enter working life have acquired good qualifications' (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2022b). Because most Norwegian musicians will need freelancing skills in their professional careers (e.g. Røyseng et al., 2022), this discrepancy is worrisome.

However, institutional change can surface from organisational strategies. For decoupling to occur, there must be a *deliberate* disconnection between the organisational structures that enhance legitimacy and the practices that are believed to be technically efficient for the organisation (e.g. administrators must explicitly claim that graduates are prepared for the changing labour market in the strategic plan while simultaneously not prioritising career courses due to, for instance, resistance from members). Moreover, what was once decoupled can eventually become coupled through strategic work for institutional change. Hence, the identified discrepancies do not necessarily equate to decoupling.

Notably, organisations must respond to institutional pressures to secure their survival in the field. Thus, the most significant contribution of this thesis is perhaps the identification of how institutional change (also referred to as cultural shifts and contested practices) is caused by various pressures from the field. This ninth main finding is crucial because it illustrates the value of frameworks from organisational institutionalism. For instance, while it is acknowledged that arts and commerce tend to present opposing values and discourses (e.g. Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Angelo et al., 2019; Moore, 2016), such tension could also be the result of governmental pressure to implement market terminology in higher music education.[37] Informants from the Norwegian music academy, which was publicly funded and coerced (by governmental demands) into implementing career courses, displayed more resistance to the concept of entrepreneurship than the Dutch informants who were affiliated with a privately funded conservatorium that had strategically moulded the concept to fit their needs (e.g. from Article 3: 'it is a difficult term', NMH-PC2; 'we call it dynamic artistry', HKU-PM2). Furthermore, the notion of institutional pressures may explain why there is more resistance toward entrepreneurship and innovation than toward student-centredness, which has been widely encouraged yet also conflicts with institutional norms for some subgroups in higher music education (2.2.1).

37 Indeed, institutional resistance (and even *decoupling*) is common whenever an organisation is coerced (e.g. due to resource dependency) into taking a specific action (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017).

The tenth main finding is also connected to pressures from the field to change higher music education. Throughout this thesis, scholarly acknowledgements that higher music education organisations are 'undergoing substantial changes' (e.g. Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020, p. 246; see also Schmidt, 2019; Burnard & Haddon, 2015; Johansson, 2012; Bennett, 2012; Jørgensen, 2009; to name a few) have been presented. This thesis partly builds on these repeated claims as the backdrop for investigating institutional change. However, the study has identified this pressure from the field as *normative*. As one of the informants put it, 'we have to change, we have to innovate, we have to do different things, otherwise our jobs, our culture, our playing music are dying' (HKU-PC1, Article 2). This claim echoes Jørgensen's (2009, p. 9) statement that higher music education organisations have been told to '"change or you don't survive!"'. Overall, the skills gap/paradox (i.e. the discrepancy between current educational policies and the reality of a changing labour market) has led to this normative pressure, in which higher music education organisations are pressured to re-evaluate the mandates of a shared institution (e.g. Gaunt et al., 2021; Angelo et al., 2019; Burnard & Haddon, 2015; Johansson, 2012; to mention a few) for the sake of the music profession(s).

The tenth main finding is not only concerned with the identification of normative pressure but how organisations choose to respond. For instance, the studied organisations affirmed the normative pressure with their current strategic plans (e.g. 'students are involved in what is happening in society', HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, 2019; awareness of 'current trends and developmental features in society', Norwegian Academy of Music, 2022b). Another response is AEC's strategic plan, where the need to support students as they transition into their professional careers was addressed (e.g. 'to prepare students for their future roles as musicians', European Association of Conservatoires, 2016, p. 3; in Article 3). Altogether, these examples suggest that higher music education organisations are chasing institutional legitimacy to secure their survival, which may have ramifications for institutional members who are forced to partake in institutional change.

Thus, the final finding informs the identified quests for survival: during processes of change, institutional resistance within organisations may inform administrators of the pitfalls of recent cultural shifts or offer more nuance to contested practices. As found in Article 1, student-centredness is not an antidote to transmissive teaching but, rather, offers more nuance to what is already student-centred in many ways (Ski-Berg, 2022).

6.2 Nuances to be addressed

Now that the main findings have been listed, I will briefly discuss missing nuances and why they are not included in the in-depth discussion (6.3). This section is thus dedicated to the important disclaimers that lie dormant within this chapter:

- What methodological and theoretical delimitations have been made, and how does this affect the discussion of the findings?

- Why is the concept of *power* not discussed more in-depth, given that it relates to several theoretical perspectives? What is there to understand about the different ways of approaching power in this thesis and relevant research?

- How do the different institutional levels discussed in the articles affect the ultimate analysis of the thesis? How are such levels discussed in other research?

Finally, the section ends with an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis as a whole, as this has affected how the findings are discussed in the last section (6.3).

6.2.1 Delimitations of the thesis

Any research project is, by its nature, delimited. This specific PhD project has taken place over a time period of four years (2018 to 2022), and the case study was conducted alone. Many decisions have been made to secure the progression and completion of the thesis, some of which concerned methodological considerations and others the abductive analysis which inspiried the articles. Therefore, a few remarks on the delimitations: firstly, the study has only investigated parts of two higher music education organisations. Though the case study includes twenty-four informants (which is a large number of informants in qualitative music education research), the target groups still only offer a small sample of three informants each (4.3.1), resulting in comparisons that could be considered weak had they not resonated across the organisations. Moreover, the informant interviews have informed the case study with rich empirical data to such an extent that three compact articles could not include all the material. Writing an article-based thesis over a monograph is another delimitation that will affect the discussion of the material, as the word count is far more limited.

Secondly, the span of theoretical perspectives in this thesis is broad and offers many points to be discussed, some of which have been removed due to a lack of space. Simply put, there are not enough words available to fully discuss all of the implications found within the data,

partly because of the rich data extracted from the undertaken fieldwork and partly because more than one theoretical angle provides many tools for analysing the material, which also requires discussion. Thus, I have chosen to sort the eleven main findings into three overarching categories (as presented in 6.1) based on the analytical tools employed to extract them. In the resulting discussion (6.3), the categories are not discussed individually; instead, a synthesis of how they connect and what they implicate for the field of higher music education is provided. This macro perspective is inspiried by the frameworks employed to analyse informants' experiences. However, on this macro level, I recognise that other cultural shifts could have been investigated (e.g. processes of digitalisation or social change) as part of this thesis. Moreover, the leaders of higher music education organisations could also have been included as informants.

Most of the delimitations already mentioned result from practicalities such as the time available, the accessibility to informants and the appropriate word count for the thesis. Other delimitations concerned ethical considerations. For instance, had I chosen to interview institutional leaders or to investigate social movements, added anonymisation would have been needed (e.g. removing the names of the studied organisations). Perhaps the focus of the thesis would have been more on hegemonic structures than on institutional politics, which would be unfortunate considering that organisational institutionalism is a central attribute of this thesis. It was also timely in 2019 for higher music education organisations to be 'innovative' and to promote student-centredness in their strategic plans, as was it to compare the experiences of music performance students and professors.

Notably, this thesis brings new theoretical perspectives to light in research on higher music education, which brings me to the final theoretical delimitations. Through the process of abductive analysis (5.4), theoretical frameworks were deliberately chosen to provide the analytical tools to examine identified research gaps. The remaining theoretical foundations for this thesis have thus been chosen primarily for the purpose of intertextuality (e.g. *innovation*) and coherence (e.g. *power*), as discussed in the next subsection.

6.2.2 Power and the field of higher music education

Whenever music scholars discuss *power* and music education, it is often concerning *ideological* (e.g. Leech-Wilkinson, 2016; Allsup, 2015; Green, 2008) or *discursive* forces (e.g. Bull & Scharff, 2021; Angelo et al., 2019; Ellefsen & Karlsen, 2019; Minors et al., 2017; Nerland, 2007), sometimes both (e.g. Vestad, 2014). I have noted that this thesis falls into a 'Norwegian tradition' of discourse-oriented research (3.1; as presented in Rolle et al., 2017, p. 158) because it combines epistemologically directed poststructuralist theory with ethnographic methodologies.

The decision to employ Foucauldian theory for this qualitative study was not only a matter of intertextuality but of scope, as this theory could provide a macro perspective on the shift towards student-centredness. Indeed, scholars employ the most applicable theory for the study at hand. Though Foucauldian theory has been employed by Norwegian scholars in research on music education (e.g. Angelo et al., 2019; Ellefsen & Karlsen, 2019; Ellefsen, 2014; Nerland, 2007, 2004), Bourdieusian theory is also commonly employed (e.g. Jordhus-Lier et al., 2021; Dyndahl et al., 2017; Christophersen, 2016). The interchange of theoretical perspectives affects how the concept of *power* is transferred from one study to another, including this thesis. On that note, few music scholars have employed institutional theory.

Ideological thinking has been referred to a few times throughout this thesis in reference to other studies. However, the terms *ideology* and *discourse* must not be conflated, and the concept of *power* must be further clarified when drawn from different theoretical realms. Foucault (1972/2010, p. 38) deemed the term 'ideology' as 'inadequate to the task of designating such a dispersion' (of discourse) and introduced his theory on the *discursive formation* to avoid such 'words that are already overladen with conditions and consequences'. Bourdieu (1993, p. 37), on the other hand, refers to the 'ideology of "re-creation"', which permeates the educational system at large. In music education research, ideological thinking could be associated with the *ideology of aesthetic autonomy* (perpetuated by the classical canon), presented by Green (2008, p. 2), who defined the term 'ideology' as a 'collective mental force which both springs from, and perpetuates our material social relations'. Other scholars have referred to similar 'forces' as the 'singular and individualist discourses which define musical creativity' (Haddon & Burnard, 2015, p. 262) or as 'classical music's ideological bubble' (Leech-Wilkinson, 2016, p. 326). Even when such 'forces' are connected to the same phenomenon, they are addressed with different theories and may sometimes be conflated in research on music education (as found in Rolle et al., 2017).

Found throughout these references is the idea that power is rooted in the social nexus, thereby aligning with Foucauldian theory (3.1.3). Building on Bourdieusian theory, Christophersen (2016, p. 82) describes how power may be present 'as a subtle regulation of individual behaviour in accordance with social conventions and expectations'. Perhaps the most crucial distinction in terms of *power* is that Foucault (1994/2020) considered it to be a productive force that (through discourses) constitutes the *subject* (3.2.2). Following the abductive analysis (5.4), I combined this theory with the concept of *institutional politics* after finishing the first article. However, it is common in organisational institutionalism to include Bourdieusian theory because of the conceptualisation of *fields* (e.g. Wooten & Hoffman, 2017; Hinings et al., 2017; Powell & Rerup, 2017). Thus, it is necessary to distinguish between the *cultural field* (Bourdieu, 1993) and the *organisational field* (e.g. Wooten & Hoffman, 2017): the former refers to the

field of cultural production in society (e.g. cultural actors), and the latter refers to an analytical entity. Whenever I refer to the 'field of higher music education', I mean the organisational field constituted by various higher music education organisations. This field also interacts with other fields in society (see e.g. Burnard & Haddon, 2015), causing a nested context.[38]

All this is to say that the force of *power* (which is socially negotiated) and *fields* (which are constituted by various actors) are relevant to the discussion of the findings from this study, yet such notions may easily be conflated even though they typically present divergent theoretical angles from which data has been extracted. As this thesis enters the literature on higher music education, please be aware of the distinctions outlined in this subsection.

6.2.3 Institutional levels in music education research

Another element that is often conflated in research is the institutional levels that are presented and discussed within studies. For instance, instrumental teaching may be examined by conducting qualitative interviews with teachers and students or observing their instrumental lessons, or by conducting quantitative surveys of these groups or a meta-analysis of study plans. These are vastly different methodological approaches to investigating higher music education, yet the findings from different studies may offer similar implications. Hence, nuances may be lost when a study is cited in other research, even though all studies must individually account for their methodological decision-making. Scholars sometimes compare studies that differ in the number of informants, the informants' instrument groups or selected programmes, or national and organisational contexts. When combined, these divergent case studies constitute a larger picture. By the same token, research projects that result in several articles function similarly. Even so, the distinction between institutional levels matters because subgroups of higher music education affect and constitute institutional change (as found in main finding five, 6.1.2).

To that end, it ought to be mentioned that this case study included a comparative level by comparing the Norwegian Academy of Music to the Utrechts Conservatorium. Though these two organisations were studied due to their recently implemented genre independent bachelor study programmes in music performance (i.e. *FRIKA* and *Musician 3.0*), this comparative level also adds a national dimension to the case study. Indeed, the former is positioned within the

38 For instance, the *musical field* is often mentioned in music education research to address the music industry, but other fields are also discussed: Burnard (2019) argues that *virtual fields* (e.g. social media, streaming services) are relevant for musicians today, and Burnard and Haddon (2015) discuss the *fields of power* that members of higher music education must interact with in society (e.g. field of commerce). Whenever the *field* is mentioned in this thesis, however, it references 'the field of higher music education' as an institutional term (as accounted for in Chapter 3). The only exceptions are found within direct quotations.

'social-democratic welfare state' of Norway, whereas the latter is positioned in the 'hybrid state' of the Netherlands with 'liberal, conservative and social democratic characteristics' (Kleppe, 2016, p. 390). However, I made the deliberate decision not to discuss their cultural heritage in-depth. I could, for instance, have employed Esping-Andersen's (1990) schematic models of welfare regimes to shed light on how the national context of the studied organisations affects the examined cultural shifts (2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3). Due to the limited scope of the thesis, I chose to focus on the field (higher music education in Northern Europe) as a whole, represented by the two studied organisations. Nevertheless, the context of the organisations did show up in the findings (as evidenced in Article 2 and Article 3) and was consequently discussed briefly.

Despite the inherent comparative levels of the case study (described in 4.2), the three resulting articles have targeted different institutional levels based on the analytical tools employed. In Chapter 5, *Table 1* (see 5.4) illustrates these institutional levels: 'Actors within the organisational field' in Article 1, examined through informant interviews; 'Subgroups and members of the organisations' in Article 2, examined through informant interviews and the web pages of the organisations; and 'Organisational' and 'the organisational field' in Article 3, examined through informant interviews and strategic plans. Furthermore, the main findings from the articles have been synthesised into three overarching categories that present their implications more than the nuances. Though some of the findings were bound to the analysis of specific levels (e.g. main finding nine, *Table 3*, see 6.1.3), most of the main results were found to surpass the targeted institutional levels. Thus, the discussion (6.4) treats the findings as shared implications from the articles. I will also discuss implications from other studies (as opposed to nuances) and consider how the field of higher music education may benefit from addressing this unveiled institutional landscape.

6.2.4 Strengths and weaknesses of the study

Finally, I would like to state that this research project introduces some new and important findings to the field of higher music education. Nevertheless, as noted in the delimitations of this thesis (6.2.1), the study also possesses some flaws. It may be considered a large qualitative study (i.e. twenty-four informants and the strategic plans from two higher music education organisations). However, given that only two sectors of these organisations (i.e. classical and genre independent study programmes) have been investigated, this is not a lot of empirical data for an institutional analysis. The abductive analysis (5.4) provided the study with new analytical tools, but the empirical data remained the same throughout the project. Consequently, I must stress that this study has not identified any *decoupling* (3.2.3) in higher music education organisations. Rather, it is suggested in Article 3 that it would be interesting to look further into this matter in future projects, as the findings from this study indicate a divergence

between the levels of students/teachers and leadership (as presented in main finding 8, *Table 4*, see 6.1.3). Delving into new theories in the middle of the project period was illuminating. However, the full potential of organisational institutionalism has not nearly been covered.

Another weakness of the study is that the undertaken case study investigated cultural shifts from 2019 (see 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3), which may soon be outdated because the field changes continuously.[39] As the study progressed, so did the object of examination: from being about a cultural shift in Article 1 (the shift towards *student-centredness*) to the *institutional politics* experienced by the informants in Article 2, and finally to a new theory concerning *institutional change* in Article 3. This transformation has been deliberate, for organisational institutionalism is a valuable contribution to the field. Even so, the thesis now includes a sizeable qualitative case study and a broad theoretical scope, neither of which can be discussed in full. Thus, the coherence that this thesis still manages to present is evidence of its strength.

In this broad study, the resulting findings categories (6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3) have been derived from three very different articles, identified across several institutional levels from two separate higher music education organisations, and resonate with other research on higher music education. Though the study possesses some flaws, the resulting articles and their synthesis (as presented in 5.4 and throughout this chapter) provide the field of higher music education with valuable information about institutional changes. Moreover, the potential for further employment of organisational institutionalism is vast. The following section discusses its implications, building on a synthesis of the main findings and accounting for why they are essential for the future of the field.

6.3 Institutional politics for student creativity

Ultimately, the three cultural shifts targeted in this thesis illustrate that higher music education organisations are chasing institutional legitimacy in the field. The struggle for legitimacy can also be emphasised in institutional politics (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017), indicating close interrelations among the field, the organisations and the institutional members. In this final section, I will discuss the normative pressure to change higher music education by turning to the institutional politics that have surfaced in tandem with what I refer to as *the rise of student creativity*. Synthesising the cultural shifts and the main findings from this study, the resulting

39 As the project ended in 2022, nearly four years after it began, these cultural shifts continued to surface as repeated themes discussed at music education conferences globally. Even so, the thesis's value lies in its chosen theoretical approach, as the findings may be transferable also to future cultural shifts in higher music education.

discussion draws a line between the changing power dynamics within higher music education, overarching societal developments and pressures for institutional renewal. Together, these areas constitute (among other things) a growing focus on enabling creativity among music students. This trajectory is the focal point of the next subsections.

6.3.1 Reforming relationships: A discursive shift?

The shift towards student-centredness has several implications for higher music education, both practically and theoretically. As accounted for in Article 1 (see 5.1; Ski-Berg, 2022), this cultural shift challenges dominant discourses. Higher music education has tended to perpetuate a Romantic view of creativity, commonly associated with the myth of the genius artist (Burnard & Haddon, 2015), and a master/apprentice teaching model in instrumental lessons (Yau, 2019), that is now under renegotiation (e.g. Sætre & Zhukov, 2021; Brinck & Anderskov, 2019; Allsup, 2015; González-Moreno, 2014). This institutional change is (at least in part) constituted by internal politics within higher music education organisations (as presented in Article 2; main finding 5) that are responding to *mimetic* pressure from the field (as presented in Article 3; main finding 9). Both students and professors appear to be driving the shift towards student-centredness (e.g. Zhukov & Sætre, 2021; van Els, 2019; Brinck & Anderskov, 2019; Gilbert, 2016), and new study programmes and collaborative projects reaffirm this turn (e.g. REACT, 2022; RENEW, 2022; NAIP European Master of Music, 2022; Duffy, 2016). Nevertheless, while such initiatives are transforming the power dynamics within higher music education, are we *reforming* the student-teacher relationship for the sake of student creativity, or are we merely *responding* to calls for change?

