

1-1-2013

# Pygmalion Music Festival as alternative media?: A critical analysis of the intersection of independence and corporatization

Patrick R. Singer

*Eastern Illinois University*

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Communication Studies](#) at Eastern Illinois University.

[Find out more](#) about the program.

---

## Recommended Citation

Singer, Patrick R., "Pygmalion Music Festival as alternative media?: A critical analysis of the intersection of independence and corporatization" (2013). *Masters Theses*. 1141.

<http://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/1141>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

**\*\*\*\*\*US Copyright Notice\*\*\*\*\***

**No further reproduction or distribution of this copy is permitted by electronic transmission or any other means.**

**The user should review the copyright notice on the following scanned image(s) contained in the original work from which this electronic copy was made.**

**Section 108: United States Copyright Law**

**The copyright law of the United States [Title 17, United States Code] governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials.**

**Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the reproduction is not to be used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research. If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that use may be liable for copyright infringement.**

**This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. No further reproduction and distribution of this copy is permitted by transmission or any other means.**

**THESIS MAINTENANCE AND REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE**

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates (who have written formal theses)

SUBJECT: Permission to Reproduce Theses

An important part of Booth Library at Eastern Illinois University's ongoing mission is to preserve and provide access to works of scholarship. In order to further this goal, Booth Library makes all theses produced at Eastern Illinois University available for personal study, research, and other not-for-profit educational purposes. Under 17 U.S.C. § 108, the library may reproduce and distribute a copy without infringing on copyright; however, professional courtesy dictates that permission be requested from the author before doing so.

By signing this form:

- You confirm your authorship of the thesis.
- You retain the copyright and intellectual property rights associated with the original research, creative activity, and intellectual or artistic content of the thesis.
- You certify your compliance with federal copyright law (Title 17 of the U.S. Code) and your right to authorize reproduction and distribution of all copyrighted material included in your thesis.
- You grant Booth Library the non-exclusive, perpetual right to make copies of your thesis, freely and publicly available without restriction, by means of any current or successive technology, including but not limited to photocopying, microfilm, digitization, or Internet.
- You acknowledge that by depositing your thesis with Booth Library, your work is available for viewing by the public and may be borrowed through the library's circulation and interlibrary department or accessed electronically.
- You waive the confidentiality provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) with respect to the contents of the thesis, including your name and status as a student at Eastern Illinois University.

**Petition to Delay:**

I respectfully petition that Booth Library delay maintenance and reproduction of my thesis until the date specified and for the reasons below. I understand that my degree will not be conferred until the thesis is available for maintenance and reproduction.

Date:

Reasons:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Author's Signature

07/10/2013  
Date

**This form must be submitted in duplicate.**

**Pygmalion Music Festival As Alternative Media?**

**A Critical Analysis of the Intersection of Independence and Corpportization**

(TITLE)

BY

**Patrick R. Singer**

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

**Masters of Arts in Communication Studies**

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

**2013**

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
THESIS COMMITTEE CHAIR                      DATE

 6-6-13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL CHAIR                      DATE  
OR CHAIR'S DESIGNEE

 6/6/13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER                      DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER                      DATE

 6/6/13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER                      DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER                      DATE

Running Head: PYGMALION AS ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Pygmalion Music Festival as Alternative Media:  
A Critical Analysis of the Intersection of Independence and Corporatization

Patrick R. Singer

Eastern Illinois University

Copyright Patrick Singer 2013

### Abstract

This study of Pygmalion Music Festival utilizes a theoretical framework of alternative media theory to analyze the festival's position in independent and corporate music festival and concert production. Pygmalion Music Festival is a mid-sized independently owned and operated music festival held annually in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. This research investigates the progression of independent (or "indie") music culture, how the industry has gradually become co-opted by the corporate music industry, and how Pygmalion Music Festival is situated within the indie/corporate binary. This binary is not black and white, rather an intersection that creates a blurred area between the two. "Indie" artists and the independent music festival scene have become increasingly assimilated according to the demands of investors and profiteers within our capitalist system. An independent or "indie" artist in music has traditionally been known as the artist's separation from a major record label. By using alternative media theory as a theoretical framework to analyze Pygmalion, it illuminates how blurred the term "indie" has become in relation its corporate counterpart. The festival provides a case study that stands outside the corporate-owned music festival and concert production monopoly, yet is dependent upon funding via sponsorship, ticket sales, and the use of inexpensive temporary labor. This research also provides an analysis of indie music culture and the perpetuation of class position and privilege, how indie culture has become increasingly commodified by the capitalist system, and how a festival of this size can also resist co-option by the corporate industry. Analyzing Pygmalion provides insight into the current state of the music industry, contributing a nuanced viewpoint of the progression of indie, the intersection of the indie and corporate culture, and how alternative media theory both problematizes and supports the practices of Pygmalion Music Festival simultaneously.

*Keywords:* Pygmalion Music Festival, alternative media, indie culture, concerts, music festivals, corporate culture

### Acknowledgements

*Dr. David Gracon:* When I initially presented the idea to start this project, it felt like you were more excited than I was to research this topic. I was fortunate enough to have you as a professor in my first semester of graduate school, which turned out to be the best thing to happen to me throughout this entire process. You pushed me to think and analyze the world in ways I could never imagine. You helped me take my passion and interest of music and take on a critical perspective, which can be difficult. Your guidance and incredible knowledge of the music industry could not have been more helpful through the process of this project. I am extremely grateful.

*Dr. Marita Gronnvoll:* I appreciate your willingness to provide an outside perspective to this project as a member of my committee. Your knowledge and experience in Communication Studies helped me complete the project by narrowing my focus and attacking small portions, rather than attempting to take on many areas at once. I thank you for helping me developing that perspective.

*Dr. Scott Walus:* As another committee member, your ability to critically examine the points I presented allowed me to be able to think of new ways of investigating different portions of my study. You helped me see outside the box when my mind wanted to stay inside, rather than explore new boundaries. Your enthusiasm was incredibly helpful and I appreciate your perspective through this entire process.



*Seth Fein:* Allowing someone to analyze an event that has become such a significant part of your life had to be extremely difficult. Your willingness to participate in the study and providing information about Pygmalion allowed me to investigate and analyze a festival I look forward to every single year and continue to do so. At times, a critical project can be difficult to get on board with, but your participation allowed this study to take place. This project has dictated so much of my life over the past year, and I admire the event you have curate and continue to produce to this day. I am truly grateful to have met you a few years ago, and to share a friendship with that will continue to grow. For all of these things, I thank you.

*My family:* I'd like to finally acknowledge my friends and family for their patience and encouragement throughout this entire process. To my parents, Heidi and Kris, and immediate family members, for their support when I felt there was no end in sight for the project, and their emphasis on persistence and patience. To my biggest supporter, Sarah, for your ability to allow our time together to be dictated by such a troubling, rewarding and frustrating project at times, and supporting my thoughts and listening to me. Lastly, to my late Uncle Matthew, for I wish we would have been able to share conversations about music, life, and this study, amongst many other conversations. I love and thank every one of you.

## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>Abstract</b> .....	3
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	4
<b>Chapter 1: Pygmalion Music Festival, Alternative Media, Concerts and Music Festivals and the Commodification of a Subculture</b> .....	7
Literature Review.....	11
Research Methodology.....	38
Research Sample.....	40
Limitations of the Study and Method.....	41
Conclusion.....	43
<b>Chapter 2: Alternative Organizational Theory and Pygmalion’s Organizational Structure</b> .....	45
Organizational Structure.....	52
Class Distinction and Community.....	72
Reinforcing Class Structures and Community.....	76
Chapter Conclusions and Findings.....	80
<b>Chapter 3: Pygmalion and the Intersection of Independence and Corporatization</b> .....	84
Resistance of Corporate Live Music Industry.....	86
Curation as Creative Control.....	90
Sponsorship.....	97
Locality.....	109
Chapter Conclusions and Findings.....	118
<b>Chapter 4: Making Sense of Pygmalion’s Identity and Place within the Music Industry</b> .....	122
Key Findings, Part I: Organizational Structure & Implications.....	124
Key Findings II: Intersection of Independence and Corporatization.....	127
Contributions.....	130
Suggestions for Further Research .....	135
Research Limitations.....	137
Recommendations for Pygmalion.....	140
Concluding Thoughts.....	143
<b>References</b> .....	147
<b>Appendix I</b> .....	156
<b>Appendix II</b> .....	159

## Chapter 1

### **Pygmalion Music Festival, Alternative Media, Concerts and Music Festivals and the Commodification of a Subculture**

#### **Introduction**

Every year, hundreds of thousands of music fans attend music festivals in the United States and around the world. Large festivals in the United States include Bonnaroo, Coachella, Lollapalooza, South by Southwest, Austin City Limits, Pitchfork, and dozens more. The music festival industry brings in millions of dollars each year (Coachella grossed \$47 million in 2012, according to Billboard Boxscore), and continues to grow in popularity around the world. While the physical music sales have declined in recent years, the music festival industry appears recession proof. Yet, few probably consider how this industry is organized: who controls festivals, how they are produced,

curated, structured, and funded. In addition, few consider how music festivals and their place within the cultural economy around the United States.

For this project, I will examine the Pygmalion Music Festival using a theoretical framework of alternative media theory to analyze the festival's position within music festival and the concert production industry. Pygmalion Music Festival is a mid-sized independently owned and operated music festival held annually in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. Growing from 500 attendees in the inaugural 2005 event, to over 5,000 attendees in 2012, the festival has progressed rapidly since its creation. Pygmalion incorporates local, independent musicians with local sponsors, organizations, and venues, and combines those features with nationally touring indie artists and corporate sponsors. This research investigates the culture of an independent music festival in terms of organizational structure and production methods, the progression of independent (or "indie") music culture, how the industry has gradually become co-opted by the corporate music industry, and how Pygmalion Music Festival is situated within music industry.

Indie artists and the independent music festival scene has changed according to the demands of investors and profiteers within the dominant capitalist and neoliberal system. Any form of media, organization or business that grows within the capitalist system changes in terms of production, funding, and ownership, and the neoliberal system allows that growth to happen freely. Independent or "indie" culture began by opposing the dominant corporate culture industry's production and organizational methods. By using alternative media theory as a theoretical framework to analyze Pygmalion, it illuminates how blurred the term "indie" has become in relation in terms of its corporate counterpart. The festival provides a case study to explore organizational

structure, production methods, and funding methods within independent music festival production. I want to examine the murky terrain of alternative media culture in the context of live music.

Analyzing Pygmalion provides insight into the current state of the music industry, contributing a nuanced analysis of the intersection of indie and corporate culture, and how alternative media theory both problematizes and supports the practices of Pygmalion Music Festival simultaneously. Although music festival and concert production research is plentiful (which I note in the literature review section), research focusing on the intersection of independence and corporatization is not frequently studied. Addressing and analyzing this intersection provides a focused case study critiquing broader issues of capitalism, neoliberalism alternative media theory, and co-option of subculture.

### **Significance of the Study**

Pygmalion Music Festival is an event I have experienced as an observant, but through this study, I analyze the festival through the lens of alternative media theory. In order to do so, conducting qualitative field interviews with the producers yields the data necessary to analyze the organizational structure and cultural significance of the festival. By analyzing the festival through alternative media theory, this research critiques and problematizes the dominant structures set forth by the hegemonic structures of the neoliberal system the festival exists in. Capitalism and neoliberalism consume and co-opt subcultures, and this study focuses on music festivals that are co-opted within the indie subculture. Music festivals and concerts are another portion of a musical subculture co-opted by the mainstream corporate culture industries. It is important to examine this co-

option because it frequently ruins oppositional alternative cultures because it favors financial gain over art. Assimilation to the corporate culture industry lessens alternative media's oppositional position, therefore making it another consumer activity bought and sold. This study addresses these aspects using the growth of Pygmalion Music Festival.

This study will contribute to a field of critical communication research that is underdeveloped (Gracon, 2010, p. 19). Music is generally neglected in communication studies, and this study is one way it is underdeveloped. This project builds on current research on the music industry within communication studies and alternative media, while providing a nuanced analysis of an independent music festival and its resistance to and assimilation by corporate culture. By focusing on Pygmalion, my research has many contributions to research on alternative media, music festivals and concerts, indie and corporate music culture, the co-option of subcultures, and subcultural class distinction, amongst other areas. This research provides an additional resource regarding the increasingly ambiguous term of "independence" within the music industry, and how the concept has changed over time. Studying Pygmalion unpacks the notion of "independent" and makes conclusions that directly problematize the contemporary music industry.

In addition, independence and do-it-yourself (DIY) culture is frequently studied by alternative media scholars such as Downing (1984), Duncombe (1997) and Fuchs (2010) amongst many others. This research is critical of the corporate methods of producing media because it co-opts subcultures for the sake of profit. The extremes of the music industry, the "independent" and the corporate, forms a binary. However, this system is not a binary. The music industry is a series of overlapping areas and intersections of many types of methods of producing, distributing, manufacturing, and

selling music. The methods of concert production differ in many ways, such as massive music festivals with tens of thousands of attendees to small shows held in the basement of a house, which is central to this research. Understanding how Pygmalion functions as a reflection of this intersection is the significance of this study. By investigating the festival through the lens of alternative media theory, I critically analyze the hegemonic structures of the music industry and the ambiguities of “alternative” methods of concert production, which is, more broadly, a microcosm of larger problems of neoliberalism.

### **Literature Review**

Prior to my analysis of Pygmalion Music Festival, I will examine the theoretical terrain of this study. In this section, I examine and unpack the literature on music festivals and their cultural, economical and social implications within communities and scenes, as well as their place within the contemporary music industry. In addition, I introduce alternative media theory, the primary theoretical lens I am using to analyze Pygmalion. Through alternative media theory, I discuss several studies that discuss the theory and its relationship with critical communication studies, DIY culture and indie culture.

### **Music Festivals**

To gain a better understanding of music festivals and concerts and their significance within critical communications research, I examine music festivals and their progression as cultural events not only in the United States, but around the world. The section broadly discusses music festivals and their cultural and economic significance. I

examine the value music festivals have to those who attend the events as well as those who produce them. The goal of the section is to provide a base understanding of music festivals, their place within the music industry and their social, cultural and economic implications. I reference my research of Pygmalion Music Festival as it fills gaps within research as well as building on the research available regarding music festival culture.

A music festival is a series of performances at a particular place, inspired by a unifying theme such as national or modern music (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008/2013). Grose (2011) discusses the growth of music festivals in popularity and how festivals act as a way to attract corporations to co-opt the music industry and the live concert experience. He discusses how the music festival industry has grown, referencing Alan Ridgeway, Live Nation's CEO, stating, "Festivals are one of the big growth areas of our business." Music festivals growth in popularity is also a theme of this section, and the cultural, social, and economic implications of that growth is discussed through other research.

Frey (1994) discusses the growth of popularity of music festivals, stating that "most cities or regions have a music festival of one sort or another" (p. 29). His study focuses on classical music and opera, and the study compares and analyzes the difference between music festivals, opera houses and concert halls, as well as "trying to give an explanation for the rapidly increasing number of festivals over the last decades" (p. 30). Music festivals may be tracked back to the 11th Century, but in recent decades the increase of music festivals has triggered more contemporary studies of these events. Frey's study examines classical music and opera, while my study will investigate independent rock music, or the "indie rock" genre. I'm furthering research in indie music



festivals and their place within culture as they continue to grow in popularity. My research focuses on a specific case study, Pygmalion Music Festival, and builds on Frey's previous notion that "most cities or regions have a music festival" and holds a significant space within regions. This notion makes my analysis significant within the region it takes place, creating research analyzing a community within the Champaign-Urbana music scene.

In an additional study, Frey (2000) discusses music festivals in terms of cultural events, analyzing the cultural and economic benefits of music festivals. He discusses the popularity of music festivals, especially those taking place in the summer months, and how some festivals are often sold out and are difficult to gain entrance into because of ticketing practices (p. 2). Again, he analyzes musical or operatic festivals, and provides empirical evidence from the Salzburg Festival, and the characteristics of that festival specifically. Frey's research focuses on music festivals and the novelty of the events, and how festivals incorporate niche groups of individuals (age, taste, location, gender, etc.) from communities, but also provide a space that attracts new groups. (p. 4). He attributes attracting new groups to the use of public space(s) (i.e. stadiums, concert venues, parks, etc.) where many festivals take place. Although this research is helpful in understanding festivals as a cultural event within a community that benefits a region economically and culturally, it focuses on classical and opera music. My examination of Pygmalion Music Festival contributes studies of indie music culture, and the contribution this festival specifically has towards communities within Champaign-Urbana. This study contributes a single, focused case that analyzes the cultural relevance of Pygmalion Music Festival in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

Frey (2000) also argues that festivals offer many opportunities to make money. He claims that “not only do they extend to tourist industry but also to firms catering for the production of festivals” as well as how “festivals provide an excellent opportunity to hire superstars for often very large crowds of spectators” (p. 5). Not only are music festivals profitable for the producers, but the record companies also “use festivals to launch the careers of their future stars” (p. 6). In addition, Frey discusses how companies sponsor festivals in order to promote goods unrelated to the arts and how products are prominently featured and “can therefore expect more publicity from a performance for a given sum of money” (p. 6). Although my research is not overtly focused on the political economic side of Pygmalion, this research provides insight into the production process of a specific case and expands on the notion that music festivals provide many opportunities for sponsors, organizers, artists, and organizations involved to capitalize economically. In addition, my research problematizes the commodification of indie culture through music festivals and concerts.