The ambiguity behind the concept of *student-centredness* (e.g. Nerland, 2019; Tuovinen, 2018; see 2.2.1) could indicate that this ongoing institutional change is predominantly caused by institutional pressures. Higher education organisations appear to be mimicking student-centred activities at organisations that are seen as successful in order to maintain institutional legitimacy. Historically, the shift towards student-centredness has been affected by the cognitive turn and the rise of constructivism (Tuovinen, 2018), but the shift can also be seen in more recent demands on higher education organisations. For example, today's professional world requires graduates who can initiate and collaborate to a greater extent than before; there are increased governmental demands for monitoring the quality of educational practices, including student representatives; and there is an implicit criticism of the established learning environments in higher education, evident in 'calls for more "authentic" and explorative learning activities' and 'efforts to promote innovative learning learning and teaching practices' (Nerland, 2019, p. 56). These elements (listed by Nerland, 2019) have also been identified within the cultural

shifts targeted in this study. From a bird's-eye perspective, they have affected one another.[40] However, what is of interest to this thesis is how the rise of student creativity will affect field knowledge moving forward.

Through a constructivist lens, musical creativity is a social construct, meaning that creative expressions are created and negotiated socially and thus become institutionalised as the social practices of education (Frith, 2011). By viewing higher music education organisations as social hubs where expert communities develop musical expertise together, creative expression is no longer the result of a genial personality (as perpetuated through dominant discourses) but an emergent of attainable knowledge in the collective (Hakkarainen, 2016). While individual field experts in higher music education (e.g. instrumental teachers) can undoubtedly declare what constitutes quality (e.g. an audition committee), they must also adhere to the collective criteria that accompany disciplinary practices (e.g. audition criteria). Hence, even expert authorities must abide by the 'rules of the game' within an institution, though they may sometimes be unaware of this institutional control. Despite this governance, the status quo of higher music education is constantly negotiated through various field-configuring events (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). Festivals, masterclasses, and exam concerts serve as smaller field-configuring events that affect how members evaluate musical quality.[41] The conventions of musical performance are governed by 'fluid boundaries' between the creative and the normative (Clarke, 2011, p. 21), and as these are moulded over time, the collective rationality about what is accepted (and not) transforms.

How, then, does student creativity unfold in systemic ways? This question concerns not only the student-teacher relationship but also the disciplinary practices of higher music education. When institutionalised, student creativity is evaluated by complex social dynamics and forms of institutional power that will continue to operate in organisations once the creative expressions of music performance students are 'emancipated' from apprenticeship. In fact, learning practices that are intended to enhance student creativity (e.g. collaborative learning or co-peer mentoring) could also present some issues regarding inclusivity (or, rather, *exclusivity*). Christophersen (2016) warns that if collaborative skills are favoured over the ability to distinguish oneself from the social group, students could become less likely to pursue creative expressions that are deemed more controversial. Paradoxically, an environment implemented to support student creativity could instead foster a sense of *normative creativity*, in which student creativity is stifled once again, only now by the students themselves (as opposed to the disciplinary practices enforced by teachers). Similarly, Tuovinen (2018, p. 71) warns that

40 All three cultural shifts (2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3) appear to be concerned with student creativity (e.g. for the sake of employability, innovative artistry, or citizenship), discussed further in 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

41 In Foucauldian terms, this concept is understood as the continual transformation of *power/knowledge*, constituted through power relationships from the social nexus.

higher music education organisations should consider 'what the potential obstacles for individuals are to complying with the norms' of student-centred approaches. Indeed, all learning environments present power relationships that are constituted by the interplay of discourses.

What hierarchies, then, will be constituted once students take the lead? The emancipation of student creativity will unavoidably be built on the same power mechanisms as before (albeit from a different generation's point of view). There will still be disciplinary practices (e.g. exam criteria), social hierarchies (e.g. the status of various institutional roles) and creative hierarchies (e.g. what constitutes musical quality). This pattern is utterly unavoidable because higher music education organisations are constituted by enduring social practices that result in institutionalised hierarchies. Hence, critical conversations about these mechanisms cannot be neglected if music performance students are to develop creatively. Discursive changes have constituted new subject positions for music students and professors (as presented in Article 1), leading to a 'flux' which is demanding for members of higher music education (as presented in Article 2). Is this the symptom of a discursive shift, in which one discourse is replaced by another (e.g. from apprenticeship to mentorship)? Perhaps not,[42] and that is besides the point; the rise of student creativity is likely connected to an even more significant societal shift.

6.3.2 Social actors: The makers (and breakers) of society

The neoliberal climate of the twenty-first century appears to have given rise to a generation of music performance students that could be potential *change agents*. Indeed, these aspiring musicians are more interested in connectedness, social innovation and sustainability than generations before them (O'Neill, 2019), all of which are traits of our time. Institutional scholar John W. Meyer (2017, p. 845) states that 'in an expanding and globalizing world society, people and groups everywhere seem to be eager to be actors'. Yet *actor identity* may not necessarily match *actor capability* (Meyer, 2017). Societal calls for activism combined with a growing need for legitimation work in arts organisations (e.g. Kann-Rasmussen, 2016; Larsen, 2013) could cause higher music education organisations to embrace approaches that promote social change, even if their ability to follow through on this campaigning remains poor. This *actorhood* does not necessarily equate to *decoupling*; strategic work may evolve into institutional changes in organisations (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). Indeed, as new disciplinary practices are created (e.g. new study programmes), new norms are internalised

42 The 'creative' and versatile music student emerges throughout history: from Mendelssohn's *Leipzig Conservatoire* in the nineteenth century (Gies, 2019), to the *creative music movement* during the 1970s (Green, 2008), to the *creativity agenda* during the 2000s (Burnard, 2014).

by organisational members (Sauder & Espeland, 2009).[43] Organisations that promote social change and act upon it thereby function as social actors in society, for better or worse.

In Chapter 3, I noted that institutional theory has been affected by a significant shift in theoretical thought from realism to constructivism (Meyer, 2017), similar to how educational theory has been affected by the cognitive turn and the rise of constructivism (Tuovinen, 2018). The same can be noted about music research, where a rethinking of music history as socially constructed has taken place in recent decades (e.g. Green, 2012; Bohlman, 2001; Citron, 1990). In tandem with this scholarly landscape (which has addressed the social epistemology of the educational system for several decades), there is also increased global mobility in higher education organisations, resulting in more international students (e.g. Stevens & Shibanova, 2021; Stensaker et al., 2019). While this development has caused increased competition among organisations over student groups, it has also resulted in international collaborations (e.g. REACT, 2022; RENEW, 2022). When this international activity was challenged during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, it demonstrated that 'internationalization is still a work in progress and has so far not been accomplished in a sustainable way' (Kertz-Welzel, 2021, p. 200). Indeed, music students and musicians must currently reflect upon their role as professionals in a world affected by climate change (e.g. Vinge et al., 2022; O'Neill, 2019), another incentive towards actorhood.

Building on this overarching societal shift towards actorhood, the theoretical perspectives from organisational institutionalism give rise to some pertinent questions: do higher music education organisations intend to function as social actors? If so, why is this shift taking place at this point in history? Is it the increasing amount of intercultural projects and international students? Is it perhaps the accumulation of institutional pressures that force the field to address global issues of inequities and climate change? Or has this pressure for change been built from the inside, that is, constituted by institutional politics as organisational members lobby for 'corrective action' because they have grown more concerned with societal calls for change?[44] Regardless, leaders of higher music education organisations today are found to 'engage in politics-related maneuvers' and to 'perform complex navigations between local and global discourses' (Karlsen, 2021, p. 212). During collaborative projects between organisations, power dynamics are central because there are often 'different prerequisites for participation' (Karlsen, 2021, p. 212). The same applies to intercultural students, who can feel marginalised due to cultural or economic differences (e.g. Ford, 2021; Jääskeläinen, 2021). In Foucauldian theory (Foucault, 1972/2010), members of higher music education are always positioned

43 Article 2 (5.2) illustrates how music performance students and professors have clear ideas about what the new genre independent programmes entail.

44 Organisational hypocrisy can be hard to sustain for organisations over time, as the risk of being 'found out' is shameful and undermines institutional legitimacy (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017).

within a discursive landscape where hierarchies are engraved in (and sometimes perpetuated by) power/knowledge.

What happens, then, if students themselves reject the attempts at including 'otherness'? For many decades, a multitude of counter-canons built on the artist's gender, ethnicity, sexuality and genre has opposed and exposed 'the hegemony of the dead, white, European, heterosexual, male musical canon' (Koskoff, 1999, p. 545). Yet not all students believe that social change is their responsibility or even within their mandate as musicians (Grant, 2019). When ethnomusicologist Koskoff (1999, p. 546)–believing that 'all musics (and people) are equivalent in terms of the values, meanings, and integrity of their own contexts'–included Indian music in a lesson about Baroque music in secondary music education, her students accused her of infecting Western music with 'creeping multiculturalism'. Though this example is dated, students were dismissive because they were focused on the 'Western' critiera used in entrance exams to tertiary education. Students today may feel differently. However, many students continue to plan their musical performances 'with a careful eye on the assessment criteria' (Creech et al., 2014, p. 327), which could bode well for them, considering that playing into dominant discourses can improve their learning outcome (Nerland, 2007). Hence, disciplinary practices are powerful constructs that mediate musical and social change processes. How, then, de we establish curricula and assessment criteria?

> Obviously, what to leave in or out must become a matter of individual or institutional choice. But how to establish the standards? How to develop criteria for what and what not to teach? Must we determine if there really is something inherently better about the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven as opposed to the Second? Or if the music of Java is any more beautiful or worthy of study than that of Estonia? Or if some societies really are better than others to produce great music (that is, some people and their musics really are inherently better than others)? (Koskoff, 1999, p. 554)

This statement was made over twenty years ago but remains relevant. The increasing focus on the social epistemology of music education offers the marginalised a voice, as new approaches are more often than not intended to include and support students of all kinds. However, in apprenticeship, it is the master who decides whether the apprentice is behaving satisfactorily or not. What happens when the dominant discourses are less shaped by the authority of teachers and more influenced by students? Will we experience a student-led revolt against discrimination, or will students work tirelessly at becoming the best within their niche, even at the expense of others? Further, if students are given more authority, are they then responsible for recognising and valuing social hierarchies and differences? If music educators neglect their responsibility to expose students to different kinds of music, could not

student-centredness simply result in an early reincarnation of new 'masters'? It may very well be that music performance students want to pursue what they perceive to be unique artistic expressions, embracing unusual role models and intercultural collaborations; however, it is equally likely that the discourses they play into (to gain field membership) will create an involuntary echo chamber.

The disciplinary practices of higher music education are always coloured by the social hierarchies from which they have been constituted. Indeed, the field of higher music education has been found to present a shared 'disciplinary community' (Moberg & Georgii-Hemming, 2021, p. 37). How is this community affected by calls for institutional change? Who decides the assessment criteria, exam criteria and audition criteria? How do we define musical quality once it is acknowledged that music is socially constructed? As student creativity is on the rise, it is supposedly up to the students to decide for themselves when 'masters' collide (e.g. the teacher versus the curriculum, the composer versus the conductor, differing opinions among students, etc.). These choices have consequences, for students partake in the institutionalisation of social practice, which in turn will alter our collective rationality of music. Regardless of what or why, their chosen paths will reflect one discourse or another, and the musical canons are thereby under constant negotiation. It seems only reasonable, then, that music students should be part of these critical conversations.

6.3.3 Institutional renewal: Change or die!

It is argued that higher music education organisations need to constantly renew from within to appeal to coming generations of students (Johansson, 2012); 'it is prime time to share areas of good practice and changing ways of doing things with a firm emphasis … on the student voice' (Minors et al., 2017, p. 470). The integrity of higher music education and the development of coming leaders must be protected 'through a united voice' (Rowley et al., 2019, p. 12), it is claimed, and 'each scholar, student, or music teacher' can support 'the vision of a united, yet diverse, global music education community' (Kertz-Welzel, 2021, p. 201). As the cultural shifts targeted in this study illustrate, calls for change are transforming higher music education as an institution. Nevertheless, change processes have been ongoing for many decades, as higher music education organisations 'have been subject to re-organization and demands for efficiency and relevance' since long before the turn of the century (Jørgensen, 2009, p. 9). At least for the past twenty years, modifications have been made to content but have not adequately addressed how power works in the institutional context (Schmidt, 2019). As organisational institutionalism informs us, institutions do inevitably change, and this change is affected by society at large.

Even though the field of higher music education is always in flux due to social negotiations, members tend to find institutional change destabilising; even field experts operate within a narrowly defined set of legitimate options as they fulfil their institutional roles (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). Consequently, disrupting teachers' autonomy and teaching routines can lead to uncertainty and turmoil (Powell & Rerup, 2017, p. 317). The shift towards student-centredness thereby presents an enormous challenge for educators: they must understand not only the theoretical basis of new teaching methods but also develop them. However, educators often lack the time, resources and expertise to do so (Bennett et al., 2019, p. 194). Because the education of the performer is built upon apprenticeship, one-to-one instrumental tuition that includes transmissive teaching is often desired.[45] New teaching methods should be additive, not replacements (Ski-Berg, 2022; Yau, 2019; Carey et al., 2017; Johansson, 2012; Gaunt et al., 2012; Burwell, 2005). Indeed, students typically aspire to learn established field knowledge (and *must* learn at least some if they are to become credible field members). This balancing act can be taxing for both educators and students (as found in Articles 1 and 2).

To gain field membership, music performance students must acquire and tailor their expertise to fit their artistic niche(s) while they steadily transition into a professional career. Hence, the balancing act portrayed above is not only a matter of practicality but of renewing institutional norms. In today's neoliberal climate, the value of education is increasingly measured by its ability to meet global challenges, often through a mercantile lens that tends to oppose the artistic ideals found in higher music education (e.g. Moore, 2016; Allsup, 2015, Johansson, 2012). The worshipping of selected musical works seems to have led an entire profession to idolise the myth of the tortured artist (Bain, 2005) and pursue a 'bread-and-butter occupation' (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 43).[46] While neglecting economic safety in order to pursue one's musical ambitions might sound romantic to an aspiring musician, the assumption that one has to choose between the two is problematic at best. Some find it hard to connect their musical passion to the 'real world' (Gaunt et al., 2012), but most students and graduates today approach career development in varied ways (e.g. Westerlund & López-Íñiguez, in press; Bull & Scharff, 2021; López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2020; Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Schediwy et al., 2018). Could this, too, indicate a discursive shift?

45 In fact, one might argue that one-to-one instrumental tuition is student-centred by default because of its inherent customisation, as argued in Article 1.

46 Bourdieu (1993, p. 39) refers to this as an 'inverted economy', particularly in 'the most perfectly autonomous sector of the field of cultural production, where the only audience aimed at is other producers'. As new audiences are encouraged (e.g. NAIP European Master of Music, 2022), perhaps such changes will transform not only our audiences but how musicians function as economic actors.

As argued throughout this discussion, the rise of student creativity will be just as intertwined with hierarchical structures as the status quo. Yet the hierarchies are undoubtedly transforming. In institutional terms, the recently implemented genre independent music performance study programmes could represent a 'disruptive event' for the field of higher music education (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 65) in so far as they introduce new disciplinary practices (e.g. teaching methods, entrance exams).[47] Thus, new study programmes could be one way for institutional norms to slowly transform, affecting the student-teacher relationship and power/knowledge alike. Because members internalise external criteria (Sauder & Espeland, 2009), such social negotiations may take time in institutional settings. Institutional change is, therefore, not the result of implementing new practices for the sake of change itself. As Schmidt (2019, p. 58) notes, 'leadership in higher music education needs to disrupt the tendency towards simply moving from one outcome to the next and from one practice to the next, without taking the time to consider how to become more willing to develop our own adaptable framing dispositions'. For there to be any institutional *renewal* of higher music education, I propose that we must pay attention to the emerging institutional politics for student creativity, and listen.

47 Moreover, the studied genre independent programmes were found to *renegotiate* such practices in order to foster institutional renewal, as presented in Article 2.

7 Conclusion

Institutional politics can be a force for change. However, this force can also emphasise the struggle over institutional legitimacy in the field (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017). The pursuit of student creativity in higher music education may therefore be caused by mechanisms for organisational survival, as this study has found that institutional politics appear to be prolific in higher music education organisations that promote this institutional change. Cultural shifts such as student-centredness, the endorsement of entrepreneurship and the call to innovate higher music education jointly constitute this emerging trajectory. As discussed in Chapter 6, these cultural shifts may also be viewed in light of an overarching societal shift towards actorhood (Meyer, 2017). Indeed, as the mandates of higher music education are re-evaluated (Angelo et al., 2019) and musicians are recognised as *makers in/for/of society* (Gaunt et al., 2021), higher music education organisations may take on the role of social actors in a time ripe with change. The discursive landscape of higher music education is under pressure to transform, and the subject positions of music performance students and professors are currently in flux. Nevertheless, the changes depicted in this thesis are only one part of this large picture. As the institution continues to evolve, what new 'ideals' will result from the changing power dynamics?

This thesis has investigated how the rise of student creativity connects to power mechanisms within and outside of higher music education. Built on the theoretical premise that the institutionalisation of music(s) constitutes social (and creative) hierarchies, I conclude that the tension points caused by institutional politics during processes of institutional change can help uncover crucial pitfalls and display critical thinking among organisational members. Because the education of the performer is changing in tandem with society, scholars argue that it is ethically and professionally essential that instrumental teachers reflect upon the (transforming) power dynamics that are present in their lessons (Yau, 2019). It has moreover been found that leaders of higher music education organisations may consider hiring new staff when there is reluctance among staff to embrace cultural shifts and new practices (Karlsen, 2021, p. 210).[48] Building on this argument, I propose that members of higher music education–whether students, teachers or leaders–also ought to reflect upon whether or not they are putting 'more effort into being actors than into acting' (Meyer, 2017, p. 845). *Renewal* demands that we act both critically and empathetically in institutional politics to create change.

In a sense, higher music education is constituted by its inherent institutional politics. The balancing act between innovation and tradition (as presented in Article 2) is a cornerstone

48 Indeed, actors who have experience with *contested practices* can play a crucial role in their adaptation (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 86; see 3.2.3).

of institutional change. Expert authorities (Hakkarainen, 2016) and institutional governance (e.g. rewards, sanctions) are central for aspiring musicians to learn 'the rules of the game' (Hinings et al., 2017). It is interesting to note, then, that it appears as though higher music education organisations have been encouraged (through a 'united voice', nonetheless) to engage in isomorphic processes, in so far as the increased attention on student creativity can be viewed as a quest for institutional legitimacy (as presented in Article 3). Thus, I find it disconcerting that the shift towards student-centredness may be a tool for organisations to succeed in isomorphic processes, while music students could be left with fewer expert authorities to guide them during a period that is so often informed by their effort and dedication to become field members. Disciplinary practices may inhibit student creativity at times, yet these power mechanisms are at the same time indispensable for the valuable moulding that is necessary for achieving excellence in the field. Considering this inherent duality, is not what higher music education needs a more nuanced discussion around institutional politics for student creativity?

This final chapter of the thesis rests on the synthesis presented in Chapters 5 and 6. The following sections present the concluding implications from this completed PhD project, sorted into its overall contribution (7.1), some suggestions for future research (7.2) and my concluding thoughts (7.3).

7.1 Contribution

The outcomes from this study complement much of the existing literature on higher music education. It is already known that student-centredness presents both challenges and opportunities for the student-teacher relationship and that entrepreneurship can cause institutional resistance because its economic roots tend to oppose the discursive landscape of higher music education. What this thesis brings to the table, however, is a valuable theoretical perspective from which institutional change in higher music education organisations can be both examined and understood in light of concepts such as *institutional isomorphism*, *institutional pressures* and *institutional politics*. Though higher music education organisations must respond to funding requirements (e.g. REACT, 2022; Jääskeläinen, 2021; Jørgensen, 2009), this thesis has found that some of the cultural shifts that are taking place in our field at present could be caused by a shared quest for *institutional legitimacy* in order to attract new members. In other words, higher music education organisations appear to be engaging in *isomorphic processes* to secure

organisational survival in the field.[49] Employing organisational institutionalism can help us dissect how and why institutional change is unfolding in higher music education, as well as identify how (e.g. institutional politics, strategic work) and why (e.g. context, institutional pressures) higher music education organisations respond to change.

More specifically, genre independent programmes can constitute institutional renewal in higher music education organisations through a continual re-evaluation of the disciplinary practices they introduce (e.g. exam and audition criteria). The disciplinary practices of classical music programmes, on the other hand, oppose the calls from the field (e.g. student-centredness, innovation), yet the institutional work of classical students and professors who participated in this study constituted *institutional agency* for innovative educational (and musical) practices. Confronting the identified conflict between the initiatives of members and the *institutional control* of their organisation is critical if we are to dissect processes of change in higher music education. To that end, *institutional resistance* to change can be highly informative for leaders of higher music education organisations. For instance, the notion that performer proficiency is no longer enough in the education of the music performer was found to cause *institutional resistance* among members based on valid concerns (e.g. there is value in transmissive modes of teaching; career courses do not communicate well to students; innovation must be balanced with tradition). Moreover, this ambivalent landscape caused contradictory criteria for the participating students and professors (e.g. being both *disruptive* and *disciplined* actors), suggesting that members might need added support during processes of change in higher music education.

7.2 Future research

Organisational institutionalism presents untapped potential with regard to the examination of institutional power in higher music education. The concept of *field-configuring* (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017), for instance, could be interesting to employ in relation to the portrayed institutional changes. By identifying events that mediate the collective rationality from which higher music education organisations are transformed, we may deepen our understanding of how the field of higher music education affects individual organisations and vice versa. This macro perspective of higher music education is similar to Foucauldian discourse theory. However, organisational institutionalism can address concrete educational projects (as opposed

49 Aligning with the findings from this doctoral thesis, a study on Swedish higher music education organisations also finds striking similarities between the studied organisations' websites (Moberg & Georgii-Hemming, 2021), indicating that institutional isomorphism is taking place.

to the abstract entity of 'statements'), such as collaborations between or intercultural projects in higher music education organisations. I have portrayed genre independent programmes as a 'disruptive event' in higher music education, and this development is likely connected to increased consumer demands for individualised programmes to which educational institutions have been found to respond (Aurini, 2006). Future research could be conducted on such connections between the field of higher music education and societal changes by employing frameworks that are suitable for such meta-analyses.

Another interesting trajectory would be to investigate how organisations may be 'accessorising' with institutional change (as presented in Article 2 and 3) as opposed to embracing it fully. Though this study did not find any *decoupling* in the studied organisations, the findings reveal that organisational context could be an important factor in the strategic work for institutional change. Indeed, the internal power dynamics within organisations mediate 'the desire to decouple and the action of decoupling' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 87). Moving forward, it would be interesting to see more research conducted on institutional work in higher music education, given the scholarly acknowledgement of the changing power dynamics. Moreover, studies on higher education organisations have investigated how the national context can affect institutional change (e.g. Stevens & Shibanova, 2021), a topic that has remained largely unexplored in this thesis but that is worthy of further attention. In sum, the push/pull relationship between various institutional levels and the field is fruitful to investigate with the theoretical frameworks from organisational institutionalism. Particularly, research that investigates the role of student representatives in institutional politics during processes of change is encouraged. Music students who engage in strategic work may offer critical perspectives on the power mechanisms driving (or inhibiting) the rise of student creativity.

7.3 Concluding remarks

The implications that can be drawn from this thesis are manifold. The findings are relevant for discussions concerning 1) educational practice in higher music education, 2) future research on higher music education, and 3) *how* to conduct future research on higher music education organisations. As noted in Chapter 5, the initial methodological decision to study genre independent and classical music performance study programmes in two organisational contexts resulted in three very different articles. Chapter 6 focused largely on synthesising their main findings and discussing their implications for the field of higher music education. Thus far, Chapter 7 has presented the same sentiment, but I would be remiss not to emphasise

that the implications are drawn from the concerns of living institutional members across affiliations and organisations.

To reiterate, the informants shared real, practical concerns related to their educational practice and their perspectives provide valuable information. The topics they noted include how to balance transmissive and more progressive teaching styles to fit the individual student, how to recruit the right teachers, how to assess students in new ways, how students and teachers could work together to form musical identities and careers, how to select repertoire for exams when assessment criteria are altered and how to teach/learn about the music industry, among other topics.

Though still drawn from the lived experiences of music performance students and professors, the remaining implications from this thesis have been moulded by the undertaken abductive analysis and the 'intellectual adventure' (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 7) I underwent during this PhD project. Specifically, the implementation of frameworks from organisational institutionalism has been highlighted throughout this thesis because they offer a theoretical lens through which institutional change in higher music education can be analysed and discussed in more nuanced ways. This inclusion of a novel theory in research on higher music education not only implies *what* to research further (that is, institutional power) but also *how* to conduct future research on higher music education in new ways. Indeed, the changes that are being advocated for today (e.g. renewal of curricula and teaching methods/assessment) demand of us that we reflect critically: are we 'acting' for the sake of our students, or are we merely participating in the same quest for institutional legitimacy? Perhaps both, but it would be constructive to know the difference. Therefore, it is my sincere hope that this uncharted terrain will be explored by adventurous intellectuals in the years to come.

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Articles

Article 1

Ski-Berg, V. (2022). 'Blazing the trail or exposing the gaps?' Discourses on student-centredness in genre independent and classical music performance study programmes in Norway and the Netherlands. *Music Education Research, 24*(1), 31-41. doi.org://10.1080/14613808.2022.2028753

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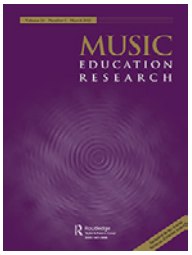

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'Blazing the trail or exposing the gaps?' Discourses on student-centredness in genre independent and classical music performance study programmes in Norway and the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Student-centredness is being advocated for in research on higher music education (HME), yet its perils have been largely neglected by scholars. While issues of employability are important to address in order for music graduates to thrive in a neoliberal world, this article asserts that the underlying power mechanisms that are being criticised for stifling creative development in students may continue to exist also within student-centred environments. By turning to a discourse-theoretical Foucauldian framework, the article presents empirical data from a comparative case study of two HME institutions. The findings suggest that there are four discourses (of *employability*, *artistry*, *craftsmanship*, and *holism*) on student-centredness in HME. Moreover, tension points between students, professors, study programmes, and discourses may be softened if student-centredness is allowed more nuances. Finally, the article discusses how the subject positions of music performance students and professors are transformed by student-centredness, and how this transformation is affecting HME institutions.

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Introduction: the shift towards student-centredness

Is higher music education (HME) offering the necessary space, content and methods for music performance students to be adequately prepared for the current job market? Such questions have emerged over the latter decade as part of a larger trend in which scholars address issues of student employability in HME (López-Íñiguez and Bennett 2020; Bartleet et al. 2019; Allsup 2015). While there are concrete issues related to employability (e.g. curricula development), this article will discuss an overarching phenomenon, that is, the current trend that HME institutions are embracing *student-centredness*.

Since the millennium, there has been a gravitational pull towards empowering the student voice. However, this orientation towards student-centredness is not only caused by issues of employability but has manifested in tandem with the development of formal education more generally. Historically, the student-centred approach entered the theory of education already during the 1950s, and is credited to the American psychologist Carl Rogers (1902–1987) for his client-centred approach (Tuovinen 2018). Decentring power asymmetry between adults and children in education is the core challenge associated with student-centredness, often displayed in the traditional master-apprentice teaching model in music education. On a macro level, both the cognitive turn during

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the 1980s and the rise of constructivism during the 1990s influenced the shift towards student-centredness. The former led (music) psychology to shift its focus from teaching to learning, and the latter reframed learning as a social process (Tuovinen 2018). As a result, transmissive modes of teaching music have been criticised for stifling the creative development of children (Hargreaves, MacDonald, and Miell 2012), students (González-Moreno 2014), and musicians (Leech-Wilkinson 2016).

Though student-centredness is widely recognised today, the term still presents 'a certain definitional looseness' (Tuovinen 2018, 66). In HME research, this ambiguity is noticeable in the variety of recently introduced student-centred approaches, such as 'autonomous learning' (Carey, Harrison, and Dwyer 2017), 'collaborative learning' (Christophersen 2016), or 'transformational teaching' (Carey et al. 2013), to mention some. Student-centred approaches are typically contrasted with the transmissive master-apprentice teaching model which still serves a dominant role in HME, resulting in an oversimplified dichotomic representation of student-centredness. Instrumental lessons entail a whole spectrum of possible teaching methods (Gaunt et al. 2012), and are shaped by both discourses (Nerland 2007) and individuals (González-Moreno 2014; Johansson 2012; Jørgensen 2000). This multifaceted quality ought to be taken into consideration if HME institutions attempt to 'renegotiate the Master-apprentice contract' (Allsup 2015, 259). Promoting student-centredness as an antidote to transmissive teaching appears to be utopian. For the purpose of this article, student-centredness is neither 'an instructional device' nor 'a mere pedagogy', and can be found in the 'cultural shift in the institution' (Tuovinen 2018, 71). But what exactly will such a 'shift' entail for HME institutions?

Recently, scholars have advocated for institutional change in order for HME to cope with the global challenges of the twenty-first century (Schmidt 2019; Allsup 2015). Courses on entrepreneurship have been implemented (Toscher 2020; Schediwy, Loots, and Bhansing 2018), and issues of social inequities are taken more seriously (Westerlund 2019; Green 2012). There has been an increasing academisation of HME (Jääskeläinen, López-Íñiguez, and Phillips 2020; Angelo, Varkøy, and Georgii-Hemming 2019; Bartleet et al. 2019; Minors et al. 2017), with an apparent gravitation towards student-centredness. However, few scholars address how power mechanisms in teaching will manifest also in student-centred environments (Christophersen 2016). There seems to be a lack of caution to the shift towards student-centredness in HME, and in the midst of this ambiguous path lies this article with the intention of addressing how student-centredness affects power mechanisms in HME. By presenting and discussing the identified discourses from a case study of two HME institutions, I intend to answer the following: What are the discourses on student-centredness in HME, and what subject positions are enabled in the unveiled discursive landscape?

Research design

This article presents findings based on a comparative case study that was conducted in Norway and the Netherlands during 2019. The study is part of a larger research project where a discourse-analytical approach has been combined with an ethnographic method of data collection. The following sections will account for these methodological choices.

Theoretical framework

The analytical approach chosen for this study rests upon a Foucauldian understanding of discourse theory, employing the notions of *discursive formation*, *subject position* and *power relationship* (Foucault [1994] 2020, [1972] 2010). It is particularly Foucault's focus on the subject and power that is explored through the employment of discourse theory, and HME is therefore viewed as a discursive field where students and professors are positioned within malleable relationships of power.

In short, Foucault studied discourse not in terms of language but as a system of representation, including both discursive practice and materiality in its formation (Hall 2001). He brought forward the idea that discourses were not only 'groups of signs', as was typical within linguistics, but also

'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault [1972] 2010, 49). As such, discourse is 'constituted by a group of sequences of signs' (referred to as 'statements'), and can be defined as 'the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation' (Foucault [1972] 2010, 107). At this macro level of discourse, Foucault set out to analyse the formation of discourses, to establish a law of rarity in which the regularity of discursive practice was determined, by identifying the dispersion of statements that resulted in a single discursive formation. Through this constructionist lens, discourses are culturally established modes of doing and thinking that exist in all fields, and of which individuals are subjected to.

The rules of discursive formation, according to Foucault, 'operate not only in the mind or consciousness of individuals, but in discourse itself', as a 'uniform anonymity, on all individuals who undertake to speak in this discursive field' (Foucault [1972] 2010, 63). Positions of the subject are thereby defined by the situation that it is possible for the individual to occupy in relation to various domains and information networks. Moreover, power is considered to be deeply rooted in the whole network of the social, and therefore 'exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action' (Foucault [1994] 2020, 340). A power relationship, then, is considered to be 'a mode of action' that acts upon the action of others, in which 'the other' is recognised as a subject 'who acts', and where 'a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up' when the subject is faced with relationships of power (Foucault [1994] 2020, 342). On this macro level of discourse, the subject positions of music performance students and professors are enabled by the discourses in which they partake in and are constituted by.

Methodology

A comparative design was chosen to ensure several target groups, selected deliberately through theoretical sampling (Silverman 2014, 97–100) based on common dichotomies found in research on music education (e.g. 'artist' versus 'artisan'; 'teacher' versus 'student'). The aim has been to uncover the ways in which different target groups relate to student-centredness, both within and across their respective affiliations. The two HME institutions were selected on behalf of their genre independent study programmes, namely *FRIKA* in Oslo and *Musician 3.0* in Utrecht. This informed the study with a deviant-case analysis (Silverman 2014, 99), in so far as being genre independent deviates from the established norms of HME. The selection of individual informants was also based on purposive sampling (Silverman 2014, 61), intentionally recruiting informants who could provide information on student-centredness. A few professors from each institution assisted in a chain-referral sampling where they namedropped applicable candidates from their institutions. The potential informants should be viewed as 'innovative', though this was interpreted subjectively in the referral process. Before starting the data collection, the study was approved by *NSD* (the Norwegian centre for research data).

In all, the fieldwork consisted of twenty-four qualitative interviews, conducted individually. The number of informants were divided equally across the target groups, twelve from each institution. Three levels of comparison were targeted: (1) bachelor students in music performance (coded 'S') versus professors ('P'); (2) study programmes in classical ('C') versus genre independent ('F' or 'M') music; and (3) the Norwegian Academy of Music ('NMH') versus Utrechts Conservatorium from the University of the Arts Utrecht ('HKU'). Interviews were recorded and transcribed, then coded in NVivo. Whereas the interviews in the Netherlands were conducted in English, the Norwegian interview transcripts have later been translated into English. My own affiliation with one of the institutions adds a bias to the study, as does purposive sampling. However, the in-depth nature of a case study is more about falsification of, as opposed to verification of, the researcher's preconceived notions (Flyvbjerg 2011, 311). The relatively large number of informants increases the validity of the identified discourses, as does the alignment with empirical data from other research studies on HME. Given the constructivist nature of discourse analysis, all interview transcripts were studied thoroughly during the coding process before entering the stage of analysis. During

analysis, discourses were identified through a discourse-theoretical reading of the interview transcripts, and these findings are presented in the next section.

Findings: identified discourses and tension points

The findings suggest that there are four discourses on student-centredness in HME: (1) the *employability* discourse; (2) the *artistry* discourse; (3) the *craftsmanship* discourse; and (4) the *holism* discourse. Additionally, several tension points were found between the target groups, underlined by how the informants were positioned discursively. This indicates that music performance students and professors approach student-centredness in diverse ways, by navigating and engaging in dissimilar and even opposing discourses.

Discourses on student-centredness in HME institutions

Discourse 1: student-centredness as the pathway to employability

The *employability* discourse is characterised by the notion that HME must transform if graduates are to be adequately prepared for their careers. As such, student-centredness may in the employability discourse be seen as representing a necessary pathway towards employability. Student-centred learning and teaching approaches that emphasise critical thinking and proper preparation for the 'real world' are considered to be student-centred within this discourse. As such, music performance students are constituted as potential arts entrepreneurs, and are expected to prepare for their future career during their studies. But while it was found to be prominent, the employability discourse was also the most controversial, given that it opposed other identified discourses on student-centredness.

The employability discourse was identified in nearly all of the interviews. In Table 1, the overarching theme of preparing music performance students for the job market is presented through four example quotations. The informants also referred to collective stories about a changing music industry (e.g. social media, streaming services) and of consequent disarray (e.g. classical music 'is dying'). A specific vocabulary was used, both in terms of the market (e.g. business, entrepreneurship, portfolio career) and with regards to extra-musical skills (e.g. reflection, critical thinking, flexibility). Overall, there was a general consensus that increasing the awareness of the individual career paths of music performance students would serve student employability. Despite this, there were differing opinions on how to achieve this, causing ambiguity that was also characteristic of the employability discourse.

The dispersion of the employability discourse can be traced back decades to the enforcement of neoliberalism and market ideology upon HME (Toscher 2020). Despite institutional endorsement of the employability discourse and similar discourses (e.g. the 'entrepreneurship discourse', see Angelo, Varkøy, and Georgii-Hemming 2019), its initial enforcement may explain why employability is still seen as something that is being forced upon HME. Moreover, a neoliberal view of musical success sometimes conflict with artistic ideals (e.g. financial stability at the expense of artistic

Table 1. Example quotations from the employability discourse.

Discourse 1: Employability	Informant	Quotation example
Critical thinking, employability.	NMH-SC2	'We can't educate clones. At least not if students are supposed to create their own place of work, then we need to be able to think critically'.
Preparing for the world.	NMH-PF3	'We have to show compassion for our students by preparing them for the real world'.
Flexibility and employability.	HKU-SM2	'For musicians nowadays, it's really important to be flexible … I think that's what's going to be asked of you … to get out there and adapt yourself to whatever the situation is'.
Preparing for the world.	HKU-PC2	'I like to prepare them better for the wide world of music … I think it's very important that we as teachers bring our experience in the field to the students, not only how you play, but also how you do your business'.

authenticity). Despite this, it is often promoted in HME through a commandment for students to pursue market rationality. The employability discourse has also increased rapidly over the latter decades in research on HME (López-Íñiguez and Bennett 2020; Bartleet et al. 2019; Allsup 2015), yet it was characterised by ambivalence in this study.

Discourse 2: student-centredness as a tool for artistic development

The *artistry* discourse perpetuates a firm belief that music performance students ought to develop artistically during their studies, and that HME must transform in order to support this development to a satisfactory degree. While the employability discourse approaches student-centredness as a means to prepare students for their careers, the artistry discourse views student-centredness as a tool for students' artistic development. Though both focus on creativity, the artistry discourse is less concerned with career creativities and more interested in the innovation of music as a discipline. As such, music performance students are constituted as artists, and are expected to prioritise their artistic development, not for the sake of employability but because artistry is fundamental to what being a musician is about.