Bowen & Daniels (2005) research on concerts and music festivals analyzes the motivations for attending these events from an audience’s standpoint. They reference Waterman’s (1998) theory that states music is often “presented as a universal and universalizing art form, transcending social and cultural fault lines” (Waterman, 1998, p. 256). Bowen & Daniels also examine how music festivals are unique special events that attract audiences for a variety of reasons. These authors analyze the differences between attending music festivals compared to concerts, stating that attendees are “generally drawn to hear and view a live performance of a specific artist,” and “music festivals often involve a myriad of talent and may or may not follow a particular genre

(e.g., jazz, classical)” (p. 155). The artists Pygmalion uses each year cross over between many different genres of music, but generally fall under the umbrella of “indie.”

Music festivals are further distinctive in that music is an integral part of culture (Bowen & Daniels, 2005, p. 155). Music festivals can have broad appeal because they typically include activities and diversions beyond the music itself, and may even include associated workshops in line with the theme of the festival (Bowen & Daniels, 2005, p. 155). Bowen & Daniels’ study investigates the impact of festivals on the communities they exist in, and how they influence the culture within those communities. The purpose of their study is to determine if patterns of music festival attendance form definable groups of visitors. In addition, they seek to understand the relative influence of specific motivators on various groups (p. 156). Likewise, I examine how Pygmalion impacts the community/communities the event is associated with.

As Bowen & Daniels suggest music festivals are further distinctive in that music is an integral part of culture, Cummings (2005) argues that music festivals are special types of scenes as they are simultaneously part of local, translocal and virtual scenes (p. 1; Bennett and Peterson, 2004). Through her study of Australian indie music festivals, she argues that the experience of attending an Australian indie music festival, festival goers begin to feel a sense of connectedness and belonging to the indie music scene. Her study argues that individuals who attend music festivals begin to feel a strong connection to the social aspect of becoming a part of a community which includes the producers, musicians and fans who “collectively share their common musical tastes and collectively distinguish themselves from others” (Cummings, 2005, p. 2; Bennett & Peterson, 2004, p. 1).

My study discusses the complexity of music festivals as events that are much more than a gathering of individuals for a live concert experience, but one that creates “intensive scenes” (Cummings, 2005, p. 8). Her study addresses how festival goers immerse themselves in cultural aspects of the music festival and experiment with different identities within the festival’s atmosphere (p. 4). In sum, the research she conducts describes the cultural and social complexities of music festivals from the perspective of the festivalgoer. Through my examination of Pygmalion, it contributes similarly to the field of research in communication studies that her study does, but focuses on a festival based in the Midwestern United States. This research specifically focuses on a single case study, while building the research of Cummings (2005) regarding indie music festivals.

Edwardes (2012) examines how music festivals frequently use volunteers and temporary labor. In addition, Lucy Tonic (2010), *Yahoo!* Contributing Editor, discusses organizations specifically geared towards providing volunteer opportunities at music festivals. She points out how the organizations, Work Exchange Team (WET), Reverb, and Headcount, “reward volunteers for their time with free tickets to the festival/concert/event.” She also discusses how “volunteers will be designated in certain area [sic] (parking, tickets, clean-up) and must dedicate a minimum amount of hours in order to maintain access to the concert.” Capanna (2002) examines volunteerism at events as well, stating that it is an “opportunity to learn capacities and competencies useful to themselves” (Marta & Pozzi, 2008, p. 36).

Although these laborers are not volunteering their time, the theory holds true to the fact that they are seeing value and benefit from working at a music festival outside of

monetary value. There is an intrinsic value of art (in this case, music), and individuals working within the event's organizational structure find value in the work he/she does that is not equated to monetary value (Parker, 1920). The incorporation of temporary laborers is a significant portion of music festivals because it allows the producers of the music festival to potentially profit further off of the event, while passing off the festival as an "opportunity" for volunteers. Although there is research discussing music festival volunteerism, my examination of Pygmalion adds to this research and taking a critical perspective of the use of volunteers at music festivals, which has been criticized previously, but often overlooked in music festival research. For example, McKim (2010) argues that corporations events like Race for the Cure (an organization widely known as the largest and best-funded breast cancer organization in the United States) as a way to "position individual philanthropy as a model of responsible citizenship" and believes that this creates a negative perception of events that are "critical forms of activism" as "naïve and unproductive" (McKim, 2010, p. 7). Many music festivals use volunteer laborers, and this research examines volunteerism for Pygmalion, a for-profit festival.

Cummings (2007) studied music festivals and their marketability in addition to their cultural significance. Because music festivals occupy space within local, translocal and virtual communities, they are valuable events to both the organizers and investors. She analyzes the Big Day Out Festival, an Australian indie music festival created in 1992 and organized by West and Less, and collected interview data in order to analyze the festival's production methods. She discusses how the festival was "decidedly commercial from the outset, in terms of putting on bands for money" (p. 2). However, the festival promoters "never seriously thought they could make money let alone a career out of

organizing a festival” and took major financial risks in order to initially produce the festival (p. 2). Due to the rise of indie and grunge music in the following years (worldwide), the festival continued to experience success.

This study also examined how Clear Channel, a United States broadcasting corporation, offered to buy out the festival, but their offer was rejected by the festival because the festival organizers “believed that this way a way to maintain the festival’s authenticity and identity” (Shedden, 2005; Cummings, 2007, p. 2). This examination of the Big Day Out Festival directly relates to my research of Pygmalion. Due to the evolution and growth of music festival culture, Pygmalion (similarly to Big Day Out), provides a rich case study that combines independent and corporate into a single event. How indie music festivals toe the line and resist (to a certain extent) between corporate and independence is a major theme of my research. However, my study builds on the concept of the intersection and blurring between independent culture and corporate culture, and analyzing Pygmalion provides an avenue to expand on this existing research.

Cummings’ (2007) study also examined how festival-goers “seem to have accepted the role of sponsorship and branding as necessary for the festival’s survival” and felt the festival “still maintains a connection to the local indie scene and refuses to be bought out” (p. 3-4). The study concluded that sponsorship plays a major role in the financing of Australian indie music festivals, and producing these events can be “extremely expensive”, so incorporating sponsors helps to “ease the financial burden on festival organizers [sic]” (p. 4). Unlike the American Vans Warped tour, Australian indie music festivals have maintained unbranded festival names or have in the case of the Big Day Out become brand names in their own right (p. 4). In many ways, music festivals

have become events that are marketable because the events allow sponsors “to interact with their customers whilst having fun and creating an association between their brand and music” (p. 5). My study is critical research, while Cummings’ (2007) study discusses the event more generally. This study contributes a critical study to critical communication studies. Cummings’ (2007) study concludes by discussing that sponsorship within music festivals works as a partnership, where the festival and sponsors have a “co-dependent relationship” because festival organizers need sponsorship while the sponsors need brand visibility to reach their target audience (p. 5). She also argues that postmodern consumer is bombarded with advertisements on a daily basis” and have “become blasé and ignore the majority of advertisements unless it ‘speaks to them’” (p. 5).

Klein’s (2000) *No Logo* examines how the structure of business has changed the way the consumer is “assaulted” with the choice of what to consume (Klein, 2000, pp. 142). She discusses how there is a pattern emerging within the marketplace as more brands seek to be the “overarching brand that we consume” (Klein, 2000, pp. 143) through her concept of “brand bombing,” which has changed the way in which public space is defined and commodified. She discusses anti-corporate activism, where individuals are reclaiming space from corporations and “un-branding” it (Klein, 2000, pp. 99), and claiming a major force in contributing to the anti-corporate activism is due to the human concern that companies are “gobbling up space” and taking over public space (Klein, 2000, pp. 201). Understanding the confliction between independence and corporatization relates to the points that Cummings (2007) discusses towards the end of her article about the Big Day Out Festival and Klein’s (2000) examination of branding. My analysis of Pygmalion builds on this research, contributing a nuanced perspective to

how indie music festivals (more or less) function differently than branded concert tours creatively and economically, and the notion of “partnership” within corporate sponsorship relationships within indie music festivals. My research expands on these notions while contributing a more contemporary case and critically examining Pygmalion.

Music festivals and corporatization can threaten the cultural ethics on which many festivals are founded. Dowd, Liddle and Nelson (2004) use the example of the American Vans Warped tour, which features Skatepunk music, to illustrate how commercialization can negatively affect a festival. They argue that the tour is primarily sponsored by Vans Inc., a shoe and clothing company, which has strong ties to skateboarding. This infusion of commercial interests into Skatepunk through corporate sponsorship of the festival intensifies tensions within the scene and threatens its core values (Dowd, et. al, 2004, p. 158; Cummings, 2007, p. 1). Dowd et al. (2004) argue that the Vans Warped tour organizers defy Skatepunk ideals (considered a form of rebellion when first originated in early-1980s California) by relying on corporate sponsorship (Cummings, 2007, p. 2; All Music, 2013). Through my analysis of Pygmalion, I discuss the relationship between indie culture and the commodification of indie, and how that progression has affected the culture’s relationship to the founding ethics of independent rock music. Much like how Dowd et. al.’s (2004) study discusses the confliction of punk culture and the commercialization of that musical subculture, my research expands on this research through analyzing the co-option of another musical subculture (“indie” culture) and the implications of that co-option through Pygmalion as a potential vehicle of alternative media.



Throughout this section, I discussed music festivals and their cultural impact in terms of social, economic and political implications. In addition, I provided several studies that examine the growth of music festivals and their sociocultural relevance. I also incorporate research on contemporary music festivals and the commodification of these festivals. My study of Pygmalion expands on current research of music festivals by providing a nuanced perspective of the complexity that exists between the binary of independent and corporate, and the implications of that intersection. In addition, I am strongly considering alternative media as a guiding theoretical framework for this study.

In the next section, I discuss the current economic structure of the music festival and concert industry. I examine the current structure of the monopolized concert and music festival industry and how the consolidation of the music industry has blurred the lines between independent and corporate and effects the alternativeness of cultural events. In addition, I examine how the notion of “independence” within the music industry has changed with the co-option of “indie” culture in recent years. Through my study of Pygmalion, I expand on that notion and contribute a perspective that builds on research to clarify the intersection between corporate and independence within the contemporary music industry and what this means for alternative media outlets.

### **Consolidation of the Music Industry, Part I: Monopolization of the Concert and Music Festival Industry**

In this section, the current economic structure of the concert and music festival production industry will be explained in relation to this research project. It is vital to discuss the monopolization of the concert industry because my examination of Pygmalion discusses the implications of the festival existing within this consolidated industry. The

music industry has been consolidated, which means only a few companies have control and ownership over the concert and music festival industry worldwide. By discussing corporate production companies, such as Live Nation Entertainment, and the monopolization of the music festival and concert industry, it will provide a better understanding context of the mainstream industry which Pygmalion resists as an independent music festival.

Through this section, the structure of mainstream concert culture will be unpacked and analyzed in order to provide context relating to Pygmalion's potentially alternative methods of production and alternative media theory. In addition, I'll be addressing alternative media theory later in the literature review. By understanding each of these parts, I can draw conclusions about how Pygmalion functions within the music festival and concert production industry, as well as how it functions (to varying degrees) outside the monopolized industry. I break down the consolidation of the concert industry, starting with Live Nation and Ticketmaster, and then analyze data collected about Pygmalion in order to make comparisons between the festival and corporate and independent production methods later in the analysis chapters.

Chris Jordan's (2012) essay on Live Nation Entertainment discusses the enclosure and monopolization of the concert and live music industry. Eckard & Smith (2012) also provide data regarding economic benefits of music venues and their study shows how the concert system is big business. Black, Fox, & Kochanowski (2007) examine concert revenues and the concert industry and analyze concert trends by investigating pricing and attendance, the superstar phenomenon, and structural changes (consolidation) in the way the concert tour industry operates. With the merger of Ticketmaster, the world's largest

ticket retailer, and Live Nation, the world's largest music promoter, in 2010, a single conglomerate company formed that controls virtually every aspect of the live music industry (Jordan, p. 1). The company is a horizontal and vertically integrated monopoly, as Ticketmaster "uses a network of exclusive contracts with key U.S. venues to control 80 percent of the concert ticket market in America" (Jordan, 2012, p. 1). Indie artists, venues and organizations are negatively affected by this monopoly because it decreases ownership of music and ability to produce concerts and/or music festivals independently.

In addition, the companies were combined to form a vertically integrated monopoly, incorporating different businesses (artist management, concert promotion, and concert ticketing). The merger raised the barriers and largely discourages competition within the music festival and concert industry. By doing this, it makes it much harder for independent concert and music festival curators to become involved in the concert production industry because of the stronghold Live Nation Entertainment has on the vast majority of the markets in the United States. In terms of Pygmalion and alternative media theory, understanding how the festival functions within, or resists to an extent, this monopolized system is significant.

The Live Nation-Ticketmaster merger affected many branches of the live music industry. The conglomerate's stronghold on these branches discourages competition from small, independent competitors because those organizations do not have the ability to compete because Live Nation Entertainment's majority ownership over the individual branches of the concert production industry. This is significant because Pygmalion is independent of this monopolized system. Live Nation Entertainment deters competition within the concert and music festival industry because the company uses the monopoly

conferred by its exclusionary agreements with key arenas and amphitheaters to raise barriers and discourage competition. This strategy of consolidation is also refers to a similar strategy, synergy, which is the promotion and sale of a product (and all its versions) throughout the various subsidiaries of a media conglomerate (Campbell et. al., 2007, p. 506). In addition, this monopoly creates other synergies between major labels, commercial radio, and television, creating more revenue for the monopoly in control. Therefore, using venues under contract with Live Nation Entertainment is not possible in producing a music festival or concert independently.

In addition to controlling these arenas and amphitheaters, Live Nation Entertainment also has the ability to control ticketing and advertising costs by hosting multi-day music festivals, enabling advertisers to reach large numbers of people for daylong periods over three days at a single location (Jordan, 2012, p. 4). Although Pygmalion is set up similarly by hosting an event over the course of three days in Champaign-Urbana, my study analyzes how Pygmalion is produced and the implications of that production in regards to this consolidated music industry. The example of Live Nation Entertainment signifies the consolidation of the dominant music industry, which deters competition in order to increase revenue and profits to very few corporations, leading to standardized and homogenized cultural events.

The dominant music industry and concert production industry, in this instance Live Nation Entertainment, “promotes a focus on derivations of proven successes, institutionalizing a conservative and self-fulfilling definition of viable live music that restricts the range of artists and potential listeners” (Jordan, 2012, p. 6). An example of this would be promoting artists that have widespread appeal and will sell the most tickets,

thus maximizing profit for the company. The motivation of a mainstream production company is to maximize profits, which eliminates lesser known artists from benefitting off of this monopolized system. Later in the chapter, I discuss alternative media theory and the motivations of producing media via Pygmalion Music Festival. By establishing these ownership structures, it allows for a stronger understanding of Pygmalion's production tactics and the goals and how the festival is situated in the larger economic and structural concert system.

Corporate media organizations claim their motivations for producing media is to of maximizing profit, the dominant media also strive to have mass appeal and to attract the most customers, which is best accomplished by standardization and reputable cultural molds. For example, Gracon (2010) discusses mainstream music retail outlets and how those businesses catered to popular mainstream music — the same music that is played on corporate radio and MTV, and utilizes artists that are on major labels and could hold arena-sized performances and tours (p. 21). The dominant music industry, which is owned by a small number of corporate players (comprised of individual stakeholders), seeks to maximize profit above all else. The controlling system prevents competition by smaller, independent players, thus creating a homogenous and standardized culture and concert industry. Later in the literature review, I discuss how alternative media organizations attempt to combat this system.

In the next section, I discuss the consolidation of the corporate music industry to explain the significance of how alternative media attempts to function outside this consolidated industry. In addition, I address this consolidation of the record industry which has created an unclear division between independent and major label artists in the

music industry. Lastly, I consider the commodification of subcultures so I can better examine Pygmalion's relation to cultural resistance and co-option/assimilation.

### **Consolidation of the Music Industry, Part II: Record Labels and the Commodification of Subcultures**

Similarly to the consolidation of the live music industry, record labels are also highly concentrated amongst a few key corporate players. In this section, I examine research of the consolidation of the music industry in regards to major record labels and artists' affiliation with record labels. In addition, I unpack what "indie" labels are and their significance within this system. In addition, I examine literature that addresses the blurred lines between corporate and independent media, and how "indie" culture has become increasingly commodified in recent years. This section will build on the theme that examines the ambiguities between independence and corporate culture industries, and how the music festival industry has a similar economic pattern in music. The music industry has become increasingly consolidated and co-opted by the corporate culture industries. The intersection between independent and corporate culture has become increasingly unclear. In this section, I discuss the division has become unclear and how Pygmalion relates to this ambiguous intersection, as well as creating an economic context of the music industry to see how Pygmalion interacts with and resists these structures.

Gracon (2010) discusses the consolidation of the corporate "big four" major record labels, Universal Music Group, Warner Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, and EMI (p. 190). Since then, these companies have been consolidated into the "big three" consisting of Universal, Sony, and Warner. The consolidation of music labels can lead to standardized forms of music and constructing genres to be marketable to a mass

audience in attempts to maximize profit. These major conglomerates consolidate and consume other branches of the media to create market synergies in order to further maximize profits. The commodification of music through the record industry aligns with the increasing popularity of music festivals, because the corporate culture industry sees it as an opportunity to maximize profits further with those events as well. The consolidation of the music industry (the “big three” labels) and the music festival and concert production industry are very interconnected (Live Nation Entertainment). For this study, examining Pygmalion’s place within this highly consolidated industry is significant. The research builds on the consolidation of the music industry as well as research of music festival and concert consolidation, providing a nuanced perspective into indie music festivals and their potential relationship to alternative media.

Although the record industry has become increasingly consolidated, there are independent “indie” labels that still exist, and together, collect the market share left over (roughly 11%) from the “big three” (“Nielsen Company”, 2012). According to Shuker (2008), the term “indie” denotes not just a type of economic entity (maintaining independence from a corporation), but a musical attitude as well, with authenticity at its core — the indie ideology views its music as raw and immediate, while corporate music is regarded as processed and mediated by “overproduction” (Shuker, 2008, p. 21, Gracon, 2010, p. 65). Indie labels are defined as being free from corporate ownership and also have independent distribution, which results in the status of “true independent” (Gracon, 2010, p. 200). The line between indie and corporate becomes very unclear with the inclusion of iTunes, other major online distributors, as well as independent labels using corporate distribution companies like the Alternative Distribution Alliance, which is

owned by Warner (Gracon, 2010, p. 67). For this study, it's necessary to know this structure to better understand Pygmalion's musical lineup selection in order to connect it to alternative media.

In addition, *Rolling Stone*'s Josh Eells (2010) discussed how indie artists, such as of Montreal, have begun to use these high production practices when years ago, "fidelity was practically a dirty word in indie rock." This example points out how production methods of indie artists are becoming assimilated with the corporate culture industry as well. The consolidation of the record industry has blurred the line between the independent and corporate labels, similarly to the concert and music festival industry. The intersection between the independent and corporate has become blurred within music festival production (Cummings' research regarding the Big Day Out Festival is an indicator of this), and my research of Pygmalion contributes to further the research of music festivals further, and their relationship with this blurred indie and corporate spectrum.

In this section, I examined literature addressing music festivals and their evolution into contemporary events, the consolidation of the music industry in terms of the concert and music festival industry, as well as the record label industry in order to address Pygmalion critically through alternative media theory. In the next section, I examine alternative media theory as a theoretical framework to analyze Pygmalion.

### **Alternative Media Theory**

For this study, I use alternative media theory to analyze Pygmalion Music Festival. In this section, I introduce alternative media theory by discussing the research



other scholars have contributed to this field of research. Alternative media theory also examines organizational structures, do-it-yourself (DIY) culture, critical communication **studies** and methods of alternative media production. In addition to this research, I examine how my research project is contributing or building on the research those scholars have done and how my research on Pygmalion Music Festival is filling a gap in existing research.

McQuail (1992) discussed how there have been significant changes in “traditional” mass media, mostly due to the direct technological advances in the means of electronic distribution and handling of information, but also describes media as an emerging portion of social order (p. 1). His discussion of traditional media reflects how the nature of public interest has redefined the meaning of “media” and its purpose in society (p. 1). Fuchs (2010) describes alternative media as “media that challenges the dominant capitalist forms of media production, media structures, content, distribution and reception” (p. 178). Alternative media is in opposition to the dominant capitalist system, while still existing within that capitalist system. Capitalism perpetuates a system between the economic haves and have nots, and must always expand and grow in order to maximize and feed the need for more profit (Rius, 1996, p. 80). This means drawing in more resources, workforces and aspects of daily life. In conjunction with the analysis of workforce, I address organizational communication in this study, which is a branch of communication studies that analyzes organizational practices and structures.

Organizational communication is defined as “the study of sending and receiving messages that create and maintain a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons” (Tompkins, 1984, p. 662-663). Organizational communication

observes the communication behaviors which constitute social collectives (Allen & Tompkins, p. 384; Bantz, 1989).

This dominant system is driven by profit making as its primary function and to consistently expand to maximize profits. Critical communication research is conducted to critique domination and power to change the world and support human agency. This theory analyzes texts and practices of culture within the historical conditions of production. Critical theory critiques a culture of consumption, which emphasizes items as commodities within our capitalist society. Neoliberalism is an economic practice that believes human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within a framework characterized by strong private property rights, free market, and free trade (Thorsen & Lie, 2000, p. 11; Harvey, 2005, p. 2). Capitalism is a socio-economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and the exploitation of the labor force (Rius, 1996, p. 78).

Alternative media can be radically different than corporate produced media, thus, exposing a radically different representation of social reality, politics, and culture, amongst other realities (Downing, 2001). This form of alternative media is referred to as radical media. Alternative media attempt(s) to and does expose a different reality (produced by the socially, culturally and politically excluded members of society) than the corporate culture tends to expose (Coyer, Dowmunt, Fountain, 2007). This project is building on alternative theory to better understand the differentiation between alternative and corporate music culture, and examine the grey area within this spectrum.

John Fiske (1992) has pointed out differences between the mainstream media and the alternative media in their selection of news and in the way that selection is made

(Atton, 2001, p. 5). Fiske's research discusses alternative media in terms of news media, and stresses alternative media's use of oppositional content, form and selectivity.

Alternative media is selective in regards to what type of content the producers want to create (often oppositional, challenging forms of media), while mainstream media creates media exclusively to harness profits (lifestyle stories, news that attracts the most viewers).

For example, content that generates more profit for the corporate media organization would be featured more frequently in the mainstream media, while more significant news, such as news critical of power structure, could be overlooked. Corporate media attempts to attract the most viewers with their news because of advertising stakeholders, which fund the program and expect the highest revenue return for their advertising investment. The widespread appeal of mainstream media is not how alternative media is produced in terms of both form and content. Alternative media employs methods of production and distribution, allied to an activist philosophy of creating "information for action" (Atton, 2001, p. 6). "Information for action" suggests that providing information through media will create a form of human agency to trigger social change. Alternative media seeks to create media for the sake of benefitting the social sphere and discourages passively consuming media.

Downing (1984, 2001) examined radical media, examining how it conveys messages that expose harmful actions by organizations and corporations to create change. An example of contemporary radical media is how Wikileaks expose otherwise hidden information held by government leaders, therefore challenging power structure held up by the dominant hierarchical system. Another form of radical media is *Bitch Magazine*,

an independent, quarterly magazine that analyzes current social, cultural and political trends through a critical feminist theoretical lens. By examining Pygmalion as a case study, my study analyzes the festival as a potentially alternative organization producing the music festival. Addressing Pygmalion's organizational structure and content (artists performing, sponsors, location, etc.) in this study builds on alternative media research by examining the music festival as a form of alternative media. In addition, this study contributes a nuanced examination of a specific case (Pygmalion) of indie music festival research in terms of alternative media theory that is under-theorized by researchers.

Downing (2001) states that the central characteristics of alternative media is a political vision that is formed on a small scale and expresses an "alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities and perspectives" of the mainstream. (p. v; Fuchs, 2010, p. 178). Hegemony is the process of cultural domination which a social class determines cultural norms in society (Gramsci, 1992). For example, the punk musical subculture is characterized by challenging major companies that had dominated economics of rock and roll by substituting a smaller scale version with control over the media (or music) they were creating, as well as offering an alternative message that differed from the mainstream message (Grossberg, 1986, p. 59). However, this alternative subculture has been co-opted. Alternative forms of media differentiate from standardized forms of mainstream media that seek to maximize profit rather than produce radical or oppositional content challenges power relations and domination in society.

Hegemonic policies of the mainstream society focus on class consciousness and power relations. Critical communication studies examines class consciousness and false consciousness, and how social class or rank in economic society is significant when

dissecting subcultures. Class consciousness is the consciousness of one's own social class or economic rank in society, while false consciousness is the idea that people are unable to see things, especially exploitation, oppression, and social class relations, as they really are (Marx, 1844). In addition, critical communication studies also addresses culture industries. Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) address cultural industries, noting that popular culture is used to standardization of cultural goods for consumption, creating a passive consumer rather than an active producer. This concept addresses the power structure that creates cultural industries, and how individuals can actively change these structures.

An example Downing (1984) used to describe radical and oppositional content was the politically radical media of the United States and Europe in the 1970s and early 1980s used to create social change. Punk music was not anti-profit, but they were more empowered to release a more "raw" sound, rather than one that was highly refined, and deliver an alternative message that music should be created for the sake of creation, not for the sake of profit (Grossberg, 1986, p. 59). Punk culture was used as an avenue to produce radical or oppositional media as an alternative to the mainstream media. For example, Bikini Kill created anti-patriarchal messages to alter gender power structures. By examining Pygmalion, this research uses an alternative theory perspective to critically analyze contemporary music festival culture and to better understand its socio-political significance. Pygmalion provides a case to examine the grey area within the spectrum of alternative and corporate, and how the intersection creates an interesting combination of cultural industries.

Other research and analyze organizations that utilize an alternative ethic. Michael Albert (1997) characterizes alternative media organizations:

- does not attempt to maximize profits as their primary motivation
- does not sell audience to advertisers for revenue
- is structured to subvert society's defining hierarchical social relationships (i.e. class, gender, racial differentiation) and does not reproduce those structures in their organization
- structured as an independent entity separated from major social institutions (particularly corporations)
- sees itself as an organization that is committed to furthering social activity (political, cultural, social) as a whole, not just preserving its own existence via profit

In theory, alternative media organizations are structured differently in order to challenge organizational principles that many corporate organizations uphold (i.e. maximizing profits, utilizing hierarchical structures, use of power division amongst members of the organization). My research provides a case to examine the structure of alternative media organizations and the grey area between what distinguishes an organization as "alternative" and not.

Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) characterize alternative media as "media that differs from mainstream media in regard to their organizational principles" (p. 141). They state that alternative media is a "participatory, collective organization" that is "horizontally structured" and utilizes "non-commercial finances", such as selling an audience for profit via advertising (p. 141). A "participatory" organization allows any and all willing individuals to participate in the creation of media. An example of participatory media is social media, where the audience can create media, thus blurring the line between audience and producers (Jenkins, 2006). A horizontal organizational structure is designed for coordination and collaboration, where vertical structures are primarily designed for control (Daft, 2009, p. 93). Alternative organizations structure themselves in these ways to combat traditional organizational structures. Much like Albert (1997), the authors describe how alternative media organizations use these guiding principles as a way to

oppose corporate methods of producing media. Albert (1997) claims that although alternative organizations should strive to accomplish these goals, he believes “that a media institution is more alternative the more it accomplishes these ends (p. 3).

There are degrees of alternativeness within alternative media theory, including radical and oppositional media as well as forms of media that share characteristics with non-alternative forms of media as Albert (1997) suggests. There are many forms of media that exist within the grey of alternative/non-alternative spectrum, including my examination of Pygmalion. The dominant music industry sometimes owns many of these forms of media (radical and oppositional as well as corporate and mainstream). This study examines that space between alternative and non-alternative and builds on previous research that examines the organizational structure of Pygmalion in terms of alternative media.

Alternative media theory suggests there are other methods of producing media than the model deployed by the mainstream or corporate culture industries. Do-it-yourself (DIY) culture refers to a production ethic from an individual producer’s creative ability rather than hiring trained professionals to produce the form of media. In addition, the DIY ethic deploys the notion that anyone can make media and that amateurism is acceptable. Stephen Duncombe (1997) discusses DIY culture in terms of fanzines, which are “little publications filled with rantings [sic] of high weirdness and exploding with chaotic design,” where the producers “privilege the ethic of DIY, do-it-yourself: make your own culture and stop consuming that which is made for you” (Triggs, 2006, p. 69). What Duncombe (1997) is expressing here is the notion that these fanzines represent not only a “shared creation” of a producer’s own, often alternative, culture, but also a “novel

form of communication” (Triggs, 2006, p. 69). This form of media is very different than corporate media in style and form, often appearing amateurish and raw, unlike corporate media which appears standardized and polished. DIY forms of media express opposition to the mainstream culture that has been created for our consumption as individuals within the capitalistic structure of society. DIY culture resists co-option and resistance of the dominant culture industry. My examination of Pygmalion investigates the DIY ethic within the production of this independent music festival.

For example, research has been done on 90s post-punk band Fugazi, who championed the DIY ethic and produced their own music, maintained control over the media they produced because they owned their own record label (in turn, owning the rights to their music) and experienced great success (financially and their music was well-received). My research expands on DIY as a form of alternative media in indie music.

To elaborate on DIY in indie music, Sinker (2007) discusses DIY ethic with Fugazi’s lead singer Ian MacKaye in his study. MacKaye discusses his definition of DIY ethic within independent music culture:

One aspect of DIY is that you really have to do-it-yourself. It’s work! We manage ourselves, we book ourselves, we do our own equipment upkeep, we do our own recording, we do our own taxes. We don’t have other people do all that stuff. I think the reason we take the approach to music that we do is that we ultimately have complete control over how we do our music, and how we operate as a band. We don’t feel compelled by anyone to do anything that we don’t want to do. We’re not indebted to anyone. When a band signs to a major label, no matter how good of a contract they think they have, no matter how much control they think their contract provides, it’s unavoidable that you’re conscious of being an investment (p. 19-20).

MacKaye discusses the process of being an independent musician and producing all aspects of his music through the DIY ethic. This ideology is engrained within the



ethics of alternative media as well, and by maintaining control over the music MacKaye produces, he can produce the media they way he wants to without influence of corporatism. DIY culture challenges dominant forms of creating media, and in doing so, are communicating beliefs and ideologies through that stance. DIY media is oftentimes oppositional, alternative and radical, challenging power and trying to open up new cultural spaces. By focusing on an independent music festival, I'm analyzing the notion of "independence" and DIY ethic within indie music through music festival culture.

In this section, I discussed alternative media theory, alternative media organizations and DIY culture. This theoretical framework I use to examine Pygmalion is helpful in examining the cultural and economic makeup and socio-political meanings of the festival in terms of alternative media. It is vital to understand the differences between the corporate production methods for producing an event (i.e. Live Nation Entertainment's monopolization of the concert industry) and the independent ethic of DIY culture in order to further understand the intersection between the two and the ambiguities created by this intersection. By examining existing research regarding these topics and their place within my study, I will further analyze the meanings of Pygmalion according to these research questions:

### **Research Question #1**

What is the organizational structure of Pygmalion Music Festival and how does that structure compare to the ideals exposed by the discourse of alternative media?

### **Research Question #2**

What characteristics of Pygmalion designate the festival as a form of alternative media, and what are the nuances of these characteristics in terms of resistance and corporatization?

In this literature review, I have examined critical communication studies and critical theory and how it informs this study, as well as outlined several sections of the music industry, including music festivals, and the monopoly practices of the music industry (concert and music festivals as well as the record industry). In addition, I examined the theoretical framework of alternative media theory, which I am using to address Pygmalion. I also examined organizational structure, co-option of subcultures, DIY culture and the intersection between independence and the corporate culture industries. In order to address my research questions, I will discuss the research methodology I am using to examine Pygmalion. In the next section, I discuss the qualitative research methods I used to examine Pygmalion. In addition, I discuss the limitations of the study as well as conclusions regarding this chapter.

### **Research Methodology**

This study critically analyzes Pygmalion Music Festival via qualitative field research methods. I collected data through field interviews in order to gather data from the producers of the festival. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) discuss field interviews and how this method acts as a way to amass in-depth information in order to understand the thoughts and perspective of the interviewees. This method provides rich data that reflects the unique viewpoint and experiences of those interviewed.

According to Berg (2007), interviews are a conversation with a purpose. This purpose is to obtain information regarding a specific research question or to explore social phenomena in more complex detail. The interviewer gently guides interviewee through a series of prepared questions, and obtains information related to a research

question (Linhoff, 2002). According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), the researcher elicits depth and detail about the research of a topic by following up on answers given by the interviewee during the discussion. Berg (2007) writes that interviews can provide greater degrees of human complexity and nuance versus statistical information, as it is an effective way to explore how social and political processes are formed, and how people exist and conceptualize such structures. Some examples of research questions I used include (and all questions are listed in Appendix 1):

- What is your role in the production of Pygmalion Music Festival?
- How would you describe Pygmalion Music Festival?
- Why are local bands used in the festival?
- What types of sponsors are used for the event?
- Describe the organizational structure of Pygmalion in terms of hierarchy.

This study included semi-structured and in-depth face-to-face interviews with Pygmalion's founder and managerial staff. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication and can be used both to give and receive information (Case, 1990). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) describe this method as a flexible way to interview individuals because it allows for movement within the questions for more thorough answers and potential for follow up questions. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored, creating rich dialogue (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 195).

Each interview ranged from a half hour to one hour in length. The interviewees were each asked the same questions in order to gather a consistent pool of data. Interviews took place in Champaign, Illinois at various locations, including Café Kopi, Blind Pig Brewery, Cowboy Monkey, the Canopy Club, and Espresso Royale, with the

exception of one interview, which was conducted via telephone. In addition, follow up questions were conducted via email because after analyzing the data, more questions were needed to address aspects that needed further questioning.

After interviewing each individual and transcribed each into a Word document, I used coding methods to dissect and analyze the data. According to Berg (2007), the coding process entails the systematic organization and coding of interview data. This was accomplished by conducting a content analysis of the data within an extremely ordered fashion. A content analysis is a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings. Transcripts, especially in the beginning, were coded in minute detail, and eventually the document was saturated with repetitious and overlapping codes.

Once the codes were established, the process of open coding began, where notes were taken on each line of transcription text, which lead to a process of memo writing (or theoretical notes), and the creation of short summaries regarding sections of text. Once categories were created, I coded the data, and put the information into categories, such as community, locality, independence and “indie”, and themes within organizational structure such as hierarchy, volunteerism, labor and exploitation. A minimum of three occurrences of something will be considered a pattern. The emerging codes were then analyze and used to address my research questions for each chapter.