The artistry discourse was identified to varying degrees during the interviews, and was often camouflaged behind the employability discourse (e.g. creativity is important for employability). Even so, it was identified in all twenty-four interviews, ranging from experiences with instrumental lessons (e.g. how student-teacher relationships had either inhibited or supported artistic development) to collective beliefs about music as an art form (e.g. true artists make original art). As portrayed in Table 2, the artistry discourse is concerned with the development of talent in music performance students. It is worth noting that while the primary focus was on students' individual development, artistry was linked to both creative abilities and instrumental skills. This central balancing act varied among the informants, depending on how they positioned themselves within the other discourses. In terms of student-centredness, however, the driving force behind the artistry discourse was the importance of artistic ownership for music performance students.

At its core, the liberation of artistic expression in the face of institutionalisation is the essence of the artistry discourse. Its dispersion can be traced back centuries, to the Romantic era and the myth of the tortured artist (Bain 2005). However, when music was institutionalised during the twentieth century, canon formations led to an 'artisan' approach to teaching music in which technical skills have been favoured over more creative abilities (Hargreaves, MacDonald, and Miell 2012). The versatile musician that is being advocated for today may be loosely linked to the Middle Age's troubadour, but the artistry discourse stems from the idealism concerning the Romantic artistic identity. Its dispersion is visible in the pursuit of artistic freedom in HME, particularly in the increasing focus on artistic development and 'performer agency' (Leech-Wilkinson 2016) for students. This may be evidenced in the introduction of new study programmes over time (including genre independent).

Discourse 3: student-centredness as the Guardian of craftsmanship

The *craftsmanship* discourse may be the most governing within HME institutions, in so far as it conserves tradition and rituals, often through the conservatoire. It contrasts the two prior

Table 2. Example quotations from the artistry discourse.

Discourse 2: Artistry	Informant	Quotation example
Artistic identity.	NMH-SF3	'It's important for students to have artistic ownership, that they can shape their own music, independent of genre, that everyone can make their music theirs'.
Artistic identity, why and how.	NMH-PF1	'I try to discuss those things with my students, the music they play, to stimulate discussions about their music, how it is created, why it works, how it doesn't work, what they appreciate and not'.
Develop talent, why and how.	HKU-PM1	'It almost doesn't matter what you do when you come here, but it matters how you do it and why you do it, and if we think that it's possible to develop your talent'.
Development of personal talent.	HKU-PC1	'I really believe in the personal development of the talent. Where is your talent, and let's work on your talent!'

discourses by focusing on the transmission of handicraft, viewing the traditional master-apprentice teaching model as student-centred. Indeed, most music performance study programmes are structured around a primary instrument, where students willingly dedicate a great amount of time and effort on developing their musical craft. As such, music performance students are constituted as aspiring instrumental virtuosi, and musical craftsmanship is not only viewed as student-centred but as essential in order to become a professional musician.

The craftsmanship discourse spoke through all twenty-four informants. In fact, most claimed that having enough time to improve one's craft was crucial. As exemplified in Table 3, formality and tradition were referred to as beneficial for HME institutions and students alike. This included the notion that music as a discipline transmits specialised knowledge and that 'master professors' often customise instrumental lessons in order to support the individual development of students. Moreover, many of the informants stated that it was common for other students and professors to value traditional hierarchical structures where instrumental skills are prioritised at the expense of developing creative abilities (e.g. conductors, composers). But even though the master-apprentice model was seen as student-centred in terms of craftsmanship, most claimed that it also needed to be supplemented with other student-centred approaches to teaching (e.g. artistic coaching) if students were to thrive in their future careers.

The transmission of knowledge from master to apprentice is an old tradition, and this teaching model was perpetuated when music became institutionalised during the twentieth century. Due to its dominance in formal education, it has been common in research on music education to separate between the 'artisan' and 'artist' parts of teaching music, often in order to advocate for the importance of creative freedom (Hargreaves, MacDonald, and Miell 2012). The criticism towards institutionalised hierarchies, however, is not directed at craftsmanship itself (that is, the physical labour of learning to play music) but concerns craftsmanship as it relates to the idealisation of 'masterpieces' and social hegemonies (Green 2012). Even so, the current emphasis put on creativity in HME may be perceived as threatening to the dominant position of craftsmanship (Angelo, Varkøy, and Georgii-Hemming 2019), and might explain why this study identified a protective streak within the craftsmanship discourse on student-centredness.

Discourse 4: student-centredness as a venue for the holistic musician

The fourth and final discourse identified in this study is visible in the belief that HME is educating music performance students not only to become musicians but also responsible citizens of the world. Characteristic of this *holism* discourse is the notion that HME is an essential part of society, and that music studies ought to be contextualised in order for students to build bridges to the(ir) communities before graduating. Additionally, it is emphasised within the holism discourse that HME institutions need to address and respect students' human needs (e.g. health). As such, student-centredness in HME can be seen as a venue for the holistic musician to grow and develop,

Table 3. Example quotations from the craftsmanship discourse.

Discourse 3: Craftsmanship	Informant	Quotation example
Tradition as tool.	NMH-SC3	'We should develop an attitude among teachers and institutions where innovation and tradition become more balanced, where tradition can be a tool like everything else'.
Tradition as place of origin.	NMH-PC3	'It's important that students know where they come from … They have played an instrument within a tradition for a long time, and in most cases that's what they wish to continue doing'.
Students want tradition.	HKU-SC1	'Not everyone wants it [*artistic freedom*]. Some people are very technical, but I think making music is very important'.
Formality and craft.	HKU-PM2	'There should be some formality, because I also have to evaluate them … Sometimes they don't pass an exam, which is good … There is something to work on in order to become who they want to be'.

in which the individual student's musical and personal development are considered to be intertwined.

The holism discourse was identified in most of the interviews. In fact, one of the most interesting findings from this study is that there was a unison prediction among the informants that HME would become more holistic in the future. This notion was typically supported by a collective reasoning that music studies needed to be contextualised in order for music performance students to thrive later in life. As illustrated in Table 4, this reasoning was founded in self-actualisation (e.g. awareness, reflection, authenticity) and social belonging (e.g. society, community, dialogue). While these elements overlap with both the employability and artistry discourses (e.g. career paths should be tailored to the individual student; artistic development is connected to wellbeing), the holism discourse is more concerned with morality. A few informants spoke to the very survival of music in society (e.g. reaching audiences), and several informants criticised HME for being negligent about global world challenges (e.g. environmentalism).

The distribution of the holism discourse can be traced back to activist movements that have increased the role of humanity in education. In research on music education, this focus is visible in the recognition of informal learning (Folkestad 2005) and creativity (Hargreaves, MacDonald, and Miell 2012), as well as in postcolonial debates where social hegemonies (Green 2012) and the morality of music education (Westerlund 2019) are discussed. In HME, more specifically, this has translated into a focus on student health (Jääskeläinen, López-Íñiguez, and Phillips 2020) and the notion that today's students may be(come) 'change agents' (O'Neill 2019) for social movement causes. Student-centredness is thereby viewed as a venue for music performance students to develop not only as musicians but as human beings. The holism discourse is recognisable in the raised awareness of how students can contribute to, fit into and create the world around them, regardless of the direction of their craft, artistic identity or employability.

Tension points concerning student-centredness

Tension points between the target groups

As portrayed in Tables 1–4, the four discourses were identified in all target groups. The informants therefore shared similar though nuanced ideas related to student-centredness. Student informants were overall interested in employability, aligning with other studies where music students have been found to welcome career-oriented content such as entrepreneurship (Schediwy, Loots, and Bhansing 2018), reflective journaling (Carey, Harrison, and Dwyer 2017), and artistic coaching (González-Moreno 2014). Professors, on the other hand, might fear that market terminology will marginalise the role of high-quality craftsmanship in HME (Angelo, Varkøy, and Georgii-Hemming 2019; Johansson 2012). Professors from this study were also concerned with student employability, yet nearly all stated that the overall staff seemed conservative. However, the Dutch informants were found to be more accepting of employability than the Norwegian informants were, suggesting that their economic underpinnings stem from different cultural heritage (e.g. a

Table 4. Example quotations from the holism discourse.

Discourse 4: Holism	Informant	Quotation example
Self-awareness, reflection.	NMH-SF1	'It's important to create spaces for reflection and dialogue among students, that they become more self-aware … to have conversations about those things'.
Art and society.	NMH-PC2	'We need an arts education that contains more knowledge about what it means to be a part of society in our contemporary time, to not merely reproduce but to comment on things that are relevant today'.
Community, authenticity.	HKU-SM3	'They [*professors*] really want to see us do our best and make as many mistakes as possible. It's about having an open space, which implies community, of course, where we can just be ourselves and try our best'.
Beautiful people, well-being.	HKU-PM3	'It [*Musician 3.0*] makes beautiful people, so that's maybe the most important thing … As long as they are sort of happy and okay, then it's right'.

neoliberal versus social democratic culture). It appeared that being socialised into the employability discourse could result in a higher tolerance for market-oriented content in HME. Yet informants from classical music studies were the most vigilant about employing student-centredness for employability. Informants that were genre independent were more likely to position themselves within the artistry and holism discourses, whereas classical informants positioned themselves more often within the employability and craftsmanship discourses. Despite this, classical informants desired more artistic freedom, whereas genre independent informants emphasised the crucial role of boundary-setting in their 'free' study programmes (that is, *FRIKA* and *Musician 3.0*). Regardless of these differences, student-centredness was perceived by nearly all to be a natural part of HME, not to mention beneficial for both students and professors.

Tension points between the discourses

If student-centredness is intended to function as a pathway to employability in HME, then it cannot simultaneously guard musical craftsmanship unless the student is able to bridge the gap between the opposing values of these discourses (e.g. mercantile success versus traditional ideals; see Angelo, Varkøy, and Georgii-Hemming 2019; Johansson 2012). In this way, friction between the discourses can lead to misunderstandings in HME, particularly with regards to what is expected of music performance students. Developing artistry, on the other hand, is often (but not always) compatible with holistic growth in students. Building on how the four identified discourses were uncovered in the interview transcripts, it appears as though opposing discourses may be bridged if student-centredness is given more nuances: For instance, music performance students may (re)claim their autonomy by working on their artistic identity and connecting it to their musical craft. They may moreover be better equipped to contextualise their artistic work if they are encouraged to follow a 'sense of calling' (Schediwy, Loots, and Bhansing 2018, 622) in the pursuit of a sustainable professional niche and societal role. This unveiled discursive landscape indicates that the interplay between the identified discourses on student-centredness may cause several tension points in HME, particularly if students are expected to adhere to opposing discourses during their studies. Rather than referring to student-centredness through polarising or dichotomic labels (e.g. 'creative' versus 'technical'), this case study has found student-centredness to exist on a spectrum, introducing many nuances of musicianship to HME.

Discussion: subject positions in flux

What it means to be a music performance student depends on how one is positioned within the discursive landscape of HME. As illustrated in the descriptions of the identified discourses, the underlying assumptions of what it means to be an aspiring musician are expanding in tandem with the shift towards student-centredness (e.g. student as change agent, craftsperson, artist, or entrepreneur). As a result, the power relationship between student and professor in HME appears to be changing as well. To illustrate this flux, I will employ the identified discourses from the study: If we posit that the craftsmanship discourse constitutes the subject positions of 'apprentice' and 'master' to the student and the professor, then the employability discourse may constitute more neoliberal positions, such as the recently established positions of 'customer' and 'supplier' in higher education (O'Neill 2019). The artistry and holism discourses, however, offer more mentor-oriented subject positions where creative collaboration and a decentring of authority figures are emphasised. Yet whether students are 'apprentices', 'artists', 'customers', 'mentees', 'co-creators', or 'change agents' will be largely determined by the discourses they partake in and are constituted by. As found in this study, this positioning may vary depending on the students' affiliation. Given that students can both benefit from and be inhibited by the dominant discourses of HME (González-Moreno 2014; Nerland 2007; Jørgensen 2000), educators ought to reflect upon this equivocal landscape (Allsup 2015; Johansson 2012; Gaunt et al. 2012). Being exposed to a variety of subject positions may mean that music performance students are confused about what is being expected of them.

On an overarching Foucauldian level, it seems evident that the subject position of the music performance student is expanding in tandem with the embracement of student-centredness. But the subject position of the music professor is also transforming. Previous 'masters' may be expected to serve music students as 'mentors', 'coaches', 'co-creators', or even 'business consultants'. Yet relationships of power do not disappear even though the student-teacher relationship changes; they merely transform as well. In fact, power relationships are entirely unavoidable in HME, for they are constituted by discourse and expressed through the subject positions that are enabled by discourse (Foucault [1994] 2020, [1972] 2010). This is why the notion of student-centredness will not remove power asymmetry but, rather, *move* it. For instance, the implementation of collaborative learning in HME may perpetuate the very same power mechanisms that the shift towards student-centredness is meant to overrule. The asymmetry between student and professor may be decentred, but what about relationships of power within the class? Perhaps a new form of compliance evolves among the students, where teamwork is favoured over individuality and the more rebellious students become inhibited once again, only now by the students themselves (Christophersen 2016). If so, then the meaning of student-centredness could morph 'into an authoritarian construct, where the new hidden curriculum promotes a certain type of student profile' (Tuovinen 2018, 71).

Relationships of power will exist also in student-centred environments, though they make take on new forms. While it is vital for HME to adapt to the challenges of the twenty-first century (e.g. student employability, social inequities, environmentalism), institutional leaders ought to reflect critically upon whether they are 'simply moving from one outcome to the next and one practice to the next' (Schmidt 2019, 58). At the moment, institutions are encouraged to embrace student-centredness (López-Íñiguez and Bennett 2020; Minors et al. 2017; Carey, Harrison, and Dwyer 2017; Carey et al. 2013), but this pursuit of institutional progress sometimes upholds unfortunate dichotomic labels (e.g. 'creative' versus 'technical'; 'student-oriented' versus 'teacher-oriented'). Student-centredness is 'by definition contextual, context-dependent, and emergent', and, moreover, is 'about increasing flexibility in all aspects of pedagogy' (Tuovinen 2018, 70–71). It should therefore be approached reflexively, similar to how formal and informal learning are seen as two poles on a continuum (Folkestad 2005) and how instrumental teaching is nuanced (Gaunt et al. 2012). In this way, genre independent study programmes are blazing the trail for and simultaneously exposing the gaps of student-centredness in HME.

Concluding remarks

The decentring of authorities is more often than not depicted as an improvement of current teaching practices, yet its successive pitfalls have been left largely unattended by scholars. Future research on HME could contribute to the further uncovering of how relationships of power operate in student-centred environments. A raised awareness of this is not only necessary but responsible in light of the challenges that HME institutions are faced with. Moreover, I propose that the master-apprentice teaching model does not need to equate an 'either/or' proposition, as it has been found to serve a unique role in HME as the transmitter of handicraft. If music performance students and professors agree upon what craft skills would be desirable for the individual student to learn, it could be approached as one of several student-centred flavours that students will need in order to be(come) autonomous musicians.

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Article 2

Ski-Berg, V. (accepted version).
Between innovation and tradition: The balancing act of the 'protean' music student. *Nordic Research in Music Education.*

Between innovation and tradition: The balancing act of the 'protean' music student

Innovation is being called for to renew higher music education (HME) due to substantial societal changes, yet the implications of this trajectory remain unclear. By turning to institutional theory and Foucauldian theory, this article investigates how innovation is perceived in HME. Drawing from a case study in which twenty-four music performance students and professors were interviewed in Norway and the Netherlands, the findings suggest that the call for innovation is enmeshed with institutional politics. Indeed, innovative practices (e.g., genre independent programmes) have caused institutional resistance but also fostered necessary renewal. Thus, the balancing act between innovation and tradition is discussed.

Higher music education; innovation; institutional politics; institutional power; disciplinary practices

Introduction: The call to innovate higher music education

> Innovation and creativity are at the same time alluring and frightening. On the one hand, innovative goods and processes, and the aspirations to realize these, suggest progress; they renew hope and offer something to strive for or to anticipate. On the other hand, they also suggest the crumbling of known entities, with its concomitant uncertainty, anxiety, and apprehension. (Sogner, 2018, p. 339)

Since the turn of the millennium there has been a call for innovation in Europe (and beyond), also in higher music education (HME). This overarching call is perhaps best illustrated in the political sphere through initiatives such as *Horizon 2020,* referred to as the 'biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever' (European Commission, 2014, p. 5). However, what I refer to as the 'call for innovation' is evident also in the cultural sector. The *Creative Europe programme* (European Commission, 2021) has for instance given funding to the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), that is, a voluntary coalition of HME organisations that envisions 'professionally focused arts education as a quest for excellence' in, as one of three areas, precisely 'research and innovation' (European Association of Conservatoires, 2016). Indeed, it is claimed that HME organisations are now curating 'research and innovation

agendas' (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 2), yet the very concept of 'innovation' is usually left open to interpretation by scholars and institutional leaders. How, then, is innovation unfolding in HME?

As an educational institution, HME is reputed to perpetuate artistic ideals which undermine the logic of neoliberalism (Allsup, 2015; Johansson, 2012; Jørgensen, 2009). Building on this, one might presume that an 'inverted economy' is prominent in HME, meaning that the value of music is not dictated by economic measures but, rather, by its symbolic value according to Bourdieu's (1993) theory on cultural production. If so, then the dominant discourses of HME might oppose the current 'call for innovation', given that the concept stems from economic theory (e.g., Schumpeter, 1934). Indeed, studies on HME have found the implementation of market terminology to challenge both music students and teachers (Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Angelo et al., 2019). Individual success has moreover been emphasised to such a degree in HME that it may overshadow critical thinking related to shared 'social, political, moral and ethical issues' (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020, p. 253). In the professional field, it has been claimed that 'institutions and sectors are dismantled in the name of flexibility and innovation', meaning that 'those who wish to work in such a dismantled sector are consequently encouraged to innovate and be flexible' (Moore, 2016, p. 51). However, friction between the old and the new is not only related to the call for innovation.

Nearly a decade ago, institutional change in HME was promoted by a 'creativity agenda' (Burnard, 2014, p. 78). It was considered essential for graduates to develop creative abilities in order to thrive as professional musicians in the changing labour market, and the notion of *multiple creativities* was introduced to challenge the 'singular and individualist discourses which define musical creativity in terms of the Western canonization' (Haddon & Burnard, 2015, p. 262). It was argued that the 'primacy of composition' had dominated more collaborative forms of creativity (Burnard, 2014, p. 78), stifling the creative development of students (González-Moreno, 2014; Hargreaves et al., 2012) and causing social hegemonies (Burnard, 2019). Over the latter decades, the authority of the instrumental teacher has been discussed at length (e.g., Yau, 2019; Tuovinen, 2018; Gaunt et al., 2012; Johansson, 2012; Nerland, 2007; Jørgensen, 2000), and the mandates and social responsibilities of HME are renegotiated (e.g., Gaunt et al., 2021; Angelo et al., 2019; Carruthers, 2019; Minors et al., 2017; Allsup, 2015). If we understand HME to be 'the result of institutional practices in which some musicians have authority over others' (Frith, 2011, p. 67), then institutional change will inevitably transform its social order. Hence, the call to innovate HME may constitute institutional politics that are worthy of examination.