### **Research Sample**

For this study, I interviewed eight individuals involved with the production of Pygmalion Music Festival. Those individuals include: Seth Fein, founder and festival

director; Mike Armintrout, Production Manager; Ward Gollings, Operations Manager, Vanessa Robinson, Production Manager; Mike Ingram, Production Manager/Sound Engineer; Jessica Beckhart, Hospitality Manager; Sarah Halpern, Hospitality Manager; Sindha Agha, Street Team Manager; Isaac Burgess, Operations Manager. These individuals were contacted and interviewed in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois between October and November 2012. I gained access to these interviewees by asking Seth Fein for individuals he considered that worked for the festival. I wanted to use these subjects because they have specific insight into the organizational structure and production methods of Pygmalion, which would help in addressing my research questions. I knew Fein and had correspondence with him prior to this study, so I use his contact information to be able to gather more information about interviewees.

### **Limitations of the Study and Method**

One major limitation of this research study was time constraints. I only had the opportunity to interview Pygmalion's managerial staff for this study. If I had more time, there are many more individuals involved with the production of the festival that I was unable to interview, including venue staff, security, and festival volunteers. In addition, interviewing patrons that attend the event would be an interesting addition to the study to gain an additional perspective on the event. Time constraints only allowed for interviews of the managerial staff to be conducted because this is a thesis research project, not a dissertation (which would have allowed for a much more broad interviewee pool).

There are many areas of Pygmalion that could be studied through interviewing additional subjects. Gaining perspective of individuals involved on the sponsorship side

of the festival would be insightful. In addition, interviewing artists who perform at the festival (national and local) would be informative as well. Again, time constraints only allowed for a certain amount of individuals to be incorporated into the study. Because the study focuses on the organizational structure and production method(s) of Pygmalion, interviewing the managerial staff was the most relevant group to interview because of their extensive knowledge of the event and their direct involvement with producing the festival each year.

Interviews can also create biased results from the interviewees' perspective. Because I interviewed only individuals involved with Pygmalion, those individuals have biased perspectives of the festival. Therefore, the data gathered could be influenced by their involvement with the music festival. Because the interviewees knew this study was a critical examination of the festival, they could provide information that is what I want to hear, rather than the truth. Therefore, the interviewees could alter their responses because they know they are on record.

In addition, the idea of researching other festival organizers was also constrained by time. Interviewing individuals involved with other music festivals (major and independent) would contribute additional perspectives to the study. As a result, my research focuses on Pygmalion exclusively from the perspective of the managerial staff, when it could be studied from the perspective of producers of other music festivals.

Despite the limitations described above this study provides a great deal of information about the nature of Pygmalion and its relationship to alternative media theory, indie and corporate culture, and organizational structure. It is my hope that other

researchers will reference my study and it will contribute to future studies of the music industry and concert and music festival culture.

### **Human Subjects**

This research project strictly adhered to the rules, regulations and ethical considerations set forth by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Eastern Illinois University. This project received approval from the IRB during my initial proposal issued in April 2012. I have research clearance through June 2013. With the approval of my research proposal, all the related consent forms and verbal scripts were approved by the IRB. Overall, the process with the IRB has made me acutely aware of the sensitive nature of obtaining information from my research participants, and it forced me to obtain field data in a manner that is both ethical and consensual. This institutional backing protects the research subjects, as they are able to contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the university should they feel they are being used unfairly or in an unethical manner. Overall, this process benefited both the researcher and research subjects.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, this chapter provided insight as to how my research methodologies functioned as a data-gathering device. It included a breakdown of my theoretical approach and methodologies, including alternative media theory, the live music industry, organizational structure, and qualitative interviewing methods. This chapter examined my research sample, procedures, data analysis, limitations, and human subjects. This chapter

emphasized the complexity of the music festival I am examining in this study. This chapter provided insight into indie culture and music festival and concert production and the relationship with the Pygmalion Music Festival, and why its an important and relevant topic of study.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Alternative Organizational Theory and Pygmalion's Organizational Structure**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I examine the organizational structure of Pygmalion Music Festival. I explore the festival in relation to how alternative media organizations are structured. By using this theoretical framework, I examine the theory of alternative media and whether or not Pygmalion fits within this framework, as well as what It means beyond this distinction. By focusing on the organizational structure of the festival, I provide insight into Pygmalion's current methods of festival production, the implications of that structure and production, and how the study builds on research of alternative media organizations. I begin by discussing the goals and motivations of the festival and how the production methods and structure of the festival have changed over time. Following that, I address the festival in terms of organizational structure, including staff

composition, hierarchy, distribution of profit, and staff duties and responsibilities. While discussing those areas of organizational structure, I provide insight and build on the current literature relating to alternative media, organizational communication and structure, and music festival and concert production.

I will address the following research question in this chapter: What is the organizational structure of Pygmalion Music Festival and how does that structure compare to the ideals exposed by the discourse of alternative media? The main focus of the chapter is to analyze the structure of the festival in order to provide an understanding of how the festival is produced, how Pygmalion compares with the theory/ethos of alternative media organizations, and the implications of the festival's structure beyond this distinction. Implications of the festival's structure include conflicting ideologies of alternative media within organizations, including the exploitation of labor for the profit of the few and unequal distribution of power.

I will briefly reiterate some major themes and characteristics of alternative media organizations and organizational structure. As discussed in the previous chapter, Michael Albert (1997) defines an alternative organization as:

- an alternative media institution does not try to maximize profits as a primary motivation.
- does not primarily sell audience to advertisers for revenue.
- structured to subvert society's defining hierarchical social relationships and not reproduce them within their own organization.
- structured profoundly different from and is independent of major social institutions, particularly corporations
- sees itself as part of a project to establish new ways of organizing media and social activity and is committed to furthering these as a whole, and not just its own preservation
- attempts to change and equalize socioeconomic conditions of society

Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) discuss the definition of alternative media early in their article, stating:

Many alternative media scholars point out that alternative media differ from mainstream media in regard to their organizational principles. According to them, participatory, collective organization, horizontal structures and non-commercial finances characterize alternative media (p. 141).

Downing (2001) discusses how alternative media often aim to challenge existing powers, to represent marginalized groups, and to foster horizontal linkages among communities of interest. For Downing, the central characteristic of alternative media is their alternative political vision, “By radical media, I refer to media, generally small scale and in many different forms, that express an alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities, and perspectives” (Downing, 2001, p. v; Fuchs, 2010, p. 178).

Fuchs (2010) describes one of his definitions of alternative media as “mass media that challenge the dominant capitalist forms of media production, media structures, content, distribution, and reception” (p. 178). Through Fuch’s definition, alternative media must be a form of media that challenges the corporate methods of producing media, but also structured differently than corporate forms of creating media. This definition provides an interesting confliction between Albert’s (1997) understanding of alternative media, where he believes not all forms of alternative media can abide by all of the rules he outlined and still be considered alternative. With Fuch’s (2010) definition, alternative media must act as a form of mass media, yet produce a form of media that is challenging or oppositional to the mainstream forms of producing mass media.

These characteristics of alternative media guide the analysis of Pygmalion’s organizational structure in comparison to how alternative media organizations function and are structured. The chapter concludes with a summary of key findings according to

the data collected through interviews with Pygmalion's managerial staff. This research provides a rich and nuanced perspective and view of the production methods, the ideals and motivations of an organization, and building and contributing to the body of literature regarding these areas of study.

### **Seth Fein and the Origin of Pygmalion**

Pygmalion Music Festival was independently founded by Seth Fein and his wife, Justine Bursoni, with the assistance of Mike Ingram, Production Manager and Sound Engineer for the festival, in 2005. Fein, 33 years old, indicates that he has lived in Champaign-Urbana his entire life, and discussed how that time has allowed him to develop relationships within the Champaign-Urbana area. In addition, he has gained relationships through his work with local venues as a talent buyer (note: a "talent buyer" is a term used to describe buying and scheduling of talent, in this case, bands and artists, to perform at venues for concerts). In addition to being a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (with a Bachelors of Arts in Rhetoric), he spent time performing in local bands throughout that time period and beyond graduation. Fein built relationships within the music community by performing in local indie bands Absinthe Blind and Headlights.

Following his performance music career, he spent time working for Jay Goldberg Events (talent buying agency based in Urbana), The Canopy Club (music venue located in Urbana), The Highdive (music venue located in Champaign) as well as establishing his own talent agency, Nicodemus Agency. According to the Nicodemus Agency's website, the agency "books tours specifically for indie rock bands in North America" and was

“established in 2005 after years of lifting drums and sleeping on floors became too much for Seth Fein” (History page, Nicodemus Agency website, 2013). Pygmalion Music Festival is curated by Fein’s Nicodemus Agency each year, and continues to do so with the help of the temporary festival staff. Fein continues to produce the festival each year, and as established previously, the festival’s growth caused Fein to add more people to assist in the festival’s production each year. The managerial staff (12 members) and a volunteer staff (30 members) assisted in producing the event in 2012. He has lived and worked in the Champaign-Urbana area for his entire life, in turn, building relationships with individuals over that time period. Fein discusses the development of these relationships:

I am fortunate enough to have worked in this industry long enough, and to have met a lot of people through my job at the Canopy Club and the Highdive, and being a part of the community. I have a good team of people that I hope are able to be a part of it.

Fein uses those relationships he has built from within the community of Champaign-Urbana in order to create the festival. He produces the event and utilizes members of these communities to produce the festival each year. However, the festival has grown since it was first created, and in the next section, I discuss how the festival has grown in terms of finances, laborers, and how the festival’s structure is indicative of indie culture

### **Growth of Pygmalion**

Pygmalion has changed in many ways since it was created in 2005. Mike Ingram, Production Manager for Pygmalion, discusses how the festival came to fruition and how it has grown:

The first year it was Seth and I, as we used to do a lot of show booking together. Pygmalion kind of came about, and the first year was, by comparison, “shoe string”... There was not a lot to it the first year, especially when you consider how big it has gotten since the event has progressed and grown.

Ingram discusses the progression of the festival, and the festival’s overall growth since the year it was founded. The festival has grown every year since its inception, increasing from “800 attendees the first year to roughly 5,000” in 2012 according to Fein. Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for Pygmalion, discusses the growth of the festival as well:

The festival has gotten bigger, and there have been more bands, there have been more venues, and stuff like that. It just makes sense for Seth to have more people to help him.

As Armintrout states, the festival has grown in many ways, including the amount of staff and labor force, budget (plus revenues and profit), amount of venues used, and number of sponsors. Although I did not have access to the festival’s budget, Fein discusses the growth in the festival’s budget:

The budget that I’m working with started as a four-figure budget, which is now well into its six figures.

With that growth, the amount of people involved with the production of the festival has grown. Since the festival was created in 2005, Fein has been the main component of the festival’s production. Fein discussed his role in producing Pygmalion, which provides context on his duties and responsibilities as the main producer of the festival:

I am the founder and producer of the festival. That role entails my buying of talent, promoting the festival, selling sponsorships, advertising liaison, and organizational operations.

Fein produces the festival each year, investing his time into all of these roles in the production over the span of the year leading up to the days of the event. He is at the top of the hierarchical structure of the festival, above all laborers he hires to help produce the festival. When Fein mentions “buying of talent”, he is stating that he recruits artists to perform at the festival, negotiates contracts with the artists, and pays each act according to the contract the two parties agree to. All of the acts are selected by Fein and paid within the budget of the festival. As the festival grows, the caliber of artists that perform at the event has increased, according to Mike Armintrout:

Everything from the number of sponsors to the caliber of artists, and I'm sure the amount of money he's spending on the festival. I mean, that's the case with any festival or event and you do. During the first couple of years and you kind of roll the dice and see what happens, and you spend a little bit of money and hope that you're not losing any. Then once you develop a fan base you realize how much money you can spend without losing it, and then every year you try and like, just invest a little bit more and try to make it a little bit bigger because you never want it to feel like you're stepping backwards.

As Mike Armintrout discusses here, as the festival grows, it causes Fein to spend more money to produce the event, investing more money into the caliber of artists at the festival, as well as using more laborers to help him produce the event. The festival has grown into a much more complex production than how it began, resulting in an expanded organizational structure, which is significant in terms of understanding Pygmalion in relation to the research question for the chapter. Analyzing the festival's growth will provide a focused view of the festival's position as a form of alternative media, or if the transition has made the festival more closely aligned to the ideals of corporate media, or some intersection of the two.

## **Organizational Structure**

Understanding the structure of the labor force is an important aspect in mapping the progression of the organizational structure. Through this section, I discuss the organizational structure of Pygmalion, and the implications of that structure according to alternative media theory. This analysis will elaborate on how Pygmalion is produced each year, how the festival utilizes temporary labor, the festival's hierarchical structure, and the significance of how the festival is managed and produced.

### **Hierarchy**

Mike Armintrout discusses Fein's role in the overall production of the event, stating that "there is Seth, and then there is everyone else." In addition, Isaac Burgess, Operations Manager for Pygmalion, agrees with Armintrout, stating "Seth is definitely at the top." This is an indicator that a hierarchical structure is in place for Pygmalion. Fein hires and oversees the entire labor force for the festival, which is comprised of fifteen managers. According to Mike Armintrout, who states:

[Pygmalion] includes Seth [Fein] and his wife Justine [Bursoni], and fifteen people that are really making the festival happen.

According to Fein, approximately thirty volunteers help produce the event. Pygmalion's structure is a hierarchical formation, which places Fein at the top of the structure, and the rest of the laborers beneath him. This structure reinforces a more traditional form of organizational structure. Alternative media organizations strive to eliminate hierarchy as much as possible within the organization. As Fuch's (2010) reiterates, within alternative media organizations (or as he describes it, "grassroots media organizations"), "there is collective ownership and consensus decision-making by those



who work in the organization, no hierarchies and authorities, symmetric power distribution, no external private ownership” (p. 179). Through this model, the organization limits power differences within the organization amongst its members by making decisions democratically across the entire organization, eliminating hierarchy and distributing power equally.

In this sense, the fact that the festival utilizes a hierarchical structure at all is troubling in terms of alternative media theory because it creates a distinct difference between members of the organization (whether that is between Fein and the volunteers, or the managers and the volunteers, etc.). In addition, because Fein makes the majority of the decisions when creating the festival (who performs, where the shows are held, etc.), another problematic characteristic arises in relation to Fuch’s (2010) definition. The structure is concerning because it reinforces the dominant hierarchical structure, rather than opposing it as alternative media organizations do by integrating horizontal structures and democratic decision making processes. However, it should be noted that Fein produces the festival himself throughout the entire year leading up to the festival (buying of talent, promoting the festival, selling sponsorships, advertising liaison, and organizational operations). Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for the festival, discusses Fein’s role leading up to the festival:

There is Seth, and then there is everyone else. Leading up to the actual days of the festival, it is pretty much all Seth. He is making all decisions, he’s dealing with all sponsorship, dealing with anything to do with ticketing, working out deals with venues, checking dates, and putting in offers to talent. All of that stuff is Seth.

Although members of the Street Team (volunteers who publicize the event via posting flyers, handing out handbills, social media, etc. to gain entrance into the festival for free) are publicizing about the event a few months in advance, from that perspective,

he is the only full time member of the organization. One could argue this makes the power structure less problematic because he is the only one (to a certain extent) involved with the production of the event up until the days of the festival. Fein (for the most part) functions independently in coordinating and planning the festival, but needs temporary labor to help execute his plan. However, the use of temporary labor instead of full time labor is problematic. Power to choose the artists, venues, and sponsors would be distributed more evenly if Fein utilized full time employees that had equal power to him instead of temporary staff. This would be more indicative of alternative media organizations. Because he is bypassing this model and utilizing temporary labor, it is suspect because it reinforces the dominant hierarchical structure that alternative media theory attempts to combat by using democratic forms of decision making. Because Fein maintains all power over the festival's production, he functions independently, but reinforces his power over the temporary laborers, thus reinforcing vertical organizational structure used to reinforce power within organizations. Later in the chapter, I problematize the use of temporary labor further.

Following the description of the overall organizational structure of the festival, I will now analyze individual aspects of that structure. The parts of the organization that I will examine include the managerial staff and the volunteer staff, as well as the implications of how those individuals are hired to work for Pygmalion in the context of alternative media theory. In addition, I analyze the ambiguities of the term "community" and how that term is incorporated into the organizational structure of the festival. This misconceived term will illuminate other issues related to class and privilege within the festival's organizational structure.

### **Managerial Staff**

The managerial staff of Pygmalion is comprised of organizational categories, including Operations (coordination of venues, stages, equipment for shows), Production (coordination artists, stage set up, sound and light controls), Hospitality (coordinate food & drink for artists and festival staff) and Street Team (publicize the festival through distribution of flyers, use of social media, among other marketing tasks). The members of the staff are assigned duties and responsibilities according to the area of production they are involved in, which is reflective of a more traditional model of organizational structure. Mike Armintrout discusses the roles of the managers during the festival:

Seth is hiring us and saying, ‘This is what your role is. You really don't need come to me unless there's money involved that needs to be spent. You can take care of things with this area’ and gives each person parameters for the duties they can take care of.

Addressing the research question, oftentimes alternative media organizations distribute duties and responsibilities equally amongst the members of the organization. Alternative organizations are structured horizontally to make decisions democratically and eliminate the power structure reinforced in vertically aligned organizational structures. Pygmalion structure fits somewhere between horizontal and vertical because it gives laborers some agency within the structure of the festival and within their own duties and responsibilities, but Fein still controls and delegates those responsibilities, which gives him power over those laborers. The hierarchy is not extensive, but the division of power is present, which is disputable in terms of alternative media theory, which seeks to eliminate power difference within organizations.

Although this is an important aspect of the organizational structure, in order to understand how individuals fit within this structure outlined above, it is important to

analyze how the laborers are hired, why they are hired, and the implications of the hiring process. These findings will help clarify the organizational structure of Pygmalion, as well as make connections to the organizational structure of alternative media organizations.

### **Hiring**

Fein hand selects and hires the individuals he wants involved with the production of the festival. Without a formal hiring process, individuals from the Champaign-Urbana community do not have equal opportunity to work for Pygmalion's managerial staff. Mike Ingram, Production Manager and Sound Engineer for Pygmalion, discusses the selection process and how Fein hires individuals to work for the festival:

He is very good at picking the right people once the festival comes together, for the day of events. So he knows he does not have to micromanager after that. You've got him taking care of all of the organization ahead of time, whether or not he has to staff that out to other people, but it all rests with him. Then he gets the festival ready to go and is comfortable with pushing it out to everyone and trusting them to do it.

As Ingram describes, even though Fein assigns each individual specific duties and responsibilities according to the area of the festival they are involved in, the festival staff has freedom and autonomy to some extent within those responsibilities (as discussed previously, Fein tends not to micromanage the managerial staff — provided they are performing the tasks assigned to them). Pygmalion's hiring process is exclusive, which is unsettling in terms of alternative media theory, which seeks to produce a diverse group of individuals from the community to participate in the creation of the event. If the festival used a formal hiring system or an open call to the community for members to help

manage the festival, it would be less problematic because it would provide an opportunity for community members to potentially participate.

Furthermore, through Ingram's discussion of Fein's selection process, Fein chooses individuals that will best assist him in creating the music festival after he has conducted all the pre-festival business. As stated previously, the duties and responsibilities Fein has prior to Pygmalion includes "buying of talent, promoting the festival, selling sponsorships, advertising liaison, and organizational operations." After those duties are completed, Fein hires individuals to carry out the remaining duties and responsibilities that help produce the festival each year. As stated previously, the individuals hired as managers carry out duties in areas of Operations, Production, Hospitality, and Street Team. These individuals are hired specifically to carry out these tasks as Fein designates them.

Pygmalion's selective hiring process is problematic in terms of alternative media theory because not all willing participants from the community are able to participate in the production of Pygmalion. As discussed previously, Fein has built relationships from years spent in the local music scene in Champaign-Urbana. Because he hires individuals from within those social circles to help produce Pygmalion, it closes off the festival from being produced by any willing participants from the community at large. As Nick Couldry (2003) discusses, the most important task for alternative media is to challenge the highly concentrated media system and the resulting symbolic power of capitalist mass media by overcoming "the entrenched division of labour [sic]" (p. 45). This division of labor relates to traditional organizational structures that separate employees according to rank within the hierarchical structure of the company. This model is "entrenched" within

the dominant capitalist system and follows a traditional model of organizational structure.

Libes (1997) explains a traditional hiring process in an article in *USA Today*:

The hiring process traditionally has been an interlinking series of multi-level, interdepartmental functions, including classified advertising, resume cataloging and review, initial candidate contact and screening, first interview, candidate testing, reference checking, verification of credentials, supplemental interviews, job offers, negotiations, and counteroffers. If the first-choice candidate accepts the job, the search may have been successful, economical, and efficient. If not, employers likely will find themselves reconsidering applicants near the top of the list.

According to this definition, there are many aspects to hiring in a traditional sense. As stated previously by Mike Ingram, Pygmalion does not have a formal hiring process, which means the festival overlooks traditional methods of hiring that employers use to hire candidates for positions within an organization. Because there is no formal hiring process, the festival does not allow any willing individual to have an equal opportunity to become involved with the festival. Traditionally structured organizations are required to offer equal opportunity employment, according to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Alternative organizational theory stresses a different model as well, because it allows any willing individuals to participate or be in the position to get hired. The individuals able to participate in Pygmalion's production are selected from very specific community/communities within Champaign-Urbana, meaning the festival bypasses traditional hiring processes and does not align with traditional or alternative methods of hiring. If the festival utilized an alternative organization's hiring methods, it would allow any willing individual to participate in the production of the festival, and allowing them an equal voice amongst other individuals helping produce the festival. Pygmalion's method of hiring is exclusively based within Fein's relationships, which allows the

festival to properly function on an annual basis and has worked well, but would not be considered an alternative hiring method.

The way Pygmalion selects (or hires) individuals to produce the festival aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) theory of class distinction. Bourdieu theorizes that the creation of subcultures is based around class distinction, which is the notion that subcultures are developed according to varying degrees of social, economic and cultural capital. Sarah Thornton (1995), drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, described "subcultural capital" as the cultural knowledge and commodities acquired by members of a subculture, raising their status and helping differentiate themselves from members of other groups. Pygmalion reinforces a particular class through its hiring process. Bourdieu's theory of class distinction is challenged by alternative media organizations. Alternative media organizations are a participatory system, allowing individuals to participate regardless of their social class, gender, sexuality, race, amongst many other characteristics that attempt to "subvert society's defining hierarchical social relationships" (Albert, 1997). Therefore, Pygmalion is not an alternative organization because it is exclusive to specific communities determined by Fein's social relationships, which are likely individuals within the same social/class structures which he belongs to. An example of how Fein hires laborers for the festival is pointed out when discussing Isaac Burgess, Operations Manager for the festival:

I hired Isaac because I like him and he does a great job and he's one of my best friends.

Fein makes a clear point that he hired Burgess based on their friendship, and the indie subcultures both individuals belong to within Champaign-Urbana, therefore sharing the same subcultural capital. In addition, Fein hired Burgess as an employee because he is

qualified to carry out his role as Operations Manager at the festival, as he works for Fein's Nicodemus Agency, a boutique talent agency (booking concert tours for indie artists) in Champaign-Urbana. Although Fein hires individuals to work for the festival according to their skills and qualifications, as Pygmalion continues to hire individuals to assist in producing the event in this manner, it reinforces the class (educated, working class within the indie music scene in Champaign-Urbana) distinction that Bourdieu discusses. This is something alternative media organizations seek to eliminate. However, Sindha Agha, Street Team Manager for Pygmalion, offers a different perspective because of how she was hired:

I know it sounds cheesy, but if you tell him you want to work for him and you follow through, that's all he wants is for you to follow through. And it's surprising that a lot of people don't do that because they just want a free festival pass. He will let you do so much ... and I was 17 years old and he let me [participate].

Agha discusses how Fein allowed her to become involved because she expressed interest in being involved with the festival. This piece of data supports the notion that Pygmalion allows certain members of a very specific community to participate in the production of the festival. This participation happens somewhat naturally because of how social relationships are created through interaction via taste and class distinction. Fein hires according to qualifications and expertise, but also allows willing individuals to participate who have a particular cultural capital. However, Agha belongs to the same subcultural community or cultural "field" that others involved with the production of Pygmalion belong to, which connects to Bourdieu's theory of class distinction because both Fein and Agha belong to similar subcultural communities. This creates an interesting intersection between the festival and the community from which it was



created, because it allows certain individuals to participate with subcultural capital, but reinforces the social structures that separate people through class distinction via economic and cultural capital. Again, it is worth noting that Agha belongs to a very specific community (student at the University of Illinois), which enables her to participate in the festival's production because of her class standing and knowledge, or "taste" in indie culture. This notion aligns with Bourdieu's theory of cultural "fields" and the connection it creates between individuals with similar subcultural capital. Even though Pygmalion's hiring process appears to allow individuals from the community of Champaign-Urbana participate, in reality, individuals typically align with very specific communities (young, white, educated) within Champaign-Urbana. This reinforces a classist structure and does not combat the hegemonic class structure within the capitalist society. As a result, Pygmalion does not reinforce the ideals of an alternative media organization.

In the next section, I discuss Pygmalion's use of volunteers and temporary laborers to produce the event. This is a significant aspect of the organizational structure of the festival. By analyzing this aspect of the festival, it reveals how temporary labor is used in music festival culture, how the use of these laborers is problematic, and how the structure reinforces class divisions.

### **Volunteerism and Temporary Labor**

Due to the growth of the festival since the inaugural event in 2005, Pygmalion has hired more individuals to assist in producing the event. As I discussed in the previous section, festival founder Seth Fein constructs and assigns duties to a group of managers

that carry out specific duties and responsibilities. This group consists of “roughly fifteen people” according to Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for Pygmalion. Because the festival has continued to grow in several categories (revenue, amount of patrons attending the event, amount of sponsors, amount of venues used), this requires an even larger labor force. In this section, I analyze Pygmalion’s use of volunteer laborers, how those individuals are compensated for that labor, and the implications of volunteerism in terms of alternative media theory. This aspect of the study contributes to the field of research by critically analyzing data collected from Pygmalion relating to volunteerism, contributing to the field of research in relation to temporary labor, volunteerism in for-profit industries, and labor exploitation. In addition, this analysis critiques the power structure of the dominant capitalist system from which music festivals are produced.

Although the temporary and volunteer staff is not paid as much as Fein, there is a reward for these individuals:

[Festival laborers] are paid. My street team is volunteer based but they get VIP tickets to the festival. So there is a tangible reward for being a part of the team that hands out hand bills and flyers or whatever. But the person who runs the street team gets paid, the person who runs the hospitality gets paid, my bartenders get paid, the people who run sound certainly get paid, the people who operate the organizational parts of the festival like constructing the stages and the areas for the outdoor shows. Everyone gets paid.

Fein discusses how all festival volunteers and laborers are paid, but these rewards are still problematic in terms of alternative media theory because all members of the organization are not paid equally. In addition, the use of temporary labor within a for-profit arena is problematized elsewhere as well. Volunteerism and temporary labor have been problematized by scholars in terms of the exploitation of labor by for-profit

companies. *Socialist Labor Party of America* (1998) discusses how capitalists benefit from using temporary labor:

Utilizing temporary workers is very good for the individual capitalist that uses their services. Temps [sic] are paid less per hour than permanent employees, and are frequently more productive. They are easy to acquire, easy to get rid of, easy to replace.

As the publication states, utilizing temporary workers is very valuable to the capitalist, and the workers are easy to acquire and have the tendency to work harder than full time employees. The temporary laborers are cheaper to hire, easily replaceable, and save the capitalist the most money, which in turn makes more profit for the organization. The laborers make these wages for a short period of time and then are no longer needed, and the capitalist profits off of those workers. Pygmalion's method of using labor is exploitative because the individuals at the top of the hierarchy gain the most economically from using temporary laborers. In terms of alternative media theory, using this hierarchical structure and the exploitation of temporary laborers for profit is problematic because alternative organizations seek to eliminate the power structures that are present within traditional hierarchical models of organizations.

Although the managerial staff is not compensated as much as Fein, these laborers are still compensated. Because these individuals are working to produce the event, they do not have to pay to attend the festival (ticket prices ranged from \$60-\$100 in 2012), and in addition, they receive payment for their work each year. In terms of compensation, Sindha Agha, Street Team Manager, discusses how the amount each manager makes is not well known:

I don't really know what I'm going to get paid [each year], but it has increased each year I have been a part of Pygmalion. Seth is generous and gives us cash at the end, because it's more than a normal internship. I think he gave me \$100

when I started as a high up volunteer, and then this year I made \$400 or \$450 or something like that, which felt really good because I've gotten three credit hours and the experience. I do appreciate that because there's time and money I've put into [the festival].

Agha notes that each year, the amount of money she has received has increased, but considering the budget of Pygmalion being in the six-figure range, the amount managers make in comparison to Fein is still vastly different. Many details of the festival's finances are unclear because I was not able to gain access to those records for this study. When addressing where the profits go for the festival, Fein responded:

The money goes into an account, and, then into another account, then it goes into another account, then it goes into another account. I'm pretty sure that account goes into another account, and then into another account. Uh, it's a for-profit festival. It's my livelihood.

Without access to financial records, the amount Fein profits off of Pygmalion is unclear and purely speculative. In addition, managers like Agha do not receive any benefits for working for Pygmalion because they are not full time employees. Although these employees are only needed for a few days/weeks out of the year, it is still problematic that the festival utilizes these laborers (exploiter vs. exploited).

In terms of alternative media theory, a more alternative organizational structure would be a cooperative, an organization that is comprised of individuals that cooperate for their mutual social, economic and cultural benefit. If Pygmalion hired more full-time employees to share the economic benefits of the festival, it would (in theory) distribute the power amongst those individuals and create a more equally balanced organizational structure in terms of power, economic benefit, and balanced control over the event.

The reason Pygmalion is structured this way is because of how much time Fein invests into the festival each year on his own. The pay system works on a scale, and the

more work an individual puts into the event, the more money that individual will receive after the festival concludes. Although the pay differences are much different, it is an indicator of Fein attempting to make the compensation valued at the amount of time the laborer dedicates to the event. Though this model does not completely align with alternative theory (which seeks to eliminate difference in pay, creating a more equal compensation system amongst all employees), Fein and Pygmalion work to make sure the laborers are compensated appropriately. However, Fein we can assume benefits significantly economically from this practice because the festival is “his livelihood.”

The work done by volunteers at music festivals are labor-intensive would be considered jobs that performed by “blue-collar” laborers. Even within the organizational structure of the music festival, hierarchical labor structure is visible, where the volunteers are seen as low-level employees below the founder and managerial staff. However, these individuals are a large part of producing Pygmalion from year to year. From a producer’s standpoint, festival volunteers are essential in order to produce the festival. Armintrout discusses this notion:

Festivals definitely cannot happen without volunteers. Otherwise, no festival would be able to survive. If every person got paid, there would be no money making its way back to the person who puts 365 days a year into [producing the festival].

This is significant because it further describes the exploitative nature of music festivals in terms of volunteerism. According to this notion, Pygmalion would not exist without temporary staff and volunteers. Therefore, these temporary staff members and volunteers are heavily valued, yet merely receive minimal financial benefits in return. This structure is highly problematic in terms of alternative media theory, which stresses the elimination of power structure and hierarchy as much as possible. Pygmalion

reinforces the hierarchical structure through the heavily reliance on volunteerism and temporary laborers, while profiting off of their inexpensive yet essential role in the festival's production.

The festival utilizes the staff of temporary laborers, and the individuals are compensated in various ways. Ward Gollings discusses the value volunteers get out of working for Pygmalion:

Volunteers that get an opportunity to see most of these bands for free instead of buying a \$100 wristband in exchange for helping out for a couple hours each day or five hours one day.

Jessica Beckhart, Hospitality Manager for Pygmalion, discusses how volunteers are compensated as well:

What we did for volunteers was give them ... we let them come into the festival for free any days they weren't working, with a guest. Which is a great deal because they get the free VIP lounge, too. With the ticket price, and all their beverages, they're basically getting paid like between 100-200 dollars.

Through the viewpoints of Beckhart and Gollings (in addition to Fein's previous statements earlier in this section), they believe the compensation for these volunteers to be sufficient and unproblematic. From a capitalist point of view, using temporary labor decreases expenses and leaves more profit for the main production staff. Fein points out how these individuals are "paid" via free admission into the festival. There are exceptions to this, as Agha points out:

Some higher up volunteers get cash, too. People who do posterings [sic] and stuff like that, they get a festival pass and get to say they were a part of the Street Team. Sometimes you can stretch it and say it was part of an internship.

From a volunteer's point of view, he/she is receiving a tangible reward for working a few hours because they receive free admission into the festival, internship credit (again, a connection to education/privilege), or cash in addition to free admission

into the festival. In this sense, Pygmalion's use of temporary labor creates more profit for the festival's founder Fein and the managerial staff because the temporary staff members are compensated with free admission into the festival. Considering this temporary labor is of little or no cost to the festival to utilize, it is problematic and perhaps exploitative from the producer's standpoint because those employees are less expensive than hiring full time employees, or even part-time waged employees. In terms of alternative media theory, utilizing temporary labor for economic profit is problematic because it reinforces a hierarchical organizational structure while increasing profit for a select few individuals, and thus reinforces the power structures and economic inequalities of society. Moreover, it reveals the music festival industry tends to believe volunteerism and temporary labor to be non-exploitative (but rewarding via subcultural capital and other "tangible" rewards because these practices are frequently utilized).

Pygmalion is not the only for-profit festival to utilize temporary labor. This temporary labor is inexpensive (or free) to the producers of the event, so if they can hire individuals who see the experience as "invaluable" as Edwardes (2012) puts it, then those producers will take advantage of that discounted (or free) labor. Pygmalion has followed a trend of music festivals utilizing volunteers in a similar way. Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for Pygmalion, also works as a producer for another music festival, Summer Camp Music Festival, an outdoor festival held annually in Chillicothe, Illinois. As Armintrout points out, other festivals, like Summer Camp, utilize volunteers similarly to Pygmalion. As he states above, he believes that music festivals are not possible without the labor that volunteers provide. In addition, Armintrout believes there is a

personal satisfaction that individuals receive, outside of receiving money, for working at Pygmalion, as well as in the music industry:

What I can say is that Seth takes care of people that take care of him. That's one thing that anyone who knows Seth would not be able to argue with that point. The people that step up and help him out and really do things that he asks them to do get taken care of in the end. It is kind of the case with this business as a whole, or working at a festival. You have to be able to find some sort of personal satisfaction or persona reward out of it.

Individuals who volunteer for Pygmalion receive benefits via subcultural capital because they benefit from the class system. These volunteers are capable of volunteering because they benefit from the class system, which has situated him/her in a position of economic privilege, whereas others in the lower class would not be able to benefit from volunteering at Pygmalion because they could not live off of the wages they would make. Being able to participate in this production is an indicator of class status through the subcultural capital they receive. This "personal satisfaction" and "persona reward" that Armintrout discusses stems from a theory discussed by Capanna (2002), who discusses volunteerism at events and the rewards individuals receive from doing this work.