Despite the potential for friction between arts and commerce (e.g., Angelo et al., 2019; Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Moore, 2016; Allsup, 2015), Dutch music students have been found to embrace

a 'holistic approach' to career development, indicating that 'entrepreneurship and creative values are not necessarily conflicting' (Schediwy et al., 2018, p. 624). This suggestion is also reflected in the potential for today's students to be(come) 'change agents' in (O'Neill, 2019) and 'makers' of society through social innovation (Gaunt et al., 2021). Indeed, HME may already be transforming due to the joint scholarly insistence that radical change is necessary, yet there seems to be a lack of critical discussion concerning how to innovate HME. In this article, a case study of two HME organisations from Norway and the Netherlands is presented. To uncover how the call for innovation is experienced in HME, I employ Foucauldian theory in combination with a constructivist approach to institutional theory. By discussing the findings from this case study, in which twenty-four music students and professors were interviewed, I intend to answer the following: How do music students and professors from classical and genre independent performance study programmes experience the increased focus on innovating HME, and what are the implications of their experiences?

Backdrop: Higher music education and the concept of innovation

To address how the call for innovation is experienced by institutional members and what their experiences implicate for HME, the concept of *innovation* must be briefly defined and delimited. For this I turn to Joseph Schumpeter (1883 to 1950), known for his work on creative entrepreneurs and innovation (Schumpeter, 1934). I have chosen to present the Schumpeterian lens of innovation due to the term's economic roots and to offer intertextuality with research on HME (e.g., Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Angelo et al., 2019; Schediwy et al., 2018). At its root, innovation is about introducing 'something new in the economy' (Sogner, 2018, p. 327). Schumpeter claims that economic life 'is represented by a special group of people, although all other members of society must also act economically' (Schumpeter, 1934, p. 4). The 'chief activity' of some groups of society is 'economic conduct or business', whereas, for other groups, 'the economic aspect of conduct is overshadowed by other aspects' (Schumpeter, 1934, p. 4). Linking this sentiment to Bourdieu's (1993) theory on cultural production, I build on the premise that economic conduct is for many musicians and institutional members of HME typically overshadowed (e.g., Moore, 2016), yet they must still act economically as members of society (even if they resist doing so).

The latter point may be linked to the notion that the changing labour market is demanding a more flexible and 'protean' musician who is able to undertake 'multiple roles' as needed (Bennett, 2008, p. 9). Technological innovations have affected world society at large over the

latter decades, resulting in increased global connectivity (e.g., social media) and accessibility (e.g., streaming services). Music students today could be expected to launch their careers on the internet or through social media (Rowley et al., 2015), and the newest generation of students are considered to be more interested in social innovation than previous generations (O'Neill, 2019). In light of this trajectory, it has been argued that music graduates must be equipped with new and inventive skillsets if they are to thrive as professionals (Bartleet et al., 2019; Reid et al., 2019; Minors et al., 2017; Haddon & Burnard, 2015; Bennett, 2012). In short, societal changes have forced HME to renegotiate its mandates, and it has been suggested that the time is ripe for a 'paradigm shift', a re-conceptualisation of HME based on 'embracing musical practices as social process' (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 16). This shift includes an increased focus on innovation (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 15), and may offer new ways of approaching economic life:

> Rather than assume that musical artists are either rational investors in their own talent or irrationally oblivious to economic forces it would seem more fruitful to explore the idea that as a social fact musical creativity is defined by the tension *between* artistic freedom and material necessity (or, to use the terms in which the debate is usually expressed, between arts and commerce). (Frith, 2011, p. 69)

Lastly, the concept of innovation is inextricably linked to that of *creativity*. Indeed, both creativity and innovation challenge the status quo and may defy 'those whose power rests on the preservation of the status quo' (Sogner, 2018, p. 337). It has been claimed that 'the most successful musicians' are 'ideas people' (Burnard, 2014, p. 80) and that the more 'innovative' aspects of music education are 'concerned with students finding their own artistic voice', including perhaps 'innovative creativity and pushing the boundaries of art' (Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019, p. 408). One way of fostering such innovation in HME may be through *innovative knowledge communities*, fostered by 'shared social practices' in 'the deliberate reinvention of prevailing practices so as to elicit pursuit of novelty' (Hakkarainen, 2016, p. 19). Building on this, innovating HME may be about transforming its prevailing practices into seeking more novelty, and to then profit from such institutional change.[1] However, it must be noted that innovative institutional work within the educational sector is most often linked to *incremental innovation*, where an already existing product (e.g., a study programme) is innovated upon

1 A key notion in organisational institutionalism is that organisations must gain institutional legitimacy to secure organisational survival in the field (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). However, HME organisations are often publicly funded and must therefore adhere to specific requirements that come with the support. Requirements are typically formulated in detail in annual grant letters and/or allocation plans, thereby affecting institutional change in the organisation. Other stakeholders or funds may also affect institutional change, as evidenced in the support given to AEC by the *Creative Europe* programme (see Gaunt et al., 2021). In short, new practices are in demand and may be profitable for HME organisations, if they align with funding requirements or increase the revenue of the organisation otherwise (e.g., student recruitment).

(e.g., new teaching methods, recruitment of new student groups). The following section elaborates on how institutional politics associated with innovating HME are approached analytically throughout this article.

Theoretical framework: Institutional power

A constructivist approach to institutional theory informs us that institutions 'exist to the extent that they are powerful—that is, the extent to which they affect the behaviors, beliefs and opportunities of individuals, groups, organizations and societies' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 477). According to organisational institutionalism, HME can only exist as long as legitimacy is acquired in the field by reflecting and affecting societal behaviours and beliefs. Indeed, the survival of institutions is dependent upon their ability to reflect the constructed reality (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Following this line of theoretical thought, the endorsement of the current call for innovation could be one of the ways in which HME seeks to survive at present time. Thus, institutional theory is applicable when investigating institutional change in HME, introducing frameworks which may indicate both *why* and *how* certain changes are taking place. Specifically, I rely on the notion of *institutional power* (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017) to analyse the institutional politics associated with the call for innovation in HME.

This constructivist approach aligns with Foucauldian discourse theory in which *discourse* is constituted by 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972/2010, p. 49). In other words, Foucault considered discourse to not only be a matter of language but to also include physical artefacts (e.g., musical scores, instruments). By the same token, an *institution* is constituted by 'enduring patterns of social practice' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 477), as well as by the 'built environment, including mechanical and technological systems' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 499). Furthermore, organisational institutionalism is foremost concerned with the *organisational field*. What is typically referred to as 'HME institutions' in literature on HME would be referred to as *organisations* in the educational sector by institutional scholars. Thus, the participating HME 'institutions' from this case study are referred to as 'organisations' throughout this article, adhering to institutional terms. The *institution* that is HME, on the other hand, serves as an overarching unit for HME organisations within the organisational field. Institutional change occurs whenever the 'enduring patterns of social practice' are transformed. Because institutions change over time, it is not *if* but rather *how* change occurs that is of interest.

Central to this framework is an institutional perspective on power where 'actors are subject to forms of power that are disconnected from the interests and actions of specific others' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 484). The notion of being *subjected* to power resonates with Foucault's understanding of power as a productive force, a 'mode of action' that exists 'only as exercised by some on others' (Foucault, 1994/2020, p. 340). In HME some individuals are given more authority than others in light of their institutional role (e.g., leadership, teachers, scholars), yet they may not always be aware of the subject positions they occupy (Foucault, 1972/2010). Indeed, power can unfold even as conformity, resulting from a socially constructed image of a 'normal' subject that moves music students and professors toward uniformity (e.g., how to play an instrument) while punishing deviants (e.g., sanctions for not performing well). In this way, *discipline* works 'through routine practices and structures that shape the choices of actors by establishing boundaries of appropriate and inappropriate behavior' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 488), and 'disciplined actors' have made these boundaries their own by internalising external demands (Lawrence & Buchanan 2017, p. 486). Due to the engraved expectations of HME (e.g., excellence in performance), music students and professors are generally considered to be *disciplined*.

The focal point of this article is to discuss the implications of the increased focus on innovating HME by building on the experiences of music students and professors. For this I lean on the notion of *institutional power*, separating between two distinct forms of power, namely *institutional agency* and *institutional control*. The interplay between these two forms is referred to as *institutional politics*, that is, the 'role that power plays in shaping the relationship between institutions and actors' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 480). In short, institutional agency is episodic and found in 'the work of individual and collective actors to create, transform, maintain and disrupt institutions' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 480). Institutional control, on the other hand, is associated with *disciplinary practices* (Foucault, 1994/2020), systemic in its execution and visible in 'the impact of institutions on the behaviors and beliefs of individual and organizational actors' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 480). Though institutional control is perhaps most visible in the pre-existing dominant discourses of HME, all study programmes are constituted (at least in part) by disciplinary practices. However, because HME is multifaceted and consists of several subcultures (Jørgensen, 2009), institutional change might affect subgroups of institutional members differently, depending on the HME organisation.

According to institutional scholars, processes of institutionalisation become hierarchised and 'take on a rulelike status in social thought and action' (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341). Who, then, has the authority to affect the 'rulelike status' of innovation in HME? By identifying forms of institutional power in HME, the analysis that this framework offers illustrates

situations where the informants from this study experienced ownership during institutional change associated with innovation and, conversely, when they did not. Foucauldian theory complements this lens by positing that subjects are often unaware of forms of power and that institutional members are rewarded and sanctioned for specific behaviours through established disciplinary practices (Foucault, 1994/2020). In HME such practices include the ways in which music students and professors are evaluated based on their performances and behaviour (e.g., grades, reports), as well as forms of surveillance which automatically shame or embarrass those individuals who do not comply with expected social practices (e.g., performing poorly). The next section presents the fieldwork that was undertaken to examine these areas of interest.

Methodology: A comparative case study

To shed light on how various subgroups of HME experienced the same institutional change, a comparative design was chosen to ensure several target groups. Two HME organisations were selected on behalf of their genre independent music performance study programme, namely *FRIKA* in Oslo, Norway, and *Musician 3.0* in Utrecht, the Netherlands. This informed the study with a deviant case (Silverman, 2014, p. 99), in so far as being genre independent is considered to be irregular in HME (Jørgensen, 2009). Another deviating factor was that the interview candidates ought to be 'innovative'. This purposive sampling (Silverman, 2014, p. 61) was employed to recruit informants who could shed light on the issue at hand, namely the increased focus on innovation. The target groups were otherwise selected through theoretical sampling (Silverman, 2014, pp. 97–100) based on subgroups found in research (e.g., 'students', 'teachers'). A few professors from each organisation assisted in a chain referral by suggesting applicable candidates. Though they were free to interpret the meaning of 'innovative' subjectively, it was specified that informants needed to be bachelor students in music performance from classical or genre independent study programmes and professors affiliated with these programmes. A balance in instruments, ethnicity and gender was encouraged during the chain-referral, but not always possible to achieve.

Before starting the data collection, the research project was approved by *NSD* (the Norwegian Centre for Research Data), including an ethics review of the project. In total the fieldwork consisted of twenty-four qualitative and semi-structured interviews, conducted individually during 2019 as open conversations with the informants about their experiences with innovation in HME. Each target group consisted of three informants, twelve informants from each HME organisation. This resulted in three levels of comparison: 1) music performance

bachelor students (coded 'S') versus professors ('P'); 2) study programmes in classical music ('C') versus genre independent music ('F' for *FRIKA* or 'M' for *Musician 3.0*); and 3) the Norwegian Academy of Music from Norway ('NMH') versus the Utrechts Conservatorium from the Netherlands ('HKU'). During 2019, the interviews were recorded and transcribed, then coded in NVivo and anonymised to protect the identity of the informants. The interviews with informants from HKU were conducted in English, the informants' second language. Interviews with informants from NMH were conducted in Norwegian, then translated into English after being coded. The translation of language might have affected some of the knowledge drawn from the interviews. However, all informants were given the opportunity to confirm that their selected quotations were authentic.

The purpose of conducting semi-structured interviews was to uncover the informants' experiences with specific institutional changes. During the analysis of the interview transcripts, forms of institutional power from the theoretical framework were identified in the informants' experiences with innovation in HME. My own affiliation with one of the organisations adds a bias to the study, as does the purposive sampling. However, the in-depth nature of a case study is more about falsification of, as opposed to verification of, the researcher's preconceived notions (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 311). Indeed, the relatively large number of informants increases the validity of the identified forms of institutional power from this study, as does the alignment with other research on HME. The next section accounts for these findings by presenting the informants' experiences with the increased focus on innovation in HME, including experiences with institutional resistance to innovation. Four categories of institutional politics emerged from the analysis: 1) institutional agency for innovation; 2) institutional control for innovation; 3) resistance to institutional control for innovation; and 4) resistance to institutional agency for innovation. These four categories are elaborated on in the next section.

Findings: Institutional politics in higher music education

Innovating higher music education

Institutional agency for innovation: Innovative individuals

The first category is derived from the informants' experiences with innovation in their own institutional role. This subsection thereby illustrates institutional agency for innovation through selected quotations about how the informants have supported the increased focus on innovation in HME as institutional members. For their experiences to have constituted

institutional agency, the informants' work must have transformed and/or disrupted their affiliated HME organisation in some way. To achieve this, the informants could have influenced other actors (that is, students and/or staff) to do something they would not normally do, or they could have attempted to disrupt institutionalised practices through technical or market leadership, or by lobbying for regulatory change and discursive action (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017). Whenever the informants shared ideas and/or stories that they considered to be disruptive to the status quo of their organisation, this form of power is understood as institutional agency. The informants are also considered to be *innovative*, in so far as their institutional work has constituted new study programmes, elective courses, and projects that have been both disruptive and profitable to their HME organisation. However, there was a gap between the informants' innovativeness and their understanding of the concept.

Though there was a general confusion about what the term 'innovation' actually entailed, most informants associated it with doing 'something new' (HKU-SM2) and 'inventing stuff' (NMH-SF3). A notion of newness was thus repeated throughout the interviews, including comments such as 'stuff that hasn't been done before' (HKU-SC3), or 'thinking out of the box' (HKU-SC2) and finding 'a solution that is completely out of the box' (HKU-PM2). In alignment with this, many informants also expressed a desire to be 'presented with different ways of being artists' (NMH-SC2) and 'to work with different styles and things' (HKU-SM2). This desire for artistic exploration was portrayed to exceed the current institutionalised practices:

> I think a musician is like a writer or choreographer or whatever. It's the job of the artist to translate the things that go around in the world or their personal lives or in your own life or in that of others … I see the musician as artist and not only as the technical crafts persons that are able to play the violin or the saxophone or the drums on a very technical high level. – HKU-PM3

> If you polish something, it will not be better, it will be polished. This is the fundamental problem in the approach to classical music … We have forgotten that aestheticism exists somehow. – HKU-SC3

> A kind of creativity has disappeared from our profession, and I think it's important to bring it back in order for the classical musician not to become a reproducing machine on a higher and higher level that only aims to play perfectly, but that we aim to educate a creative musician, a participating musician, an artist that can reflect upon why and not only what and how, and take greater risks in music. – NMH-PC2

The statements above point to the fact that developing technical craft skills has typically been favoured over creative development in music education (e.g., Yau, 2019; González-Moreno, 2014; Hargreaves et al., 2012). Defying this status quo by promoting an understanding of the musician as an artist is therefore illustrative of how institutional agency is constituted when such ideas of renewal are promoted, particularly among the classical informants. Indeed, several of the classical professors encouraged more artistic exploration in HME while simultaneously underlining the importance of instrumental proficiency, a finding that resonates also in other studies (e.g., Angelo et al., 2019; Gaunt et al., 2012; Johansson, 2012). One professor stated that instrumental lessons should teach students 'to become free, to think out of the box' but also that 'for me, craftsmanship is number one' (HKU-PC2). Similarly, the classical professor who wanted to 'educate a creative musician ... an artist that can reflect' also claimed that 'what makes this institution so great is the maintenance of an excellent level of instrumental teaching' (NMH-PC2). Thus, it is worth noting that their attempts to transform their organisation do not equate a rejection of the classical tradition but, rather, an expansion of it. By introducing more creative development into their study programmes, classical informants disrupted the status quo (of 'reproducing'):

> I think they [classical students] are extremely conservative … I feel like we're tricking them, the students, by letting them reproduce the same musical works over and over and over … It's like we're educating them for unemployment. – NMH-PC1

The interplay between the 'reproducing' status quo and the increased focus on innovation was further elaborated on by one of the genre independent professors:

> If the institution was innovative, then we would need to put ideas into a structured, methodical system where results are put out into society in a valuable way that people are actually willing to pay for. And if you look at the majority of events at the institution, then we are "repeating," "copying," and teaching our students to play a repertoire that is almost always approved by the teacher. At best we might be "recreating." – NMH-PF3

During the interviews, several of the professors attempted to dissect the concept of innovation. The degree of newness was discussed, ranging from nuances such as 'repeating' and 'recreating' to 'creating' and 'inventing', musically as well as in their educational practices. One professor noted that 'creativity is almost a synonym for innovation … but I think that innovation is a bigger word than creativity' (HKU-PM1). Another stated that 'I interpret innovation as something truly new … you need to bring something new to the field' (NMH-PC3). A third professor was confused as to 'when can we actually call it innovation and when

is it simply study activities, and when is it something genuinely new?' (NMH-PF2) Innovation and creativity were considered to be interlinked by most, yet innovation was portrayed to demand more contextualisation of HME. The classical informants were particularly vocal about improving the amount of artistic freedom that was offered in their programmes. As for the genre independent informants, they were considered to be both creative and innovative by virtue of their affiliation with the genre independent study programmes. The following subsection elaborates on this.

Institutional control for innovation: Innovative study programmes

The second category is derived from the informants' experiences with innovation in their HME organisation. While new study programmes may be initiated in terms of institutional agency (e.g., by lobbying actors), they are constituted over time through the implementation of institutional control (e.g., disciplinary practices such as curricula and evaluations). Indeed, the entrance of genre independent study programmes is illustrative of how institutional politics unfold in HME, as the institutional work that is required in the development of new programmes entails 'deliberate strategies of actors as they skillfully and reflexively engage in activities to influence the institutional environments in which they operate' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 491). The interplay between individual actors and their affiliated organisations is therefore key when developing study programmes. Moreover, genre independent study programmes may be considered innovative because they challenge the status quo of HME with an openness to musical genres and because they are profitable to HME organisations (that is, if they recruit new groups of students). In alignment with this theoretical reasoning, most of the informants considered genre independent programmes to be an example of innovation in their organisation, namely *Musician 3.0* from Utrechts Conservatorium (HKU), the Netherlands, and *FRIKA* from the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH), Norway.

At the time of the fieldwork in 2019, *Musician 3.0* had recently been expanded to offer an international class in addition to their regular class, thereby doubling their student number. On the webpages of the Utrechts Conservatorium (HKU), it is stated that *Musician 3.0* is 'the only conservatoire programme in the Netherlands that is not connected to an instrument, style or genre' (HKU University of the Arts, 2021). Moreover, any graduate from the programme is considered to be a 'Music Performance Artist' who is able to take on creative work as a 'musical director, instrumentalist, performer, composer, interdisciplinary maker, entrepreneur, coach and educational innovator,' or even 'create a new profession!' (HKU University of the Arts, 2021). As these segments illustrate, the *Musician 3.0* programme is thought to educate versatile and innovative music performance artists, resembling the notion of the 'protean' musician (Bennett, 2008). This was reflected in both the *Musician 3.0* students and professors:

> It [*Musician 3.0*] is quite exceptional and unique … We connect the music part with other disciplines, not only on stage, but within people themselves. And we connect life coaching and the personal development in the whole study, and we connect the physical parts of the body awareness and the dancing part and the being aware of societal issues, which is quite new and innovative within the conservatory world. – HKU-PM3

> We get really motivated to and also skilled to search for this, to search for new sounds and free improvisation and to see beyond borders … You benefit a lot from doing other art disciplines, to opening some boundaries or some boxes and to perceive music in a different way. – HKU-SM2

In order to develop into an interdisciplinary and open-ended programme, several of the *Musician 3.0* professors explained that the programme relied on carefully selected methods (that is, disciplinary practices) to enforce boundaries for their students to work within, such as 'artistic coaching' (HKU-PM1) and an 'improvising mind' (HKU-PM2). One of the professors also claimed that it could be 'quite hard actually to find the right teachers, that come from the same state of mind' because 'often people come from a conventional way' when they in fact need to 'allow themselves to be educated in very different fields so that they have this open mind' (HKU-PM3). This 'open mind' was searched for in the programme auditions, and the *Musician 3.0* students were overall considered to be innovative by the informants from HKU. One student claimed that 'I have looked at a lot of graduation performances, and in 90% it is like the student creates a new genre almost' (HKU-SM2). Another student stated that 'you can't even imagine beforehand, you know, it's so different every time … so I really see much innovation in our study' (HKU-SM3). This innovativeness was further elaborated on by one of the professors:

> I think the department [*Musician 3.0*] in itself is an idea, and the way it is shaped and formed over time. I mean, it has been there for now 9 years or so, I believe, and it's changing all the time! Developing. I think that's definitively innovative, because as an institute, as an organism, it's a different organism than the classical department or the pop department. – HKU-PM1

As its own subculture of HME, the *Musician 3.0* programme appeared to foster social practices for innovation, resulting in 'innovative' disciplinary practices (e.g., audition criteria). In fact, the continuous renewal of the programme resembles the notion of 'innovative knowledge communities' where novelty is actively pursued (Hakkarainen, 2016). Central to the programme was also the employment of student-centred teaching methods that are 'contextual,

context-dependent, and emergent' (Tuovinen, 2018, p. 70). Scholars have noted that it may be unrealistic to expect any educator to transform into a career coach without the proper training or resources (Bennett et al., 2019). Yet classical informants from this study, as illustrated in the prior subsection, actively challenged the status quo by expanding their teaching to include student-centred methods while still relying on more transmissive modes as needed, thereby constituting institutional agency for innovation. Considering this, more traditional programmes may currently lack the disciplinary practices that are needed to innovate (e.g., teacher training, an 'open mind'). Indeed, the deliberate reinvention of old structures is institutional knowledge that is currently in demand (e.g., Schmidt, 2019; Carruthers, 2019; Johansson, 2012). The disciplinary practices of the *Musician 3.0* programme (e.g., teaching/audition methods) are therefore timely and could be profitable if the programme's competencies are shared, making them 'innovative' according to the Schumpeterian lens.

In comparison, the *FRIKA* programme was much smaller in size and described as 'exclusive' by the informants from the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH). Only one student was enrolled each year, until shortly after the fieldwork in 2019 when *FRIKA* was expanded. *FRIKA* currently enrols seven students a year, thereby constituting a class dynamic that did not exist at the time of the interviews. Even so, the expansion of *FRIKA* had become a topic of discussion at NMH, ripe with institutional politics. For instance, one of the students claimed that 'either the whole institution will be like *FRIKA* or every other study programme has to become more open' (NMH-SF2). In short, the *FRIKA* students suggest and shape their own curriculum. The openness of the programme is not only a matter of genre independence but of institutional structure. On the webpages of the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH), *FRIKA* students are portrayed to 'have the opportunity to adapt your studies and take advantage of the Academy's wide range of programmes and professional networks', leading to 'a broad music education that can serve as a stepping stone towards a diversified music career both in Norway and internationally' (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2021). The *FRIKA* model was characterised as innovative by nearly all the NMH informants:

> Students should develop more ownership to their own career and what one wants, to have more freedom, and I think *FRIKA* is a model that can become very relevant for higher music education in general, particularly on the master's level. – NMH-SC2

> My impression is that very few conservatories offer similar programmes. I think it's *FRIKA* a cool innovation when compared to programmes that are based on genre, which has been done for many years. – NMH-SF3

> I think that *FRIKA* is an example of something innovative and even a little risky, the amount of freedom that is given to the students, there is something innovative about the way it is being done. But it is also a scary project. I think that sometimes we're speeding a little too fast perhaps. – NMH-PF1

The sentiment that the *FRIKA* programme was 'speeding … too fast perhaps' contrasts the deliberateness of the *Musician 3.0* programme, with its institutionalised social practices for continuous renewal. However, even though *FRIKA* did not yet offer a class culture in 2019, the programme already practiced curriculum renewal with each enrolled student. As indicated in the beginning of this article, such innovative practices (e.g., new methods of evaluation that are not based on canonical works) can be both alluring and frightening to institutional members. The findings have thus far focused on the allure of innovation, but the following two subsections elaborate on how innovation can also lead to institutional resistance in HME.

Institutional resistance to innovating higher music education

Resistance to institutional control for innovation: The 'façade' of innovation

The third findings category is derived from the informants' resistance to how innovation has been encouraged in their HME organisation. Because music students and professors are considered 'disciplined' actors (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 486), resistance to disciplinary practices is likely to manifest itself as internal tensions in the informants. For instance, students and professors may want to conform to conflicting discourses from different parts of HME, thereby experiencing 'contradictions rooted in the differential attachment of subgroups to the values in play' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 487). This was illustrated in how the work of classical informants constituted institutional agency (e.g., lobbying for constructivist teaching methods) while being subjected to opposing disciplinary practices (e.g., exam criteria based on canonical works). The genre independent informants were also disruptive in their institutional work (e.g., programme renewal), yet the disciplinary practices of their programmes appear to have fostered the very social practices which constituted continuous renewal. Despite these differences, all informants have been subjected to the same overarching status quo ('reproducing') and disciplinary practices of their HME organisation (e.g., programme reports, opening hours, resources). Thus, the informants also experienced institutional resistance within themselves (as inner conflict) because of the changing discursive landscape.

Institutional resistance appeared to be constituted slightly differently at the two HME organisations. For instance, informants from HKU were more tolerant of innovation as a means to face issues of employability than informants from NMH were, indicating that their economic

underpinnings stem from different cultural heritage. This finding aligns with a study where the role of autonomy in the arts was examined in the 'social democratic state' of Norway and 'the world of independence' in the Netherlands (Kleppe, 2016). One of the professors from HKU noted that 'you are forced to change … especially in Holland' (HKU-PC1). In contrast, one of the students from NMH stated that 'the institutional leaders are very focused on innovation … but it's still important to maintain balance' (NMH-SF1). Several of the professors from NMH also expressed that innovation had become an 'accessory' in the conservatory world, and that the 'façade of innovation' (NMH-PF3) had not yet been critically addressed:

> Well, I feel like the institution accessorises with such terms [innovation]. But when you enter the rehearsal rooms, people don't actually do much innovative stuff. – NMH-PC1

> The credibility for this [implementation of the concept of innovation] is questionable. Do we really expect or wish to be innovative if we understand the term by its full meaning? – NMH-PF3

> There is a wish to innovate at the institution, but the question remains whether this is promoted by the teaching staff. How does one shake the ideas about what being a musician is about? How do you reach hundreds of our working teachers? And it doesn't happen overnight, and certainly not without changing their mindset. – NMH-PC2

These statements point towards a lack of discussion concerning how HME will transform as a result of the increased focus on innovation and what its consequent pitfalls might be. In other words, while the social practices which constitute innovation in HME were embraced and even established by the informants (e.g., student initiatives, student-centred teaching methods, new study programmes or elective courses), the call for (or the 'façade' of) innovation was addressed with hesitance. This ambivalence was reflected in both HME organisations:

> It often looks as though we're being encouraged to some form of disruptive innovation … To me that's a contradiction, my life depends on the existence of classical music … I'm not sure if a conservatoire is the right place to implement innovation in that sense, because it contradicts the ways of an institution. – NMH-PC3

> I think our institution is innovative in a lot of ways and extremely conservative in others. And then I think that this could be a healthy sign because we also preserve

> a long tradition. There are centuries with history and education to consider. One shouldn't just jump on every wave that comes our way. – NMH-PF1

> Of course, I'm always open for innovation, but what you see a lot is that people are thinking so much of innovation that the basic stuff is gone, and that's what I miss a lot. I miss quality. Just that somebody is really good. – HKU-PC2

> I'm not black and white about *Musician 3.0* because innovation has been overlooked a lot, I think; in classical music and jazz or other genres, things shouldn't become stagnant. That being said, I just again think that the ways to go about it are utterly and completely wrong. – HKU-SC3

> Probably we don't need this much technology and innovation ... Maybe we need to learn how to be ourselves and communicate and connect with our people instead of innovating ... What we really are as human beings, that's what we forget sometimes. – HKU-SM3

As mentioned by one of the informants, it could be a 'healthy sign' that parts of HME are viewed as conservative, given that one of the commonly accepted mandates of the institution is to conserve musical heritage and traditional craft skills (Angelo et al., 2019). Yet the mission of HME is twofold: the institution exists in part to preserve the history of music (that is, the status quo of 'reproducing'), in part to prepare graduates for their careers as professional musicians (Minors et al., 2017; Rowley et al., 2015; Johansson, 2012; Jørgensen, 2009). The final subsection of the findings elaborates on this duality by zooming in on how conflicting discourses can cause institutional politics in HME.

Resistance to institutional agency for innovation: Conflicting discourses

The fourth category is derived from the informants' experiences with how innovation has been resisted in their HME organisation. Whereas the first category elaborated on how the informants experienced innovation in their own institutional role, this final subsection presents the informants' experiences with resistance to innovation, even in areas that are often deemed 'innovative'. For instance, all informants expressed that an awareness of the music industry was crucial for today's music performance students, yet the student informants experienced career courses to be yet another 'reproducing' facet of HME. Several students were displeased with the career courses that had been offered to them, and some claimed that courses on entrepreneurship were 'irrelevant' (NMH-SF2), 'outdated' (NMH-SC2), and did

not communicate well (NMH-SC1). As innovative actors in their HME organisation, the students wished to develop their careers but were met with a rhetoric that did not speak to them:

> We have a course on the music industry … We talked a lot about developing artistic ideas, like, creating something that you can stand for as opposed to following the already trodden trail. But I didn't really like the course that much. But it's probably relevant for many others? – NMH-SC3

> Why don't we educate students to become freelancers? That's what most students want, but instead we're being told that "you probably won't succeed as fulltime musicians." – NMH-SC1

> Yes, we have a course on this topic … about yourself, what kind of musician do you want to become … I don't like the subject at all, but I think the teachers are okay. They joke a little about it: "Ha-ha, you are becoming musicians, no money." But they try their best. – HKU-SC1

> It's [entrepreneurship] actually really good in such a capitalistic society as in the Netherlands, or wherever, Western society. You need this skill! … They should teach it here because otherwise people die … That being said, I'm completely uninterested. – HKU-SC3

According to a study from Norway where ten teachers and leaders within the field of HME were interviewed, two separate directions were identified within an entrepreneurship discourse of knowledge in HME. In the first, a musician was considered 'an economic actor providing a service to meet market demands', whereas the second represented 'an autonomous agent who possesses the power, skill and drive to change and improve society' (Angelo et al., 2019, pp. 89–90). Thus, it might be that the student informants had been taught entrepreneurship according to the first direction ('economic actor') but could have responded better to the second ('autonomous agent'). Another Norwegian study found that even when seen as entrepreneurial, music students might resist the term 'entrepreneurship' to such a degree that it could 'prevent them from choosing to take an optional course or module in an institutional environment that may be using this language' (Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019, p. 408). Similarly, professor informants from this study described both Norwegian and Dutch music students as 'pragmatic' (NMH-PC2) and 'hard-working' (HKU-PM3) in terms of career development. A few informants stated that inner conflict could result in students:

> On one hand they [students] think they have to be smart and business-like, and on the other hand they are very much against it and have a resistance to it because it doesn't feel right or good to them. They tend to sometimes go into the more alternative non-profit communities … they are busy with the environment, they are busy with the animals, the planet ... They don't fit usually with the more business-like ideas about being an entrepreneur. It clashes. – HKU-PM3

> There are, of course, some [students] who don't want to "sell out," so there are mixed feelings about these things. But I think that students don't really know that much and are interested in learning more [about career development]. I remember that I appreciated having to work with entrepreneurship, even though I didn't like the teacher. – NMH-SF1

Thus, while the informants expressed that an awareness of the industry was crucial, they also expressed that career courses may cause internal tension (or 'mixed feelings') in students. Notably, career courses were described by student informants as 'outdated' and 'irrelevant', indicating that resistance to such courses may not only be caused by conflicting discourses around neoliberalism (as found in other studies) but, in fact, by a lack of innovation. One of the classical professors from HKU explained that 'we have to change, we have to innovate, we have to do different things, otherwise our jobs, our culture, our playing music are dying' (HKU-PC1). Despite the fact that innovation, like entrepreneurship, is strongly tied to the economic market, the identified institutional resistance in this study was directed at the *call* for innovation (that is, 'accessorising' with innovation), not at innovation itself (e.g., new musical genres, new study programmes). In fact, the need to balance tradition and innovation was expressed by all target groups to varying degrees, as illustrated throughout this entire section. The ways in which their HME organisation was 'innovated' upon were both appreciated and questioned by the informants. The discussion that follows centres on the implications of this unveiled landscape.

Discussion: Between innovation and tradition

Even though music students and professors might lobby for seemingly contrasting discursive changes, there are more commonalities than opposing factors underneath the identified institutional politics from this study. For instance, all institutional members must adhere to the same overarching disciplinary practices of their HME organisation (e.g., opening hours, reports), as well as consider broader societal changes such as issues of employability

(Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020; Bartleet et al., 2019; Reid et al., 2019; Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Allsup, 2015; Rowley et al., 2015; Bennett, 2012, 2008) and social inequities (Gaunt et al., 2021; Burnard, 2019; Minors et al., 2017). Yet, as found also in other studies on HME (e.g., González-Moreno, 2014; Gaunt et al., 2012; Nerland, 2007; Jørgensen, 2000), individuals are positioned differently in this discursive landscape based on the subject positions that are made available to them (Foucault, 1972/2010). Because the interplay between institutional agency (e.g., disruptive actors) and institutional control (e.g., disciplinary practices) is intricate and permeates all parts of HME, institutional members will likely experience institutional changes differently depending on their affiliation(s). It is therefore interesting that all informants from this study, albeit representing different subgroups of HME, expressed that innovation ought to be balanced with tradition (and vice versa). But what does this proposed balancing act imply exactly?

Recently, scholars have suggested that seemingly opposing values within HME can be 'partnered', as opposed to seen as competing priorities (Gaunt et al., 2021). In practice, this means embracing 'canon repertoire *and* making new work' (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 8), or pursuing both 'artistic imagination *and* social/cultural entrepreneurship' (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 9). As identified in the interviews from this study, classical informants wanted to preserve canon repertoire and technical 'quality' (HKU-PC2), *and* they wanted more 'creativity' (NMH-PC2) and 'aestheticism' (HKU-SC3) in their programmes. Similarly, genre independent informants pursued innovation through artistic exploration 'beyond borders' (HKU-SM2) *and* stated that connecting with people was more important than innovation (HKU-SM3). In fact, institutional resistance to innovating HME was deemed a 'healthy sign' due to the value of musical traditions (NMH-PF1). Building on the call to innovate HME, such attempts at 'partnering' values may be profitable for HME organisations. As the examples illustrate, the informants aimed for a 'yes, *and*' approach (as opposed to 'either or') to balance tradition with innovation in their artistic and institutional work. However, this balancing act was not employed without conflict. By influencing their institutional environment in innovative ways (e.g., project initiatives, new teaching methods), the informants' work challenged the status quo (of 'reproducing') and thereby constituted institutional politics.

Broadly speaking, the institutional politics associated with innovation in the two participating HME organisations appeared to emerge in two ways: on the one hand, as internal tension within individuals due to conflicting discourses; on the other, as tension points between 'disciplined' and 'disruptive' individuals and/or subgroups by virtue of conflicting disciplinary practices (e.g., different methods for evaluation). This does not mean that various subgroups of HME conflict with one another, but rather that music students and professors are typically disciplined to such a degree that being exposed to the social/musical practices of other

subgroups might be uncomfortable, even when the practices in question are deemed valuable or interesting. Indeed, institutional change is often uncomfortable for institutional members (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017), perhaps particularly so in HME due to the perception that music is 'dying' (HKU-PC1). The notion that institutional change is required for the sake of survival could explain why some HME organisations have become tolerant of innovation as a means to attract new audiences, as was the case with the genre independent programmes (see also NAIP European Master of Music, 2021). Yet, if innovation can set the stage for new and original art in HME and help graduates position themselves uniquely as professional musicians in a crowded market (Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019), why is there institutional resistance?

It has been argued for some time now that HME is under pressure and that HME organisations need to develop process-oriented methods to renew from within to adapt to a changing society (e.g., Haddon & Burnard, 2015; Johansson, 2012). Still, members of HME may associate innovation with the 'crumbling' of entities (Sogner, 2018) that results in 'dismantled' institutions (Moore, 2016). Indeed, the call for innovation was found to challenge the status quo (of 'reproducing') in this study, opposing the 'primacy of composition' (Burnard, 2014, p. 78). However, institutional resistance can be informative to institutional leaders, revealing the lived experiences of institutional members such as how the increased focus on innovation in HME was deemed a façade (NMH-PF3) and an accessory (NMH-PC1). In fact, both music students and professors are dependent upon the conservation of musical practices to perform their institutional roles (Yau, 2019; Angelo et al., 2019; Johansson, 2012). Thus, the call to innovate HME may very well be a 'contradiction' (NMH-PC3) to some institutional members. The genre independent professor who considered the innovative *FRIKA* programme to be 'speeding a little too fast perhaps' (NMH-PF1) noted that it could be 'healthy' for the conservatory to inhabit some resistance. But, if so, how can institutional resistance be met in constructive ways?