Building on Armintrout stressing the necessity of volunteer laborers for music festivals, using volunteers for the production of a music festival is not uncommon. Edwardes (2012) of *Volunteer Global* discusses how music festivals, dating back to Woodstock, frequently use volunteers to assist in production. A few contemporary festivals she lists include Bonnaroo in Manchester, Tennessee, Lollapalooza in Chicago, Illinois, and South By Southwest in Austin, Texas. She discusses how "volunteering with a music festival gives you more than free tickets — volunteering on such a large, well-planned project gives you invaluable experience that may come in handy later if you decide to work with other projects." From this perspective, Edwardes stresses the value



of volunteerism as a redeeming opportunity for volunteers because they gain social capital through this work and gain access to a community in the process. Sindha Agha, Street Team Manager for Pygmalion, discusses this notion in terms of volunteerism at Pygmalion:

The reality is, a lot of people who volunteer for a festival do the minimum [amount of work] because it is fun and they are getting a free pass [to the festival].

Her evaluation of volunteerism for Pygmalion is similar to how Edwardes addresses volunteering for music festivals. Individuals seek to gain free admission into the festival, do the work asked of them to accomplish that goal. However, individuals that are able to provide their time and labor in exchange for free admission into a music festival typically come from a privileged class that has disposable time and finances, which allows them to participate in the event and have subcultural capital. Again, this aspect of the organizational structure relates to Bourdieu's theory of class distinction. It is assumed that volunteers for Pygmalion belong to a privileged, educated class from within Champaign-Urbana. Agha discusses what type of individuals volunteer for Pygmalion:

Volunteers who work for the street team are mostly college students, along with a couple of high school students.

College and high school students are supported financially most often by their parent(s) or guardian(s). Dunlap et. al. (2007) examines the process of student recognition of privilege and socioeconomic advantages in relation to community service projects. Their model offers students (especially white students) an awareness process in the context of volunteerism so they can begin to recognize their privilege and advantage within a broad socioeconomic structure (p. 28). Many of Pygmalion's volunteers are come from a privileged class (as students), which should be recognized as not reflective

of the economic diversity of Champaign-Urbana at large. Those individuals benefiting from the system have the luxury to volunteer for the festival, which is not reflective of the Champaign-Urbana community at large. Marginalized classes in the Champaign-Urbana community would not consider volunteering for free admission into the festival “tangible” financial compensation.

Uma Viswanthan (2011), Program Director for Nouvelle Vie Haiti, International Association for Human Values, discusses volunteerism and privilege in her studies of poverty and economic differences within cultures. She discusses how her privilege allows her to volunteer, while others cannot because of their economic social standing. She makes a reference to Lesly, a 29 year old from Haitian who escaped Haiti for the United States, and Viswanthan’s own position of privilege:

It's easy for someone like me to volunteer. I grew up in Westchester, an affluent suburb of New York, went to a great university, and live in a warm, comfortable house with a steady supply of healthy food, clean water and electricity. But what does it mean for Lesly to volunteer? What does it mean when some of the world's poorest people volunteer? Being a volunteer, serving selflessly, is a position of power.

Many people, like Lesly in the example above, cannot volunteer because they do not have the economic capital or freedom to do so. This classist structure which is reinforced through volunteerism for Pygmalion is problematic because it reinforces the economic inequalities within society and perpetuates privilege. Poor, lower class citizens are not typically seen as volunteers for Pygmalion, which is not an overt volunteer hiring practice by the festival. This points out the economic and subcultural capital inequality that exists, and the indie subculture deters lower class individuals from participating. This aspect is a vital part of understanding the organizational structure of Pygmalion because of how the event reinforces class divisions. Alternative media organizations

As King (2003) and Capanna (2002) address in Chapter 1, volunteer laborers feel they are benefitting from being a part of a community event, regardless of how they are being compensated financially. Both authors argue exploitation of individuals volunteering their time in order to contribute to a cause occurs frequently, as volunteers see a positive reward (in King's example, promoting breast cancer awareness), even though the corporation producing the event benefits most. By using temporary or volunteer (and most often free) labor to produce an event that generates revenue for a for-profit organization, the process becomes problematic and exploitative. Alternative media organizations seek to eliminate this exploitation, regardless of whether that organization is for-profit or not. Since Pygmalion is a for-profit event, using these temporary volunteers is exploitative because it recycles laborers to increase profit margin for a few at the top of the hierarchical structure. Alternative media organizations attempt to eliminate this differentiation by using horizontal organizational structure, and distribute revenue evenly in the event that profit is earned.

As Capanna (2002) states, working at an event is an "opportunity to learn capacities and competencies useful to themselves" (Marta & Pozzi, 2008, p. 36). The theory holds true because volunteers see value and benefit from working for Pygmalion outside of monetary value. There is an intrinsic value of art (in this case, music), and individuals working within the festival structure find value in the work he/she does that is not equated to monetary value (Parker, 1920). Bourdieu (1984) claims that "one has to take account of all the characteristics of social conditions which are (statistically) associated from earliest childhood with possession of high or low income and which tend to shape tastes adjusted to these conditions" (p. 177). In Pygmalion's case, being able to

volunteer for a music festival is a sign of benefitting from the classist system of capitalism for volunteers, managers, and the owner of the festival. This display of class privilege is significant because it stresses that Pygmalion, as well as other music festivals that use these practices, perpetuate the dominant classist system of society. In terms of alternative media theory, Pygmalion's organizational structure does not challenge the dominant classist system, therefore it would not be an alternative method of producing media.

Classism and privilege also relate to how festival volunteers are compensated. Although festival volunteers and temporary laborers are rewarded through free admission into the festival, it provides an effective transition from this subject to the discussion of what type of individual is able to volunteer for the festival. In the next section, I discuss how Pygmalion and music festival culture reinforces class division through the creation privileged subcultures based on economic, social and cultural capital.

### **Class Distinction and Community**

The creation of these exclusive communities, or subcultures, relates to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of class distinction. In his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984), he theorizes about class distinction, a concept which theorizes that an individual's class distinction is determined by varying degrees of social, economic, and cultural capital. These attributes are shaped by interests of the dominating class, and emphasizes the dominance of cultural capital, stating, "differences in cultural capital mark the difference between classes" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 69). Grief (2010) discusses this connection of cultural capital to taste, stating "The things you prefer —

tastes that you like to think of as personal, unique, justified only by sensibility — correspond tightly to defining measures of social class: your profession, your highest degree and your father’s profession.” He further discusses how taste is competitive, addressing indie culture and the notion of the “hipster” and elitism within cultural capital: “These conflicts for social dominance through culture are exactly what drive the dynamics within communities” (Grief, 2010). Taste and class are therefore interconnected and reinforce social dominance through cultural capital.

Bourdieu’s theory helps explain the process by which Pygmalion’s employees are selected. The laborers belong to classes according to a very specific type of cultural capital, economic and social standing. Communities and classes within Champaign-Urbana are separated because of this theory of class distinction, separating marginalized classes from middle and upper classes even further because of taste and cultural capital. Bourdieu’s theory addresses the research question for the chapter by explaining how cultural capital affects what individuals are hired by Pygmalion, thus further explaining the organizational structure of the festival. Isaac Burgess, Operations Manager for Pygmalion, notes that the selection process of bands and hiring laborers:

He definitely takes his own personal taste into account. He's got a lot of friends in the community [who work for Pygmalion]. And there are people that are in his ear about which bands they'd like to see at next year's festival.

Fein chooses the artists to perform for the festival based on his own personal taste, which, as Bourdieu addressed, is connected to subcultural capital and class. The individuals who Fein chooses to work for the festival have similar taste and interests, which dictates their interest in helping produce the festival. Indie culture attracts individuals based around taste within music. Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for

Pygmalion, discusses his understanding of taste, relating his work with the jam band scene to indie culture:

Because just like in that subculture of jam bands, there is a subculture of indie, and there are all these other things that fall under that.

Armintrout's belief is that subcultures are determined by taste of music,

regardless of what genre of music. Subcultures are formed around those who have a particular taste for jam bands, just like subcultures are formed around those who enjoy indie music. It reiterates the differentiation between subcultures based on taste, which happens in all forms of music. Those who enjoy indie music are likely interested in Pygmalion and belong to the indie subculture and have subcultural capital, therefore the likelihood for their participation in Pygmalion increases because they hold more cultural capital than someone does not have a "taste" for indie music. This notion is a significant finding from this section because it reinforces class difference according to taste, which is something alternative media seeks to eliminate.

Another explanation of Pygmalion's hiring method relates to the principles of homophily, which suggests that individuals tend to develop relationships with others whom they perceive to share similarities (Hallinan & Williams, 1987, 1989). Thus joining an organization (i.e. Pygmalion) would be easier if the individual shared similar traits (i.e. class standing, subcultural capital, indie culture) with others within that organization previously. So when an organization is constituted by a majority of members who share a common identity, it is easier for members of that group to enter into the organization (Mease, p.166 in Mumby, 2011). This is the case with Pygmalion, where the members joining the organization mostly come from a class of privilege, or privileged community, within Champaign-Urbana. For example, Mike Armintrout and

Ward Gollings, both Production Managers for Pygmalion, are employed by venues that are used for the festival. Armintrout discusses his role with the festival and his responsibilities at the Canopy Club (a place where Fein and Armintrout previously worked together):

Typically in past years my role has been basically the talent buyer here at the [Canopy] Club. I'm the Production Manager and promotional rep [sic] for shows. My role in years past has been to assist my friend Seth with whatever shows that might be happening here [during Pygmalion].

Gollings discusses how became involved with the festival:

Well this year I was given an official title of operations manager. There wasn't [sic] as many people on Seth's staff, so I don't think I really had a title ... Years before that I've just been helping Seth in general in the downtown venues when he's been busy in Urbana or anywhere else.

Armintrout has known Fein from his time working at the Canopy Club in Urbana and Gollings through working at the Highdive in Champaign as a booking agent (as Fein is a booking agent as well). In addition, most of the employees of Pygmalion attended the University of Illinois or Parkland College, which provides evidence that those individuals come from a privileged social class of educated and (potentially) financially stable demographic/community. It would be difficult (if not impossible) for an individual outside of this "common identity" to participate in the production of Pygmalion because there is no formal hiring process, thus excluding individuals who lack subcultural capital from participating in the production of the festival. Once again, the exclusion of individuals from participating in the production of the festival does not align with alternative media theory because it does not attempt to break down the dominant social hierarchies constructed by the dominant culture. Instead, the festival reinforces the dominant structures in an exclusionary manner.

Throughout this section, I discussed the hiring process utilized by Pygmalion in order to analyze how the festival's organizational structure is created. As stated previously, the festival creates an intersection between alternative and traditional methods of hiring. The festival does not have a formal hiring process, Fein hand selects individuals according to his/her experience and skills to help produce the festival, but also allows individuals from a very specific privileged community of Champaign-Urbana participate in its production (to a certain extent).

Much of Pygmalion's hiring process can be accredited to Bourdieu's (1984) theory of class distinction, due to the separation of individuals within society due to differences in social, economic and cultural capital. Communities are formed because of this theory of class distinction, which is significant in understanding how individuals are hired to work for Pygmalion. The understanding of community is especially significant because it symbolizes the significance of class and social standing, and how communities are formed according to socially developed relationships. In the next section, I discuss a nuanced perspective on the formation of communities according to characteristics of Pygmalion by connecting that analysis to the organizational structure of the festival and alternative media theory.

### **Reinforcing Class Structures and Community**

One important characteristic of alternative media argues that participation from a diverse range of people from a community in production is central for alternative media (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 7). The process by which Pygmalion hires individuals to participate in the production of the event is troubling in terms of alternative theory



because it is a highly selective and exclusive process. Alternative organizations seek out a diverse pool of individuals and allow anyone capable and willing from any community to participate. An example of this would be community radio stations, which allow any willing individual to host or produce a show broadcast on the airwaves. The structure of a community radio station follows the characteristics of alternative media organizations as and Pygmalion selects specific individuals to fill roles in the organization without any formal hiring process. This practice is highly selective and exclusive, which is a practice not used by alternative media organizations.

In addition to the principles of organizational inclusion within alternative media theory, the notion of “common identity” also relates to theories surrounding the meaning of “community.” Leunissen (1986) argues that the “conceptualization of community predominantly refers to geography and ethnicity as structuring notions of the collective identity or group relations” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 8). By this definition, community is constructed according to the similarities between individuals within the same geographic location. In addition, other theories believe community can be non-geographical. As Lewis (1993) believes, a “community of interest” can extend “across nations and continents” and thus bypasses the geographical location (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 8). In relation to Pygmalion, the individuals hired to assist in producing the festival come from the same “community” from which Fein stems from within Champaign-Urbana. An example of the intersection between “community” and Pygmalion is described by Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for Pygmalion:

We’re trying to shed light on the community we live in, which in the long run is beneficial for this festival as well as the Canopy Club and everything else. Hopefully it makes people think of Champaign-Urbana a little bit more. Again, Seth has said, this is his home and this is where he lives, so he wants to do things

that have a positive impact on his community, and I feel the same way. That is another reason why I want to be a part of the festival, aside from Seth being my friend. I want to be a part of the festival because I want it to have an impact on the community I live in.

Armintrout points out the intersection between the community and Pygmalion. Through this example, I am moving beyond the traditional glorification of community. The communities to which Armintrout and Fein belong are not the same as the overall community of Champaign-Urbana, which is a diverse range of people. Community is based around “community of interest” as well as being geographical (which also relates heavily to class distinction via economic capital). The community of interest for Pygmalion is music, as it is a music festival. Burgess believes that common interest comes from the community:

I think it is just because of the type of music. With this town, the citizens of this town and the type of music they listen to. I think that is what really dictates [the music].

Again, as Burgess states, Pygmalion is reflective of the community from which it was created. It reflects the class distinction model set by Bourdieu (1984), because he explains that an individual’s taste is indicative of his/her place in society (p. 184). Not only is the festival itself an indicator of individual’s position in society (via their participation — volunteers, patrons, or producers of the festival), but also indie music culture at large is indicative of these hegemonic class structures.

The development of “communities” is an interesting notion, and through Pygmalion, the creation of a very specific community based around interest, class and geographic location is visible. The organizational structure is also based around this very specific “community” which Armintrout discusses. Within alternative media organizations, the goal is to combat the division of social hierarchies and sees itself as

part a movement furthering an entire community, rather than its own preservation. If Pygmalion sought out to benefit the entire community of Champaign-Urbana, perhaps the area of the cities (predominantly Downtown Champaign, Downtown Urbana, and the broader of the University of Illinois' campus) which it takes place would change ever year instead of remaining in the same general area each year, and involve more venues to decentralize the location and accommodate more individuals within the Champaign-Urbana community as a whole. Bringing the festival to other areas of Champaign-Urbana would introduce patrons to new areas of the community, rather than a hyper-specific location of Champaign-Urbana.

As stated previously, these hierarchical social relationships are developed according to specific communities perpetuated by individuals who share common economic and social identities. This term is also known as homosocial reproduction, which is the notion of choosing to associate with individuals reflecting one's own self (Elliott & Smith, 2004, p. 365). Homosocial reproduction can occur in many ways, whether that is through the selection of individuals closely resembling one's social class, race, gender, and political beliefs, amongst other characteristics.

The hiring process behind Pygmalion directly relates to this term, as Fein has constructed the staff of laborers according to the relationships he has established within Champaign-Urbana over his lifetime, specifically the local indie music scene. Again, this is problematic according to alternative media theory, which stresses opposing the dominant structures set forth by the dominant social structures within society. A more alternative method of hiring individuals to participate in the production would be to hold open hiring for the festival, thus considering many candidates from a variety of economic

and social backgrounds. This tactic would be of the traditional sense because it is a model followed by organizations in order to ensure that their hiring practices are fair to people of all communities, classes, and races. This model is problematic still because not all willing individuals would be qualified to work for Pygmalion, just candidates that share similar subcultural capital with the festival and indie culture. Any willing individual, regardless of qualifications, class, race, or social standing can partake in the production of alternative media.

As addressed previously, the managerial staff is constructed according to a very specific group of individuals. Those individuals have close relationships with the festival's founder Fein because of his time spent in the Champaign-Urbana indie music scene. The indie music scene within the Champaign-Urbana social hierarchy shares characteristics with a very specific group of individuals. The individuals who are chosen to work for Pygmalion belong to a very specific community within the cities of Champaign and Urbana, as well as a privileged group of individuals within indie culture that share similar cultural capital. Marginalized populations and communities of the same social class as these laborers would not have a chance to participate in the production of Pygmalion. This closed process is problematic in terms of alternative media culture, which seeks to promote participatory structure and equality.

### **Chapter Conclusions and Findings**

After a thorough analysis of the data collected, there were various findings regarding the organizational structure of Pygmalion. This analysis builds on the existing

theory regarding organizational structure and alternative media theory. The key findings of this chapter include:

- Pygmalion's organizational structure mostly does not align with alternative media theory.
- The festival's structure is exploitative via the use of temporary laborers and volunteers for the economic benefit of a few individuals (mainly Fein).
- Pygmalion's hiring practices are not alternative or traditional, but exclusively selective and favors individuals that share subcultural capital with Fein.
- Participation in Pygmalion is a privilege and the festival is indicative and perpetuates class differences within society's dominant capitalist structure.
- Indie culture is reflective of class privilege within society among participants and cultural producers.

Pygmalion utilizes a hierarchical structure based around Seth Fein, the founder of the festival. Each year, the festival uses temporary laborers to produce the festival as Fein is the main producer of the festival throughout the year. The festival's use of temporary labor is problematic in terms of alternative media theory because it creates a hierarchical, exploitative power structure that alternatively structured organizations seek to eliminate. In addition, the financial benefit Fein receives from producing the event is problematic as well, because the festival utilizes temporary, inexpensive labor for his economic benefit. This model of organization is exploitative. However, other music festivals use this type of temporary structure as well, so this is an issue that exists in the music festival production industry at large. These structures reinforce the dominant hierarchy of power that alternative organizations challenge.