Because institutions change over time, institutional resistance may be inevitable during periods of transformation. Due to the delimitations of this study, I can offer no conclusion regarding the overall institutional resistance to the call for innovation in HME. What I can claim, though, is that there has been an evident lack of critical discussions concerning the role of innovation in HME and that the informants were concerned with both this shortage and with a consequent 'parading' of innovation. Though the genre independent *Musician 3.0* and *FRIKA* programmes were praised for continuously adapting their curriculum and teaching methods, they were also described as being 'a little risky' (NMH-PF1) and, moreover, to be executed 'utterly and completely wrong' (HKU-SC3). What, then, can institutional resistance to new study programmes tell us? The active recruitment of 'disruptive' students could mean that HME organisations are able to renew from within (Hakkarainen, 2016; Carruthers, 2019) and consider 'how young people's initial motivation and love for music can be nurtured'

(Johansson, 2012, p. 59). However, the evolving disciplinary practices (e.g., exam/audition criteria) of new programmes could also construct a new 'normal' subject (Foucault, 1972/2010, 1994/2020) which ceases to be disruptive if institutional control is left unattended over time. If met constructively, resistance may shed light on such pitfalls.

This discussion is not intended to further the call for innovation in HME, nor to discourage it, but to present the nuances found in this study. Though the informants did overall experience the selected genre independent programmes to be innovative and a positive addition to their HME organisation, the increased focus on innovation in HME also presents several pitfalls. A final example is that music students may easily become strained from being both 'conservative' (NMH-PC1), 'hard-working' (HKU-PM3) and 'busy with the environment' (HKU-PM3) in their efforts to balance innovation with tradition on their own terms. Because today's students are expected to not only develop as professionals but also become responsible citizens (Gaunt et al., 2021; Angelo et al., 2019; Bennett et al., 2019; O'Neill, 2019), they might experience inner tension due to the contradictory state in which many of them are positioned: expected to be dedicated to their craft (as disciplined actors) while innovating in their professional careers (as disruptive actors and/or 'protean' musicians); being subjected to the institutional control of their HME organisation (e.g., grades, curriculum) while simultaneously meeting the social expectations of other subgroups and individuals (e.g., teachers, peers). Thus, if innovation is intended to unite different subgroups of HME in facing societal changes together, would it not be wise to constructively discuss this institutional change?

Concluding remarks: Renewing higher music education

In this article, I have discussed some of the implications behind the increased focus on innovating HME. However, the discursive landscape of HME is of such complexity that it has been challenging to decipher the institutional politics that drive this institutional change. Future studies on institutional change in HME could benefit from employing organisational institutionalism in the examination of institutional forces, for instance with the notion of institutional *isomorphism* (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Based on the presented study, I conclude that processes for renewal may be found within genre independent programmes. Moreover, institutional resistance to seemingly innovative practices can be informative for institutional leaders of HME organisations because institutional politics can reveal underlying pitfalls that may be worthy of further examination. Finally, I posit that it could be helpful for music students and professors who are experiencing internal tension during processes of institutional change to consider 'partnering' innovation with tradition, and that HME organisations may benefit from addressing this required balancing act.

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Article 3

Ski-Berg, V. & Røyseng, S. (submitted version).
'Chasing legitimacy?' Institutional change in higher music education.
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‘Chasing legitimacy?’ Institutional change in higher music education

Institutional change is being called for to renew higher music education (HME). But what institutional pressures, specifically, are driving these calls, and how are HME organisations responding to pressures to change? By turning to institutional theory, we lean on the concept of institutional isomorphism to shed light on how HME organisations may be navigating pressures to appear legitimate in the field to secure organisational survival. Drawing from a comparative case study of two HME organisations from Norway and the Netherlands, in which strategic plans and interview transcripts with students and professors have been analysed, we discuss how change processes are intertwined with an organisational quest for legitimacy. The findings suggest that there are overarching pressures to change in the field of HME, and that variables in the institutional environment indicate how processes of change may unfold. Finally, implications of this unveiled landscape are discussed.

Higher music education; institutional legitimacy; institutional theory; institutional change; contested practices

The need for institutional legitimacy

Several ideas of the need for change have revolved in higher music education (HME) for quite some time. Recently, we have seen a call for implementing entrepreneurship and innovation in study programmes (Gaunt et al, 2021; Schediwy et al, 2018; Minors et al., 2017) and a turn towards student-centred learning (Benjamins et al, 2022; Author 1, 2022; Tuovinen, 2018; McPhail, 2013), to mention a few trends. Such ideas have not emerged in a vacuum. The sense of urgency associated with such ideas can be related both to requirements and expectations from funding authorities and norms and practices in the international sector of HME. The institutional landscape in which HME organisations have responded is a context where some practices appear as more legitimate than others.

Previous research has mainly viewed the most prominent change processes of HME as necessary in order to become more effective in preparing students for their professional careers as musicians (López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2021; de Reizabal & Gómez, 2020) and as a more

or less unfortunate outcome of neoliberal trends (Allsup, 2015). In this article, we draw on institutional theory to better understand the dynamics of such change processes. Central to institutional theory is the idea that legitimacy is crucial for organisational survival and success (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Furthermore, legitimacy is seen as a result of acting in ways that are deemed appropriate in the institutional environment. We argue that focusing on legitimacy is particularly acute in HME. While the survival of organisations in fields where results are easily quantifiable might be related to technical efficiency (e.g., business organisations), the survival of HME organisations depends on more complex legitimacy requirements. Recent research on arts organisations indicates a growing need for legitimation work and that this has become a greater responsibility for leaders (Kann-Rasmussen, 2016; Larsen, 2013).

When we put institutional legitimacy at the centre of our inquiries, our focus is on the extent and manner in which the activities and characteristics of HME organisations are questioned. Another focus is on the degree to which formal policies (such as of entrepreneurship, innovation, and student-centredness) are aligned with organisational practices. Institutional theory fascilitates an understanding of how HME organisations are embedded in an organisational field with specific dynamics where external and internal pressures are simultaneously present (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017; Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017; Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). Accordingly, change processes can be observed both at the level of organisational strategies and in the content and methods of actual study programmes.

On this backdrop, the aim of this article is to explore the degree to which and the ways in which change processes in HME are intertwined with the need for legitimacy in institutional environments. More specifically, we present a comparative case study of two HME organisations from Norway and the Netherlands, and present findings based on an analysis of their strategic plans and interview transcripts with twenty-four music students and professors. In essence, we ask the following:

- What practices are being called for to change HME, and what institutional pressures appear to be driving these calls?
- How are the participating students and professors experiencing institutional change in HME?
- How are the participating HME organisations responding to pressures to change, and what are the implications of this unveiled landscape?

Institutional theory

Institutional theory is foremost about 'how social choices are shaped, mediated and channelled by the institutional environment' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 55). As such, *institutions* are at the centre of this theoretical framework, defined as 'enduring patterns of social practice' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 477). Because institutions change over time, as 'enduring patterns of social practice' transform, it is not *if* but rather *how* and *why* institutional change occurs that is of interest. It must be noted that what is commonly referred to as HME 'institutions' in research on HME are likely referred to as 'organisations' within the educational system by institutional scholars. Indeed, it is the *organisational field* that institutional theory is concerned with. The *institution* that is HME, on the other hand, serves as an overarching unit for HME organisations within the organisational field.

In short, institutions may be viewed as the overarching social orders that over time constitute society at large. Institutional scholars investigate the interplay between these social orders, considering how organisations are affected by the organisational field in which they are positioned (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) and how they might respond to various institutional pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The premise of this article follows the theoretical claim that organisational survival is dependent upon institutional legitimacy. Appearing legitimate in the field can increase an organisation's 'prospects for survival because constituents would not question the organization's intent and purpose' (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 57). Organisations conform to 'rationalized myths' in society about what constitutes a proper organisation, thereby 'morphing' with the surrounding field, constituting *institutional isomorphism* (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Thus, if 'institutions exist to the extent that they are powerful' (Lawrence & Buchanan, 2017, p. 477), then HME organisations can only survive if they appear legitimate in the organisational field.

This constructivist approach to institutional theory contrasts the economically oriented notion that organisations survive by having their efficiency needs met. To shed light on this distinction, we employ the concept of *institutional pressure* (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), separating between *coercive*, *mimetic* or *normative* pressures from the field: HME organisations may be coerced into meeting governmental requirements due to resource dependency, or stakeholders might demand institutional change due to political stakes; HME organisations may attempt to imitate successful counterparts to appear equally legitimate; or be pressured to follow new norms when the mandates of profession are changing. Indeed, these pressures may exist at the same time and even present conflicting pressures. Moreover, professional groups are carriers of norms and may resist 'contested' practices which run 'counter to institutional norms' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 86). Resistance can vary among institutional members and

typically constitutes a complicated institutional landscape. Consequently, organisations may engage in *decoupling*: they 'abide only superficially by institutional pressure and adopt new structures without necessarily implementing the related practices' (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017, p. 80). Decoupling can occur in one or several areas of an organisation, to various degrees, and is therefore difficult to study. The following section will explain the methodological decisions behind the fieldwork undertaken to examine these areas of interest.

Methodology

The aim of this research project has been to examine how institutional change unfolds in HME. For this, two HME organisations were selected to participate in a comparative case study due to their recently institutionalised genre independent study programmes. This informed the study with a deviant-case analysis (Silverman, 2014, p. 99), in so far as being genre independent deviates from the established norms of HME. The fieldwork consisted of two data sources in the forms of qualitative interviews and strategic plans from the participating organisations. Moreover, a comparative design was chosen to ensure several target groups based on theoretical sampling (Silverman, 2014, pp. 97–100) by targeting subgroups within music education research (e.g., 'teacher' versus 'student'). To recruit applicable informants, a few professors from each organisation assisted in a chain-referral sampling by namedropping applicable music students and professors who were affiliated with classical and genre independent programmes, and who were considered 'innovative.' This purposive sampling (Silverman, 2014, p. 61) was employed to recruit informants who could provide information on institutional change. A balance in instruments, ethnicity and gender was also encouraged but not always possible to achieve.

Before starting the data collection, the study was approved by the *Norwegian Centre for Research Data*, including an ethics review. Thereafter, twenty-four semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted individually during 2019. There were twelve informants from each organisation, and three levels of comparison resulted from the selected target groups: (1) music performance bachelor students (coded 'S') versus professors ('P'); (2) study programmes in classical ('C') versus genre independent music ('F' for *FRIKA* or 'M' for *Musician 3.0*); and (3) the *Norwegian Academy of Music* ('NMH') versus *Utrechts Conservatorium* from the *University of the Arts Utrecht* ('HKU'). The interviews were recorded, transcribed, anonymised, then coded in *NVivo*. The Norwegian interview transcripts have been translated into English, whereas the interviews in the Netherlands were conducted in English. Afterwards, strategic plans were gathered from the webpages of the participating organisations, also in English,

and these documents function as a tool for building institutional legitimacy (Stensaker et al., 2019). After the data collection, the interview transcripts were compared to the strategic plans.

In the analysis of the collected data, three 'contested' practices in HME were targeted: 1) *student-centredness*; 2) *entrepreneurship* (education); and 3) *innovation*. These emerging practices were targeted through theoretical sampling (Silverman, 2014, pp. 97–100) drawing from literature on HME, then analysed with the theoretical framework. Specifically, we examined how institutional pressures may be linked to the emerging contested practices, thereby identifying pressures within the collected data as well as in research on HME. It is worth noting that one of the participating organisations had published more text than the other, resulting in an unequal amount of secondary data. Purposive sampling also adds a bias to the study, as does [hidden for the purpose of blind peer review]. However, the strategic plans and the number of informants increase the validity of the identified findings, as does the alignment with research on HME. In the next sections, these findings are presented in several subcategories, accounting first for the identified contested practices, then for the identified institutional pressures behind these institutional changes.

Identified contested practices

Student-centredness as strategy and experience

The notion of empowering the student voice echoes in research on HME (Benjamins et al, 2022; Minors et al., 2017; McPhail, 2013). Though widely recognised today, student-centred practices are still considered 'contested' in this article because student-centredness is often implied to oppose the more dominant and transmissive 'master-apprentice' teaching model in HME (Yau, 2019). However, student-centredness is 'by definition contextual, context-dependent, and emergent' (Tuovinen, 2018, pp. 70–71), and has been found to encompass both artistry and craftsmanship, wellbeing and career development in HME (Author 1, 2022). How, then, was student-centredness reflected in the participating organisations?

The strategic plan of the *Norwegian Academy of Music* (hereby NMH) spans from 2015 to 2025 and defines five main themes, the first of which is 'Students in the forefront'. At the webpages of the academy, it is specified that NMH 'places the independence and artistic identity of students at the forefront', and that 'it is in the interaction between the Academy's expertise and the students' identity that academic independent learning is fostered'. Some of the aims in this strategy's theme are to facilitate a learning environment where students' independence

can be developed and to view students as 'inquisitive artists'. Moreover, NMH aims to increase 'awareness and knowledge of what contributes to students' health and wellbeing' (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2022).

The strategic plan of *HKU University of the Arts Utrecht* (hereby HKU) spans from 2019 to 2024 and defines six main themes, of which 'Active participation' can be connected directly to the notion of student-centredness. It is explained that both 'students and staff are active participants in our learning and working community' and take responsibility 'both on a personal level and for the HKU … community'. It is further elaborated that 'active participation goes hand in hand with ownership' and that 'students are owners of their personal study path'. HKU students 'determine their own pathway and choices' and will also be challenged to take this responsibility (HKU University of the Arts, 2019).

As illustrated in Table 1, institutional change related to student-centredness was described differently at NMH and HKU. Informants from HKU spoke of how teachers guided students towards their individual pathways (e.g., 'different programme', 'special talent'). In comparison, informants from NMH discussed the evolving student-teacher relationship with dilemmas concerning ownership and responsibility (e.g., 'too much responsibility', 'experiment with this'). This identified discrepancy could be the result of different institutional pressures, or it could perhaps indicate that HKU has worked strategically with this shift longer than NMH has.

Keywords	Informant	Example quotation
Students are individuals	HKU-PM1	"In very early stages you try to figure out what the special talents of a student are and interest fields. You try to shake it up, but then at the same time you try to create a space, where that talent can be addressed and developed."
Students are individuals	HKU-PC2	"Each student has a different programme with me."
Ownership	HKU-SM3	"I think they guide us … on a higher level, but on the detail … Well, it's up to you to find your way."
Teachers are individuals	NMH-PC2	"The academy needs to provide students with different teachers for different outcomes, and we do experiment with this nowadays."
Balanced ownership	NMH-PC3	"We have seen in student feedbacks that some students think it's too much responsibility, that they want more guidance and become confused when the teacher only asks questions."
Ownership	NMH-SC2	"It's important that students are in front of their own career … That's more important than being in front at the academy. To be in front of one's own life."

Table 1. Informants on student-centredness in higher music education.

Entrepreneurship as strategy and experience

Though entrepreneurship education has been continuously endorsed over the latter decades, its related practices are still considered 'contested' in this article because they tend to oppose the majority of the institutional activities in HME. In fact, the very term 'entrepreneurship' is still debated to this day because of its neoliberal roots (Allsup, 2015) and is often considered ambiguous. However, it is argued that there is a genuine need for students to be equipped with entrepreneurial skills (Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019; Schediwy et al., 2018), and entrepreneurship education is often linked together with issues of employability (López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2021; de Reizabal & Gómez, 2020). For the purpose of this article, the notion of 'entrepreneurship' is considered ambiguous in HME and is identified as career development and professional practice.

In NMH's strategy, the notion of entrepreneurship is perhaps most visible in the core theme titled 'in our encounter with the future'. The theme's aim is that the academy's programmes are 'adapted to a musical community in the process of change' by providing 'a basis for a variety of career choice' and ensuring 'that students who are about to enter working life have acquired good qualifications'. It is further stated that 'we will expand our contact with workplaces and former students in order to enhance the connection of the academic programmes with professional practice'. Furthermore, the recurring notion of institutional 'renewal' speaks to the wish to be engaged with society while also holding a leading position: 'We will define society's need for higher music education and identify the need for adaptation' (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2022).

In HKU's strategy, it is claimed that HKU 'has always been concerned with … creative entrepreneurship'. It is stated that HKU graduates 'have a strong position on the job market' and that HKU aims to 'actively present a realistic idea of the new professional practices of artists and creative professionals'. The strategy moreover asserts that HKU is 'confident in propagating the narrative about developments in the arts and the creative industry, and the role our graduates play'. In the theme 'HKU … at the heart of society,' entrepreneurship is evidenced in how 'students are involved in what is happening in society and are able to reflect critically on how they can contribute to these issues on the basis of their creativity' (HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, 2019).

As illustrated in Table 2, entrepreneurship education was seen as a necessity in HME for graduates to be equipped with career skills. However, HKU appeared to have reframed the concept of 'entrepreneurship' (into 'dynamic artistry'), whereas NMH was still in the process of moulding it (e.g., 'difficult term'). Informants from both NMH and HKU mentioned that the concept had been adapted from the corporate world, yet the organisations are positioned

in different climates, that is, HKU in the neoliberal Netherlands versus NMH in the social-democratic state of Norway (Kleppe 2016). This difference might have affected the degree to which entrepreneurship is 'contested,' as evidenced also in the strategic plans.

Keywords	Informant	Example quotation
(Re-)definition	HKU-PM2	"We call it dynamic artistry ... There are different ways to look at entrepreneurs. One way is that the outside world asks something of you, and you can provide that or not ... The other way of looking at it is that as an artist you have a personality and you have luggage and you have content, and from that perspective on you offer something to the world."
Strategic placement	HKU-PC1	"In the beginning I think it's important not to think business-like too much ... Develop your skills, you know, because otherwise you are trying to sell a product which is maybe not your product."
Necessity	HKU-SM1	"It's like a key part of being a musician."
Corporate term; Necessity	NMH-PC2	"It is a difficult term because it was adapted uncritically from the corporate world ... not really compatible with the idea of autonomous art ... It's almost taboo to admit that one wants to make money, which is a paradox, because all musicians need to make money."
Strategic placement	NMH-SF1	"I think the academy tries to ease students into it, to place entrepreneurship strategically throughout the studies."
Necessity is lacking	NMH-SC1	"Why don't we educate students to become freelancers? That's what most students want."

Table 2. Informants on entrepreneurship in higher music education.

Innovation as strategy and experience

Over the latter decade, HME organisations have been encouraged to innovate in tandem with a changing society (Schmidt, 2019; Haddon & Burnard, 2015; Johansson, 2012). Indeed, HME organisations are now curating 'innovation agendas' (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 2), yet despite this overarching call to innovate the term 'innovation' is often left undefined by scholars and institutional leaders. Similar to the term 'entrepreneurship,' 'innovation' may cause institutional resistance if associated with neoliberalism, yet innovation may also be about pushing the boundaries of art and 'innovative creativity' (Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019, p. 408). For the purpose of this article, innovative practices in HME are considered to be 'contested,' in so far as innovations challenge the status quo. How, then, was innovation reflected in the participating organisations?

Innovation is only mentioned twice in NMH's strategy yet may be identified in the academy's aim for institutional renewal: 'The academy faces the future with the wish to renew itself'. It

is further stated in the strategy that the academy 'has a high-quality culture that contributes to development and renewal' and 'will face the future with an openness for innovation and new areas of expertise' (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2022). Compared to this, innovation is mentioned eighteen times in HKU's strategy, be it 'creative innovation' or 'innovative professional practices', or through the 'continual revision of … innovative curriculum'). Indeed, the university's guiding principle is 'that art and creativity are sorely needed for bringing movement and innovation to modern society' (HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, 2019).