In addition, through this system of temporary labor, I found that other class structures were reinforced as well. Through Pygmalion's organizational structure, individuals from very specific privileged communities are able to participate in the production of the music festival, which reinforces the class structures according to economic and social subcultural capital. Individuals that are able to participate in the

production of the festival belong to a privileged class within society that has disposable time and income to designate his/her time towards the production of the event, while others in lower social classes do not have this luxury as these blue collar jobs are being taken by a privileged class. By even being able to work as a temporary/volunteer laborer, that is a sign of privilege within the capitalist system the festival exists in. This is a significant finding because not only do alternative media organizations attempt to combat the classist structure created by the dominant system of capitalism, it shows that music festival culture is created and sustained by those with privilege within our society.

Overall, the festival is a reflection of privilege within the dominant capitalist system. The festival perpetuates class distinctions and benefits a very specific group of communities within Champaign-Urbana, not the community at large. The understanding of what “community” means is an interesting finding. The “communities” that benefit from the festival are people in the position of power and privilege that have the ability to produce an event that benefits a niche subcultural group.

This analysis provides additional research on organizational structure, problematizes the dominant hierarchical structure of organizations, addresses music festival production and the perpetuation of privilege and class structure. In addition, it helps illuminate the classist structure of Pygmalion, and how subcultures are formed and reinforced through economic, social and cultural capital. Individuals from the privileged class reinforce the dominant system of capitalism. Indie music culture at large arguably perpetuates privilege and is an indicator of how music can contribute to reinforcing the hegemonic structures of capitalism.

In the next chapter, I continue to address Pygmalion in terms of alternative media theory, and how the festival functions within the highly corporatized and consolidated monopoly of the concert and music festival industry.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Pygmalion and the Intersection of Independence and Corporatization**

##### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I examine Pygmalion Music Festival and the nature of independence within the live music industry. I explore the festival in relation to how the monopolized live music industry is structured. I analyze the differences between corporate and non-corporate production practices of Pygmalion (i.e. ownership, sponsorship), creative control and the curation of the festival, the intersection between Pygmalion and locality (use of local independent artists, local venues and sponsors), as well as analyze of the type of “independent” musical artists the festival utilizes.

This chapter continues to focus on alternative media theory, and I will address the following research question in this chapter: What characteristics of Pygmalion designate the festival as a form of alternative media, and what are the nuances of these



characteristics in terms of resistance and corporatization? The main focus of the chapter is to analyze Pygmalion's position in the live music industry, examine how curation and creative control are significant in terms of alternative media, and the implications of the festival's actions beyond these distinctions. The examination and analysis of creative control and independence within the monopolized live music industry is significant to this study and is addressed throughout this chapter. The goal of this chapter is to critically examine the meanings of the data collected in the field interviews in relation to these aspects of the live music industry, curation, creative control and locality relation to alternative media theory.

As I examined in Chapter 1, the live music industry has become more consolidated and monopolized since the merger of Live Nation Entertainment. Jordan (2012) discussed the monopolization of the live music industry by Live Nation Entertainment. Grose (2011) addressed the growth of music festivals in popularity and how festivals act as a way to attract corporations to co-opt the music industry and the live concert experience. He discusses how the music festival industry has grown, referencing Alan Ridgeway, Live Nation's CEO, stating, "Festivals are one of the big growth areas of our business." Live Nation Entertainment treats music festivals as a portion of their corporate business, rather than an active form of media that music and a music festival can be in terms of alternative media theory.

Bowen & Daniels (2005) suggest music festivals are further distinctive in that music is an integral part of culture, Cummings (2005) argues that music festivals are special types of scenes as they are simultaneously part of local, translocal and virtual scenes (p. 1; Bennett and Peterson, 2004). Music festivals are an integral part of the

communities they exist in, and this chapter examines Pygmalion's integration of locality into the festival and the significance of that integration in reference to alternative media theory. Cummings (2007) studied music festivals and their marketability in addition to their cultural significance. In addition, I addressed Fugazi's Ian MacKaye (a musician known for his overt support of the DIY ethic), and his understanding of DIY culture, stating:

I think the reason we take the approach to music that we do is that we ultimately have complete control over how we do our music, and how we operate as a band. We don't feel compelled by anyone to do anything that we don't want to do (Sinker, 2007, p. 19-20)

MacKaye discusses his approach to music is to maintain complete control over the media he is producing. A staunch supporter of DIY production of media, he strives to maintain creative control over his music and all aspects of his band, Fugazi, in order to maintain his independence as an artist. The objective of this chapter is to address Pygmalion's growth within the monopolized live music industry, the festival's resistance of the corporate industry through their practices of curation, and integration of locality.

### **Resistance of Corporate Live Music Industry**

As discussed in Chapter 2, Pygmalion is produced and owned by one person, festival founder, Seth Fein. He maintains control over the event via ownership and ability to dictate and curate the festival each year. The goal of this section is to examine Pygmalion as an event independent of the corporate live music industry. Mike Ingram addresses Pygmalion's independence from a corporate production company:

It's not corporate owned or anything like that. It's independent in that sense. I suppose it's also independent in the sense that the bands that play would be considered independent on whether they don't have labels or have indie labels.

But yeah, in terms of that side of it, the fact that it's just a guy doing it, that's about as independent as you can get.

The independence from a corporate production company is significant in terms of music festival production because of how monopolized the live music industry is today. This is significant because as the festival has grown, the corporate industry would detect that growth and co-opt the event via sponsorship, corporate stakeholders, and incorporation of artists to maximize profit. Black, Fox, & Kochanowski (2007) examined concert revenues and the concert industry and analyzed concert trends by investigating pricing and attendance, the superstar phenomenon, and structural changes (consolidation) in the way the concert tour industry operates. The corporate live music industry seeks ways to maximize profits in these ways, which is vastly different than how alternative media organizations seek to produce media. Pygmalion maintains this independence, thus resisting co-opted by a corporate production company because it wants to maintain ownership over the event, thus maintaining creative control over the festival it created. Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for Pygmalion, discusses the festival's independence, and the process Fein goes through as Pygmalion is independently produced:

Leading up to the actual days of the festival, it's pretty much all Seth. He is making all the decisions, he's dealing with all sponsorship, anything to do with ticketing at Krannert [Center for the Performing Arts], working out deals with venues, checking dates, and putting in offers for artists. All that stuff is Seth.

Armintrout discusses how Fein controls essentially all aspects of producing Pygmalion, which is similar to how MacKaye outlines what DIY culture entails: producing everything from within the organization, without the use of corporate production (Sinker, 2007, p. 19-20). Producing independent media is a characteristic of

alternative media theory, and producing Pygmalion independently allows Fein to maintain control over the event he is curating each year. Fein handles all aspects of the festival, which is an important aspect of the festival according to Isaac Burgess,

Operations Manager for Pygmalion:

It's very important to [Fein] that the festival is something he is able to do or oversee as one person.

Again, this point exemplifies the notion that Fein is the individual taking control over the production of the festival. Fein prefers to maintain creative control over the festival instead of passing over to a corporate-owned production company to produce. As the festival continues to grow (in terms of the organizational structure and overall budget, as established in the previous chapter), the control over the festival gets more difficult to maintain. This control gets more difficult when more individuals, organizations and sponsors are involved with the festival because the increase in stakeholders creates pressure on the organizer to produce a form of media that generates economic profit for those stakeholders. Despite that growth, Fein reiterates his stance of maintaining his independence and control over the festival:

[Pygmalion] is an extraordinarily independent operation because I am the only human being that has any control.

Although the control Fein maintains over the festival is problematic in terms of an alternative media organization (creates a power separation within the organization), maintaining control over the festival is significant in this chapter because of the affects corporatization has on alternative media, and how Live Nation Entertainment has created a monopoly of the live music industry. Because Fein and the producers of Pygmalion maintain their independence from a corporate owner, they have the ability to act

independently in opposition to the live music industry, dictating which artists, sponsors, venues, and other details of the festival are incorporated into the event. Sarah Halpern, Hospitality Manager for Pygmalion, believes acting outside of the monopolized system of Live Nation Entertainment is a true display of independence:

Because [Pygmalion is] run by an independent company and isn't affiliated with Ticketmaster or Live Nation, it's truly an independent event.

Pygmalion bypasses a major corporate ticketing depot Live Nation Entertainment, which is a monopolized system with fees and service charges incorporated into ticket prices (thus offsetting labor costs for the corporation and maximizing profit off ticket distribution). This is apparent through the ticket distribution system Pygmalion uses each year when distributing tickets for the festival. According to the festival's website, Pygmalion utilizes Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, a local performing arts center located in Urbana and part of the University of Illinois, for their ticketing system. Individuals can pick up their festival passes at various local businesses around Champaign-Urbana, including local cafes, art museums, and venues. This method of ticket distribution is very different from how a major ticketing depots, such as Live Nation, would distribute tickets. Instead of mailing out tickets individually, or making the tickets all digital, Pygmalion utilizes local businesses to distribute tickets to festival patrons. This method drives these patrons to these establishments, which is an alternative method of ticket distribution from the monopolized Live Nation Entertainment ticketing system. Although there are many other avenues to use for ticketing (for example: Bonnaroo, a corporate festival, mails tickets to patrons, but is owned and operated by a corporation which charges extra for ticket distribution at no option to the ticket buyer) the

method Pygmalion uses (no ticketing fees) is alternatively structured in comparison to the corporate method of ticketing distribution.

### **Curation as Creative Control**

Pygmalion's growth since the festival was curated back in 2005 has been expansive, incorporating many more artists, sponsors, and venues into the festival over the past 12 years. As discussed in the previous section, the corporate live music industry has consumed and monopolized the system, yet Pygmalion is resisting that co-option. Through this section, I discuss how the festival has maintained creative control via curation, and how the process of curation is significant in terms of alternative media.

Mike Ingram, Production Manager/Sound Engineer for Pygmalion, discussed how the festival was originally curated back in 2005:

I remember sitting in Seth's house recording audio, because we didn't have recorded audio for a commercial for the radio for Pygmalion. My girlfriend at the time (and now wife) had the idea for the poster with Moses holding a tablet and it had all the bands on it. She has an art degree so she drew up the poster.

As examined in Chapter 1, alternative media is often amateurish and aesthetically rougher than corporate produced media. Ingram's account of this is an example of how the festival utilized a very DIY ethic, hand-drawing the posters and recording audio themselves to publicize the event. The festival has creative control over their work, and alternative media stresses creative control and values independent media production over passive consumption of media. As discussed in the previous section, Pygmalion's independence from the monopolized live music industry is significant because it grants the festival creative control over the event. If Pygmalion followed a corporate production method, the festival could potentially change to a model that stresses maximizing profit,

thus altering the content and form of the festival. For example, Pygmalion would incorporate mainstream acts in order to attract the most attendees and maximize profit. Isaac Burgess, Operations Manager for Pygmalion, discusses his support for the festival's incorporation of non-mainstream acts into the festival:

I think [Pygmalion] does a good job of introducing art and culture or non-mainstream art to the community and people appreciate it.

Burgess discusses introducing “non-mainstream” art and music to Champaign-Urbana. Because Pygmalion incorporates non-mainstream or indie acts, it is functioning differently than a corporate produced festival. Pygmalion values creative control of the event because they independently curate the event each year. Alternative media values creative control and independence because it challenges the passive consumption of media that the standardized corporate media produces in favor of a form of media specifically curated by the producers. Although Pygmalion is a for-profit festival and does strive to produce a profit each year (similarly to corporate-run festivals), there are other motivating factors to producing the festival each year beyond economic profit. Fein discusses the festival further, and believes Pygmalion showcases different characteristics than other music festivals he has experienced:

Pygmalion is a boutique indie festival. It's very “homey” [sic] compared to a lot of other [festivals] I have been to. You can definitely tell that it is a small production. It is a personally run event. You can tell that it is not corporate, and I really enjoy it. I think that is my favorite part of the festival.

Fein points out the different characteristics that separate Pygmalion from other festivals he has been to, but does not necessarily discuss what festivals specifically. He does point out that Pygmalion “is not corporate”, which is true because the festival is owned independently, free of corporate and stakeholder influence. Pygmalion is not

inherently anti-corporate, because it uses some corporate sponsors to fund the event, albeit on a minor scale. In addition, the festival seeks to make a profit each year, which is a similar motivation corporations have when producing media, yet not on the same scale as corporate produced concerts and music festivals. It is important to distinguish these characteristics to gain an understanding of Pygmalion's place within the spectrum of alternatively and corporately produced media. Isaac Burgess, Operations Manager for Pygmalion, discusses Pygmalion's resistance to corporate culture:

As far as resisting other things in the music industry, he definitely wants to make a profit, but he wants to put out good music, too. He does not want his profit to make the music suffer. If he resists anything, it's that.

Burgess' observations point out how Pygmalion is a for-profit festival, but would not sacrifice its creative freedom (in terms of what types of artists, and their "use value", are invited to perform at the festival) in order to increase profits. This is one of the benefits to maintaining control and independence: it opposes the standardized music culture that strives to maximize profit, in turn, producing a different form of media that produces a more intimate experience and promotes music that is not considered "mainstream" or corporate. Because the festival utilizes the type of artists it does, it promotes a diverse and potentially ideologically different type of music to music that would be considered corporate or "mainstream." Fein discusses what types of bands he selects to perform at Pygmalion:

Indie rock. Bands that are writing new, original, and independently produced rock music.

Fein selects acts that fall into the specific genre of "indie rock". He mentions bands that are "writing new, original, and independently produced" material, which is significant because many artists on major labels are creating music that is standardized



(polished, radio friendly), as opposed to independently produced music, which can have more of a rough aesthetic. For example, Xiu Xiu, a band that performed at Pygmalion in 2011, uses an avant-garde and experimental style of indie rock. Their style of music would not be considered “radio friendly”. Another example is Willis Earl Beal, a musician that performs neo-soul music and produces lo-fi recordings. Neither Xiu Xiu nor Beal would have mainstream appeal, but have ties to independent rock music.

Fein selects bands that are “really fresh bands that are putting out new records”, which typically coincides with the band’s status on an indie label. For example, Xiu Xiu released their 2012 album *Always* on Polyvinyl Records (an indie label based in Champaign) the year they performed at Pygmalion. These labels typically allow artists creative freedom to produce the type of music they want, not what type of music the label thinks will sell the most amount of records (like major labels). Fein discusses his opposition to the corporatized portion of the music industry:

First of all, I think [mainstream] music is pretty fucking horrible. The stuff that makes it on the radio is a pretty clear indicator that it’s not very good. Because, I think the American conscious has been trained to listen to really well recorded, but poorly crafted songs that follow a very, very boring path. The bands that are popular from a mainstream perspective are not of interest to me because I don’t believe they will have much career longevity. It’s not a hard and fast rule; it’s just what I do. It’s basically because I don’t think the music is very good.

Fein discusses mainstream music and his opposition to not only mainstream music, but the sterile process of producing mainstream music. Fein accepts the process of mainstream music, but his criticisms of the industry and his ability to select performers for his festival because he doesn’t “think the music is very good” could be considered an elitist stance against a large industry. His subcultural capital leads to this ability to be selective with the type of performers he uses for the festival, which he believes to be

better than mainstream acts. Fein and Pygmalion are resistant to this standardization and homogenization of music culture, as they want to fill the void and promote cultural alternatives. As Triggs (2006) discusses by citing Duncombe (1997) expresses, DIY ethic strives to “make your own culture and stop consuming that which is made for you”, which helps explain what is happening between Pygmalion and corporate concert system (Triggs, 2006, p. 69). By maintaining its independence, Pygmalion is creating its own form of media outside the corporate concert system. The festival began as a form of media created by Fein because there was a gap for this type of event in Champaign-Urbana. He was motivated by his passion for music, as he was an independent musician prior to creating Pygmalion. As Sarah Halpern, Hospitality Manager for Pygmalion, discusses, it was Fein’s love of music, and the lack of a festival of this kind, that created Pygmalion:

Seth's love of music, specifically indie music, [is what created Pygmalion]. I think it's literally the only event in Champaign-Urbana that will bring that much attention to this genre of music.

Again, referencing the DIY ethic discussed by Triggs (2006), through Pygmalion, Fein is curating an event instead of being a passive consumer. Fein noted Pygmalion’s ethic in relation to creating the music festival:

It's DIY. It's got a punk rock ethos.

Instead of consuming what the corporate concert industry was providing in Champaign-Urbana, Fein decided to curate his own festival, which is significant in terms of alternative media because it favors creation over passive consumption. This is a characteristic of alternative media, which produces media (often amateurish and rough in aesthetic and form) rather than being passive consumers. Fein’s curation of Pygmalion

acts similarly to this alternative ethos and the artists incorporated into the festival support this claim, such as examples of Xiu Xiu and Willis Earl Beal.

Selectivity is an important aspect of creative control in curating Pygmalion. Mike Armintrout addressed Fein's process of selecting the headlining band each year:

He's going into each year going one of these four or five bands has to be my headliner. Sometimes he might be going into it like, "I am putting all of my money into needing to have Grizzly Bear." I mean, I remember him saying that in the spring, Most of the time he's booking bands and I don't even know who they are. So I'm like, "Who's your Explosions in the Sky [Pygmalion's headlining band in 2011] this year?" and he goes, "I got all my money riding on Grizzly Bear. That's who I want for the festival.

Fein specifically selects the headlining band each year because of how the artist fits the aesthetic of the festival he is curating. Armintrout addresses this as well:

Seth has a lot of experience ... He knows his scene and he's pretty straight up with people when they [promoters] offer him particular bands and he'll be like "Nope, I'm not interested in that." He knows what it is that he wants.