As illustrated in Table 3, the genre independent study programmes were deemed 'innovative' by the informants. Though innovation was considered to be necessary for institutional renewal (e.g., 'things shouldn't become stagnant'), some informants claimed that innovation could come at the cost of quality (e.g., 'I miss quality'). Mostly, there was a consensus that innovation ought to be balanced with tradition in HME. Compared to the former contested practices, however, institutional change in favour of innovation was addressed with less urgency by the informants. This was inconsistent with HKU's strategic plan, which may perhaps indicate that innovation has become part of the taken-for-granted culture of the organisation, a stark contrast to NMH where several of the informants experienced innovation as an institutional 'accessory'. To further examine the nuances presented thus far, the next subsection presents how institutional pressures within the field may be affecting the two studied HME organisations.

Keywords	Informant	Example quotation
Innovative programme	HKU-PM3	"It [*Musician 3.0*] is quite exceptional and unique ... We connect the music part with other disciplines, not only on stage, but within people themselves ... which is quite new and innovative within the conservatory world."
Balancing tradition and innovation	HKU-PC2	"Of course, I'm always open for innovation, but what you see a lot is that people are thinking so much of innovation that the basic stuff is gone, and that's what I miss a lot. I miss quality."
Innovative programme	HKU-SM3	"You can't even imagine beforehand, you know, it's so different every time ... so I really see much innovation in our study [*Musician 3.0*]."
Balancing tradition and innovation	HKU-SC3	"... innovation has been overlooked a lot, I think; in classical music and jazz or other genres, things shouldn't become stagnant."
Balancing tradition and innovation	NMH-PF1	"I think our institution is innovative in a lot of ways and extremely conservative in others. And then I think that this could be a healthy sign because we also preserve a long tradition."
Accessorising with innovation	NMH-PC1	"Well, I feel like the institution accessorises with such terms [*innovation*]. But when you enter the rehearsal rooms, people don't actually do much innovative stuff."
Innovative programme	NMH-SF3	"My impression is that very few conservatories offer similar programmes. I think it's [*FRIKA*] a cool innovation."

Table 3. Informants on innovation in higher music education.

Identified institutional pressures

Mimetic pressure to embrace student-centredness

The notion of 'student-centredness' is first and foremost connected to an overarching shift in the educational system at large from *teaching* to *learning*. This institutional change is therefore part of a larger movement in which a constructivist lens is now being employed in education to address the power asymmetry between teacher and student (Tuovinen, 2018). According to institutional scholars, uncertainty can be 'a powerful force that encourages imitation' (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 151). Notably, the shift towards student-centredness is positioned in a time 'of significant and speedy change' that affects 'what, how and why we teach what we teach' in HME, including an increased focus on 'the uniquely individual experiences of each student' (Broad & O'Flynn, 2012, p. 4). Indeed, scholars discuss 'what it would mean to renegotiate the Master–apprentice contract' to 'an Apprentice-master setting' (Allsup, 2015, p. 259). Research moreover explores how one-to-one instrumental tuition can be an arena for individual growth in students (Yau, 2019; McPhail, 2013; Johansson, 2012). Considering this messaging to empower the student, we have found mimetic processes to be present in the two participating organisations, substantiated by the ways in which scholars advise that the time is ripe for '…changing ways of doing things with a firm emphasis … on the student voice' (Minors et al., 2017, p. 470).

Coercive pressure to implement entrepreneurship and innovation

Over the latter decades the concepts of 'entrepreneurship' and 'innovation' have been employed repeatedly in higher education, often related to major changes in the labour market (e.g., López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2021; de Reizabal & Gómez, 2020; Haddon & Burnard, 2015). When HME organisations develop strategies and educational content with these labels it can also be understood as an outcome of coercive pressure. If publicly funded, HME organisations must adhere to requirements that come with the support. Such requirements are often formulated quite specifically in annual grant letters. For instance, in the 2019 grant letter from the Ministry of Education and Research to NMH, it is stated that 'NMH's study portfolio must be relevant and adapted to societal needs and a changing music life', that a 'revision' is needed to accomplish this, including an increase of 'minimum 25%' in postgraduate courses (Kunnskapsdepartement, 2019). Subsequently, the organisation is asked to report annual performance on different measures related to the given requirements.

A key difference between the studied organisations is that NMH is publicly funded whereas HKU is funded privately. Thus, when it is stated in the strategic plan that HKU 'wants to help

shape the ambition to make the Netherlands the most creative economy in Europe' (HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, 2019), this is linked to normative pressure. Building on this difference, we find it interesting that informants from NMH were more reluctant to neoliberal terms than informants from HKU, given that strong coercive pressures to implement a new practice may lead organisations to engage in decoupling (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017). If neoliberal terms are enforced onto HME organisations, such coercive pressure from governmental messaging could explain, at least in part, why there is still institutional resistance to contested practices associated with neoliberalism.

Normative pressure to contextualise higher music education

At present time, a re-conceptualisation of HME is taking place rooted in 'a social and moral turn based on embracing musical practices as social process' (Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 16). Scholars are asking HME organisations 'to consider whether they are still holding a gatekeeping role that is now redundant' (Haddon & Burnard, 2015, p. 272). This normative pressure to contextualise HME was reflected also in the strategic plans of NMH and HKU through sentiments such as being 'aware of current trends and developmental features in society' (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2022) and being positioned 'at the heart of society' (HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, 2019, p. 9). Such ideas can be understood as normative pressure in the sense that they reflect norms and worldviews that have developed within a professional community. Associations like the *European Association of Conservatoires* (AEC) might be of importance in establishing such norms and worldviews. For instance, within the first pillar of AEC's strategic plan for 2016–2021, it is stated that AEC 'will promote excellence' in HME by 'investigating … innovative practice,' as well as 'support … graduates' by 'promoting the integration of entrepreneurial skills to prepare students for their future roles as musicians' (European Association of Conservatoires, 2016, p. 3).

Whereas the shift towards student-centredness is linked to mimetic processes in HME and the implementation of neoliberal concepts are found to be coerced onto HME (if publicly funded), we identify normative pressure to be present in all the contested practices. As illustrated throughout the findings section, there appears to be normative pressure for institutional change itself, in so far as institutional leaders and scholars consider it necessary for HME organisations to contextualise, that is, to adapt to societal changes and to educate flexible career workers. In the final sections of this article, this normative pressure for institutional change will be discussed, building on how and why contested practices may vary among HME organisations.

Discussion

Increasing globalisation is a major reason why the higher education sector is changing (Stensaker et al., 2019; Schmidt, 2019), affecting both NMH and HKU as part of the same internationalised organisational field. Indeed, music scholars across national borders are now addressing 'complex institutional change in an ever-changing and increasingly complex world' (Haddon & Burnard, 2015, p. 277). Yet when HME organisations pursue the same trajectory for institutional change in global competition to gain legitimacy, the degree to which contested practices are being implemented will inevitably vary. What, then, are the variables of such institutional change?

We propose that it may be useful to consider processes of change as they relate to *context* and *time*. Though the studied HME organisations were (mostly) affected by the same institutional pressures to implement contested practices, variables were found in their institutional environment. Compared to older conservatories, both NMH and HKU may be considered 'young,' as the former was founded in 1973 and the latter in 1987. However, the former organisation is positioned in the social-democratic state of Norway and the latter in the 'world of independence' that is the Netherlands (Kleppe, 2016). Moreover, the Norwegian conservatory is publicly funded whereas the Dutch conservatory is part of a larger higher education organisation that is funded privately. Such variables affect the degree to which student-centredness, entrepreneurship, and innovation are considered to be contested or legitimate practices in the two studied HME organisations.

Context-wise, the Netherlands is more liberal than the social-democratic state Norway. Studies on entrepreneurship education have found Dutch music students to embrace a holistic approach (Schediwy et al., 2018) and Norwegian music students to be more reluctant to market terminology (Toscher & Bjørnø, 2019). This contextual nuance was reflected in this study as well: HKU responded to the normative pressure to prepare music students for their professional careers with notions of 'creative entrepreneurship' and 'dynamic artistry' whereas NMH was coerced into adapting to the changing market. Due to the limitations of this study, we cannot dissect the timeline of these processes of change. However, some variables were evident: HKU had reframed 'entrepreneurship' whereas NMH was in the process of moulding the term; the concept of 'innovation' was also less contested in HKU than in NMH; and HKU may have worked strategically with the shift towards student-centredness for a longer period than NMH (e.g., 'each student has a different programme' versus 'we do experiment with this').

Overall, institutional change was identified in both studied HME organisations. Their strategic plans referenced processes of change to a large degree (e.g., 'the need for adaptation,' 'face the

future,' 'present a realistic idea of the new … practices'), as did the informants (e.g., 'experiment with this nowadays,' 'adapted uncritically,' 'the basic stuff is gone,' 'is quite new and innovative'). Building on this landscape, in which the studied HME organisations are put under normative pressure for institutional change, we note that the variables portrayed above may be helpful in uncovering why certain practices are considered more or less contested during processes of change. In light of the growing need for legitimation work in arts organisations (Kann-Rasmussen, 2016; Larsen, 2013), we also underline that the quest for legitimacy may be particularly acute in HME. Indeed, the identified contested practices from this study appear to surface from an overarching shared quest to respond to pressures for institutional change. If so, then HME organisations are indeed chasing legitimacy, and organisational institutional theory may be a fruitful tool in the examination of this quest for survival.

Concluding remarks

The aim of this article has been to explore the degree to which and the ways in which change processes in HME are intertwined with the need for legitimacy in institutional environments. We conclude that identifying the nuances in organisational responses and the variables in the institutional environment of HME organisations can help scholars and leaders uncover processes of change in HME. Moreover, we assert that there is a lack of and need for this research. When pressures for legitimacy are increasing there is also an increased risk that HME organisations may engage in decoupling. This could have consequences for other institutional changes (e.g., addressing issues of social inequities), if leaders say one thing but do another. Because it is timely to renegotiate what HME is about, we propose that organisational institutional theory may be a fruitful tool in the examination of institutional change in research on HME moving forward.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Consent from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

Vurdering

Referansenummer

874502

Prosjekttittel

Institutionalizing the Unknown: Uncovering the Protean Music Student

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Norges musikkhøgskole / CEMPE - Senter for fremragende utdanning i musikkutøving

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Veronica Ski-Berg, veronica.ski-berg@nmh.no, tlf: 48155503

Type prosjekt

Forskerprosjekt

Prosjektperiode

03.09.2018 - 30.09.2022

Vurdering (2)

27.01.2022 - Vurdert

Personverntjenester har vurdert endringen registrert 03.01.2022.

Vi har nå registrert 02.01.2023 som ny sluttdato for behandling av personopplysninger.

Vi vil følge opp ved ny planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til videre med prosjektet!

18.02.2019 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 18.02.2019, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan

starte.

MELD ENDRINGER
Dersom behandlingen av personopplysninger endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. På våre nettsider informerer vi om hvilke endringer som må meldes. Vent på svar før endringer gjennomføres.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 24.09.2021. Opplysningen skal oppbevares til videre forskning frem til 01.01.2022.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER
Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER
NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp underveis (hvert annet år) og ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet/pågår i tråd med den behandlingen som er dokumentert.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Kajsa Amundsen
Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

Appendix 2

The interview guide

Interview guide for research project

«*Institutionalizing the Unknown: Uncovering the Protean Music Student*»

The purpose of this interview guide is to prepare you for the types of questions that will be asked during the interview. As already mentioned, questions regarding your relation to other students and professors are of particular relevance, as well as how you think about the 'student in front' concept and how it relates to higher music education (HME). The study focuses on general observations on these topics. No third parties will be recognized in the final articles.

The interview itself will have a duration of 30-45 minutes and is semistructured. This means that the interview will take place as an open-ended conversation, in which the interview themes are allowed to unfold organically. The aim of the interview guide is that all questions are asked, and that the order of the questions can vary for each interview candidate. (The exception of this is the first and last question, for structure.) Other questions may develop during the interview, depending on the perspectives and experiences that you bring to the conversation.

Interview guide

Category	**Question**	**Comment**
Opening question	Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?	Relevance, experience
Warming up	What do you think is important for music students today?	Perspectives, experience
Student-centredness	What does 'student-centred' mean to you? (NMH: What does 'student in front' mean to you?)	Associations, experiences Comment on NMH's strategy
Entrepreneurship	What does 'entrepreneurship' mean to you?	Associations, experiences
Innovation	What does 'innovation' mean to you?	Associations, experiences
Relations	How do you think students relate to [insert the three aforementioned terms]?	Assumptions, associations and experiences
	How do you think professors relate to [insert the three aforementioned terms]?	Assumptions, associations and experiences
Cooling down	Based on the topics we have discussed, what do you think is important for HME today and in the future?	Reflecting on the interview, perspectives
End question	Is there anything else you would like to share?	Associations

If you have any questions regarding the interview guide or the research project itself, please feel free to contact project leader Veronica Ski-Berg (veronica.ski-berg@nmh.no) at any time.

Appendix 3

Information letters and consent forms

Request for participation in research project

«*Institutionalizing Innovation: Uncovering the Protean Music Student*»

This is a request for you to participate in a research project that will take place in Norway and in the Netherlands in 2019. The purpose of the study is to better understand quality in higher music education (hereby HME): what do music students need today, and what should HME entail? The study is a PhD project (2018-2022) affiliated with the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. This document will inform you of what participation in this project will entail.

Purpose
The aim of this research project is to achieve a better understanding of how student-centered learning in HME is experienced by students and professors. In order to achieve this, students and professors from HME institutions in Norway and in the Netherlands will be interviewed in 2019. Questions regarding creative learning and the individual's experience with learning environments are of particular relevance. However, the study focuses on general observations, and therefore no third parties will be recognized in the final articles.

Who is responsible?
This research project is conducted by research fellow Veronica Ski-Berg, affiliated with the Centre for Excellence in Music Performance Education (CEMPE) at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, Norway. You may contact her at: veronica.ski-berg@nmh.no

Why am I a potential interview candidate?
You have been contacted because your experiences and perspectives may be valuable to this study and because your profile aligns with one of the target groups in this study. Your contact information was gathered from public sources (e.g. a website) and/or by the means of networking within the field, but the permission to gather and process your personal information further (e.g. name, age, gender, profession/study) is yours to give at the end of this document. The obligatory guidelines of NSD (the Norwegian Centre for Research Data) will, as mentioned under *Privacy policy*, protect the processing of your information during this study.

What does participation entail?
Participation in this research project entails an interview, and it is required of you that you reserve 60 minutes at our agreed meeting time. The interview itself will have a duration of approximately 45 minutes, and the interview will be recorded. Afterwards, you will get the opportunity to approve the selected quotations before publication. It is intended that you cannot be recognized from the citations in any publication. The interviews are planned to be conducted in the Netherlands in the end of October and/or the beginning of November 2019.

Field observations may become relevant during this project, meaning observations of teaching situations in HME. This would be documented solely with field notes, and you are free to pass on this step of the project even if you wish to participate in the interview process.

Participation is voluntary
It is voluntary to participate in this research project. Therefore, if you choose to participate, you can

withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. All of the collected information will automatically be anonymized if you should choose to do so.

Privacy policy — how information is stored and processed
The personal information that is gathered about you will only be used for the purpose that is explained to you in this document. All of the gathered information is confidential and will be processed according to the guidelines of NSD (the Norwegian Centre for Research Data). Only the project manager will have access to the raw data (that is, the interview recording and transcription), and this material will be stored on a password-protected memory stick and processed on a computer without internet access.

What happens with the data material after the project is finished?
The research project is planned to end during the spring of 2022. At this point, all of the gathered personal information and data from the interview recordings will be anonymized. After the project has ended, the approved findings from the interviews can still be published in articles and shared on relevant conferences.

Your rights as a participant
As long as you can identify with the data material, you have the right to:

- know about the personal information that is stored about you;
- correct the personal information about you;
- have personal information about you deleted;
- receive a copy of your personal information; and
- complain to NSD about the treatment of your personal information

What gives us the right to process personal information about you?
We process information about you based on your consent. On behalf of the Norwegian Academy of Music, NSD (The Norwegian Center for Research Data) has considered that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

How can I find out more?
If you have any questions about this study or wish to take advantage of your rights, please contact:

- Project manager and research fellow Veronica Ski-Berg, the Norwegian Academy of Music:
  - veronica.ski-berg@nmh.no
- Project supervisor Sigrid Røyseng, the Norwegian Academy of Music:
  - sigrid.royseng@nmh.no
- Data Protection Officer at the Norwegian Academy of Music: gdpr@nmh.no
- NSD – The Norwegian Center for Research Data
  - personvernombudet@nsd.no
  - 0047 555 82 117

Best regards,
Veronica Ski-Berg
(Researcher and project manager)

I have received and understood the information about the research project «*Institutionalizing Innovation: Uncovering the Protean Music Student*», and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I agree:

- ☐ to participate in a qualitative interview
- ☐ to participate during field observation (if applicable)

As an informant in this study, I wish to be given the following consideration(s):

- ☐ to be contacted regarding the selected quotations before publication
- ☐ to be given another instrument in order for my profile to be less recognizable

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(Signed by project participant, date)

withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. All of the collected information will automatically be anonymized if you should choose to do so.

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- ☐ to be contacted regarding the selected quotations before publication
- ☐ to be given another instrument in order for my profile to be less recognizable

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(Signed by project participant, date)

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «*Institutionalizing the Unknown: Uncovering the Protean Music Student*», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- ☐ å delta i intervju
- ☐ å delta under observasjon av undervisningssituasjon (hvis aktuelt)

Som informant i denne studien ønsker jeg følgende hensyn:

- ☐ å bli kontaktet for en gjennomgang av utvalgte sitater før publikasjon
- ☐ å bli tilegnet et annet instrument slik at min profil blir mindre gjenkjennelig

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Is the music student merely a reflection of higher music education, or does the institution in fact reflect its students? In recent decades, scholars have encouraged institutional renewal to take place in higher music education, often with a firm emphasis on the importance of enabling student creativity. Yet institutional change does not guarantee progress; it only ensures that a transformation will take place. How, then, are music students and professors affected by processes of change?

In this thesis, Veronica Ski-Berg posits that the rise of student creativity is connected to the changing power dynamics within higher music education and to overarching societal developments. Specifically, Ski-Berg examines how power mechanisms (such as institutional politics) mediate institutional change by targeting three change processes: 1) the shift towards student-centredness; 2) the endorsement of entrepreneurship; and 3) the call for innovation. Through a comparative case study of classical and genre independent music performance study programmes in Norway and the Netherlands, pressures to change are identified across affiliations and national borders.

Three articles resulted from the study, each discussing the power mechanisms for/against change in higher music education. Ski-Berg combines Foucauldian discourse theory with frameworks from organisational institutionalism to analyse data in the forms of organisational plans and twenty-four interview transcripts. Key findings include four discourses on student-centredness (Article 1), institutional politics connected to the call for innovation (Article 2) and institutional pressures from the field (Article 3). Notably, the lived experiences of music students and professors reveal crucial pitfalls connected to institutional change, and Ski-Berg urges the field to listen.

Veronica Ski-Berg (b. 1990) is a music scholar and composer.

Norwegian Academy of Music
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