If Pygmalion was interested in maximizing profit, Fein would not go through the extremely selective process each year to choose bands to perform at the festival. The process would be much more methodical, choosing bands that would sell the most tickets to the festival. Through this process, Pygmalion values curating the festival each year and specifically tailoring it to their vision, rather than striving to sell as many tickets as possible. Looking at the bands that have headlined the festival in the past four years, all of them are on labels that are considered "indie" labels: Grizzly Bear (Warp Records), Explosions in the Sky (Temporary Residence Limited), Of Montreal (Polyvinyl Records), and Yo La Tengo (Matador Records). By selecting these bands to perform at the festival, there is an overt politic that Pygmalion is expressing because they are choosing artists on independent labels instead of major labels. By doing so, they are choosing bands that do

not typically have massive, mainstream appeal. However, many “indie” labels are distributed by corporate distributors like Alternative Distribution Alliance, so the line is still blurred between what is truly “indie” and what is not.

In addition to choosing artists that reside on independent labels, Fein discusses his selection process further:

I try to get bands that appeal to the older [age] set ... Dinosaur Jr. this year, Braid the year before, Built to Spill the year before that, and Cap'n Jazz. So I try to appeal to a wide range of ages, but certainly not anything outside the realm of anyone who likes indie rock music.

Certainly indie rock is a genre that appeals to a specific audience, but the genre is not overtly mainstream or trying to appeal to a mass audience (i.e. Xiu Xiu and Willis Earl Beal, among other artists relatively unknown by a mass audience). However, there are exceptions to this, as many artists that are considered “indie” are being used in television commercials broadcasted to a massive audience on NPR. Pygmalion specifically targets indie artists for the festival bill because those acts appeal to Fein and the indie rock community in Champaign-Urbana. In terms of alternative media theory, this is a significant aspect of Pygmalion because it bypasses incorporating overtly mainstream and corporate acts in favor of a specific genre of artists based in indie rock.

If the festival selected artists specifically from major corporate labels, Pygmalion would be supporting music that has become standardized and corporatized in order to maximize profit because these artists would most likely have widespread appeal. The fact that Pygmalion does this is an important connection to alternative media theory, because the festival overtly bypasses corporatized forms of music (to an extent) in favor of independently produced music. It reflects the festival’s stance against corporatized forms of music (which could earn the festival a lot of money in ticket sales) for artists that are

not as well known. It is an important distinction to make in relation to the artists Pygmalion selects to perform at the festival each year, and provides a segue into analyzing the festival's use of sponsorship and selectivity when curating the festival in that aspect of production.

### **Sponsorship**

Because Pygmalion is not funded by a corporate production company, the festival utilizes sponsors each year to fund the event. In this section, I discuss how sponsorship is problematic in terms of independence, and how the festival utilizes sponsorship through curation of the event.

Fein addressed the sponsors he uses for Pygmalion in 2012:

My primary sponsors are Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, which is the theater, dance and performing arts wing of the University of Illinois. Red Bull, who has a division of their company called Red Bull Music Academy Radio. WPCD, which is the radio station at Parkland College. A couple of beer companies, Goose Island Brewery and this year, Rolling Rock, which are both Anheuser-Busch brands. Jack Daniels and Southern Comfort, which are both Brown-Foreman Liquor brands. Then any number of local sponsors, from big companies like Busey Bank and Volition, a video game company, to small cafes like Café Kopi or restaurants like Farren's or Black Dog. There are over 50 sponsors.

The festival uses these sponsors, national corporate brands, such as Red Bull and Jack Daniels, in conjunction with local sponsors, such as Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and WPCD, to fund the festival each year. However, it is important to note that Fein lists particular sponsors first during the interview, which could be framed as more important to the interviewer, all while the more financially significant sponsors could be latter companies discussed. As discussed in Chapter 1, Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) define alternative media organizations as utilizing "non-commercial finances" to

run their organization. In theory, any use of commercial sponsorship is problematic in alternative media because it sells an audience to a stakeholder. There are ways which corporate involvement can affect the product being made. For example, Van's Warped Tour has been overrun by corporate involvement, and this infusion intensifies the tensions within the scene and violates Skatepunk's core values (Dowd, et. al, 2004, p. 158; Cummings, 2007, p. 1). The more stakeholders become economically involved with an event, the less control the event producers typically have on the content and form of the event. In addition, there are sponsors that Pygmalion uses that do not necessarily affect the content of the festival, but can reflect on the image of the festival. For example, Pepsi recently launched a campaign with Tyler, The Creator, a rapper in the hip-hop collective Odd Future Wolf Gang Kill Them All (abbreviated Odd Future or OFWGKTA). The campaign was a television campaign with Mountain Dew, a Pepsi product, which was highly controversial and eventually banned from television broadcasts. Pepsi is a sponsor of Pygmalion, so the corporation has a history of attaching itself to "cool" festivals or popular forms of "indie" culture in order to co-opt another subculture. This relationship can potentially affect the image of Pygmalion negatively because of the reputation of the corporation and their willingness to sponsor artists like Tyler, The Creator. This is an example of how corporate integration can affect the image of the festival, despite it maintaining its "independent" status.

However, Pygmalion utilizes sponsorship while stressing their ability to independently maintain control over the curation and the characteristics (types of artists, sponsors, venues used) of the festival. In fact, Fein addresses Pygmalion's independence in relation to sponsorship:

It's definitely an independent festival. In fact, I'd argue that this is the largest independent music festival in America. Based on the idea that I am partnered with no one, and my company is not outside of my personal sales of sponsorships. I am not sold on the open market and I cannot be bought.

His statement points out that the festival is "partnered with no one" and individuals hired by Pygmalion are the sole producers of the festival. Pygmalion is an independent festival, owned by Fein himself, and is produced each year through his work selling sponsorships that he chooses to help support the festival financially. Even though the festival uses sponsorship, it maintains its independence from the dominant structure of music festival production because it is owned independently, and functions outside the dominant Live Nation Entertainment's monopoly. However, it is problematic that the festival is reliant upon sponsorship each year for the festival to take place. Fein addresses this notion, stating

Without the sponsors, there is no festival. There's not enough money in ticket sales to justify the cost of the expenses between the cost of production and artist fees. It's not even possible.

Although, Pygmalion relies on sponsorship each year to produce the festival, it is somewhat selective in which sponsors it utilizes. Fein elaborates:

I'd have a hard time not allowing certain companies market themselves at my festival, but I'm not totally closed to it, depending on who it would be. As far as choosing sponsors, it's not a situation — i just go out there and pound the pavement to get people who are willing to believe in it. I don't feel like I have anyone who I disrespect. It would be interesting to have a tobacco company, to see the reaction that people would have to that. I'm sure there would be a backlash. It's O.K. for Jack Daniels sponsors it. That's fine, but if RJ Reynolds sponsored it, it would probably cause a big stink.

Fein's concern for the image of the festival is similar to how *Bitch* media utilizes sponsors to a certain extent. The publication will allow advertising in the magazine, but are highly selective in which brands they allow in the magazine because of the

publications stanch feminist political agenda. Pygmalion's selectivity is not unlike the process corporate sponsors use to pursue marketing endeavors. For example, a corporation would not sponsor an athlete with a criminal background or history because it would reflect poorly on their brand's reputation. The process of selectivity in sponsorship is shared between forms of alternative media and corporate media. Although Pygmalion uses selectivity when allowing sponsors to fund the event, it is not unlike other forms of media. However, the festival relies on sponsorship each year, so the boundaries for selectivity might be looser due to the increasing cost of producing the festival due to cost of artists and production costs as Fein stated previously.

Because the cost of indie rock artists has grown exponentially because bands are touring less frequently. Mike Armintrout discusses the process:

Grizzly Bear, like a lot of indie artists, don't tour as much. They're not road hogs, if you will, that are touring, trying to play 100 shows a year, every year. So they might have a record, so when they record cycle happens, they tour for six months then they don't tour for another year and a half or two years. So when they tour, their tours are much hotter commodities. They're only playing in Chicago, Indianapolis, and New York and L.A. They're only playing big cities, so they're certainly not playing Champaign-Urbana. So there are definitely times where Grizzly Bear is a good example of a band we would not have playing in Champaign if it wasn't for Pygmalion.

Touring patterns and the cost of indie artists has increased due to the infrequency of touring, and the cost of touring for those acts. Pygmalion is using sponsorship in order to afford these artists, and curate a festival that could not otherwise occur in Champaign-Urbana because of its small market status. Fein is utilizing sponsorship in order to afford the festival and curate the event he wants to each year. However, this process is problematic because the festival has brought on more sponsorship in recent years and



grown dramatically since it was first created. The festival could have maintained the original size (800 attendees in 2005), but instead, grew into a 5,000 attendee festival.

This conscious choice to continue the growth of the festival is problematic, because Pygmalion could have maintained its original size, promoting an curating a festival that focused on the indie rock music scene of Champaign-Urbana on a small scale. As Downing (2001) discussed, alternative media is typically small scale in many forms, and does this to express an alternative vision to hegemonic practices (Downing, 2001, p. v; Fuchs, 2010, p. 178). As Downing references, this “hegemonic practice” would be growing into a co-opted form of media, which Pygmalion has done. They incorporate sponsorship, selling their audience to advertisers, which is also problematic. However, the growth of Pygmalion is not easily avoidable, as the neoliberal system encourages growth and expansion because it benefits the capitalist system we are all a part of. Although the festival has grown and become more co-opted through sponsorship, Isaac Burgess points out how Pygmalion has discussed growth, and made a conscious effort to keep maintain its independent ownership over the festival:

Seth does his best to [keep the festival independent]. It’s really important for him to keep it independent and not let it get too big. That’s something we’ve talked about before.

The festival has grown to since it first was created and formed into the even it is today, which incorporates over 50 sponsors, while maintaining the ability to incorporate the artists it wants (national and local), and dictate how they want to curate the festival each year. Fein addresses the balance between sponsorship and his creative control over the curation of Pygmalion:

Ultimately, I am not willing to allow a sponsor to tell me who I can and cannot book [to perform at Pygmalion]. If a company came to me and said, “Hey, we’re

going to vie you one hundred thousand dollars, and you're going to have John Mayer headline the festival" — I would have to tell them no. It would be a hard thing to say because that would change my entire financial livelihood, but I am not going to have John Mayer headline my fucking festival. That's selling out. Selling sponsorship to my festival, I don't consider that selling out. I consider that process. Processing the festival in a way that makes sense. I'm not going to let someone else tell me who I'm booking. Period.

Fein stresses his independence from corporate influence via sponsorship, which emphasizes the independence that Pygmalion possesses when producing the event. He mentions the term "selling out", which he believes is sacrificing creative freedom for the sake of maximizing profit, or abandoning control over the media being created. Fein is maintaining control over the festival, stating "I'm not going to let someone else tell me who I'm booking," and by doing so, he is showcasing the festival's independence and control over the form of media it chooses to produce. By maintaining control over the festival, Pygmalion is choosing artists that align with the festival's vision over artists that would generate the most profit. As addressed in the previous section, Pygmalion utilizes independent artists rather than artists overtly for maximizing the festival's economic value (choosing artists solely for the sake of maximizing profit). However, because the festival uses sponsorship to fund the festival, it is problematic because the ability to selectively use sponsors even furthers his ability to maintain superiority in terms of cultural capital and decision making processes.

Pygmalion needs sponsorship in order to produce the event, however, sponsors have no creative control over the festival. As Sarah Halpern, Hospitality Manager for Pygmalion, points out:

The sponsorship literally has nothing to do with the actual festival. All of the programming has nothing to do with sponsors. All of our set up has nothing to do with sponsors.

Halpern states that although the festival does use sponsors to fund the event, the organizations or corporations have no control over what types of artists perform at Pygmalion. An example of how sponsors could determine aspects of a festival's curation could be at a festival that has sponsored stages, such as Lollapalooza in Chicago. A corporate sponsor could endorse an artist at the festival (sponsor the band's tour, cross promote the record label by using the band's song in a commercial endorsing the corporation's products, etc.) and dictate that the artist perform on the stage the corporation sponsors, or else the organization could pull their sponsorship funding for the festival. In this sense, Pygmalion is oppositional to giving festival sponsors any power in curating the festival, which is significant because the festival maintains creative control over the event and suppresses corporate involvement in the process. In addition, Mike Ingram, Operations Manager for Pygmalion, discusses the notion of control within Pygmalion and how the festival maintains its independence:

The sponsors don't share any of the risk or anything. It's not corporate owned. I don't see it as muddying the waters of being indie at all. It's still one dude doing it all. He's just using whatever avenues he can... [sponsors] don't have any control to assert as to what, or vetoing any bands, or asserting an agenda or anything.

As Ingram discusses, the festival has complete control over the production of the festival, and the sponsors of the event have no control over what types of artists perform, or how the festival is structured. However, the festival depends on sponsorship each year in order to bring artists to Champaign-Urbana to perform. In this sense, the festival is dependent upon funding. In addition, sponsors could have other power over the festival in other ways, including conflicting views amongst sponsors. A sponsor who commits to a large sponsorship could threaten to pull a sponsorship if certain other sponsors are allowed to sponsor the festival as well. In this way, they have power over what other

types of sponsors are incorporated into the festival. Halpern also points out how Fein maintains creative control over the festival, despite the increase in sponsorships:

[Fein] has kept it the way he has wanted it to be. If he was giving into that then he would've already sold Pygmalion. You know what I'm saying? As the owner of the festival, he's the one that controls that. So he's definitely been like resisting the corporate side of the business to keep it grassroots.

Halpern points out Pygmalion's resistance of corporatization, which is significant in terms of alternative media theory. In addition, she states that Pygmalion could have been sold to a corporate production company, but Fein has resisted that co-option. The festival maintains its independence and is resistant of becoming part of the corporate music festival industry. However, it is important to note that Pygmalion is Fein's livelihood, which could affect the way the festival is curated because he wants to make money off of the event. Isaac Burgess, Operations Manager for Pygmalion, discusses this notion in terms of sponsorship control and Fein profiting off of the event, and how Pygmalion is not willing to sacrifice its vision for the sake of profit:

[Fein] doesn't let that compromise his vision at all. I think once you start letting the sponsors take over what you do, and if it conflicts with your vision, then that starts to conflict with the independent nature of what you do.

Burgess believes that allowing corporate sponsors to control the event sacrifices the creative control of the festival. This is an area which Pygmalion resists being consumed by a corporate production company, and maintains its independence in order to keep creative control over the festival. It is important to point out Pygmalion's opposition to the corporate media and how the festival's independence is showcased because they have creative power and control over the types of acts they incorporate into the festival.

Although the festival does want to make money, the motivation for producing the event is not solely based around maximizing profit. Corporate organizations seek to

maximize profit, while the motivations of alternative media organizations are not entirely based around maximizing profit. Although this is a slightly different model used by Pygmalion, this subtle difference in production method is distinct and important because it separates it ever-so-slightly from the corporate model of production. Sarah Halpern discusses this notion:

[Pygmalion] is not against business. The goal of anything is to make money, and the goal of Pygmalion is, I think, first and foremost, to get the music out there, then to make money. Obviously both are very important goals.

Both Burgess and Halpern agree that making a profit is a goal of Pygmalion. However, they both make points about music at the festival being as important, if not more important, than making a profit. Gracon (2010) discusses how the corporate music industry frames music in terms of its exchange value and its ability to generate capital. He stresses that music is simply another commodity to be bought and sold within a marketplace to the corporate music industry (p. 221). The use value of music means little to the corporate music industry if it is not economically profitable. In Pygmalion's case, the use value of music is much different than the corporate music industry. The music is valued much differently because maximizing profit is not the main priority of the festival, which sets Pygmalion apart from the corporate concert industry. Although this relationship between corporate and independent is not a binary, there are indicators that provide a better understanding to where media falls between the spectrum of independent and corporate. These aspects of Pygmalion create an interesting tension between the independence and corporate, and by doing so, provides a distinct and specific case where a form of media is functioning differently than its corporately-owned counterparts.

Because Pygmalion is not owned by a corporate production company, it establishes its independence from the control those companies have over creative control of the event. If the festival would succumb to corporate pressure and gave up the creative power over the event, it would become another portion of the corporate music industry which lacks diversity and has become standardized to produce music that maximizes profit. Fein refuses to relinquish that control in order to maximize profit, which is significant in terms of alternative media theory because it challenges the dominant model of producing media and provides an alternative method in the process. However, Fein makes another point about existing within the dominant structure, and he only has so much control over just how “independent” Pygmalion is due to the capitalist structure the festival exists in:

I suppose theoretically having [Pygmalion] sponsored technically dismantles its independent status. But, I hope none of the bands drove a car to get here, because they all used oil to get here, so by that, they are fucked, too. I really, really hope that the rubber I am wearing on my shoes wasn't ... you know ... it's stupid. You can dig deep enough until I'm living in the fucking woods of northern Canada and I'm off the grid completely, foraging for berries. I'm bought and sold, so let's all join the party and accept it.

First, Fein is discussing how Pygmalion exists within the capitalistic structure from which it cannot escape. The music festival is a product of capitalism, and which cannot easily act completely outside this system. The festival attempts to resist capitalism, it reinforces the dominant system simultaneously. Fein draws arbitrary lines and justifies those lines according to his own interests and ideals in order to maintain the image of his company and music festival, which is not unlike the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Kim and Reber (2008) ground their understanding of the concept according to a few others, but believe CSR relates to ethical codes, corporate

philanthropy, community relations programs, and law-abiding actions (p. 338). Any company that exists within the music festival and/or concert industry cannot exist entirely outside capitalism. Festivals only have the ability to combat and challenge those structures, which alternative media organizations seek to do. Pygmalion can only do so much in order to be considered entirely independent of dominant, corporate culture.

However, Pygmalion is still doing something different culturally than a larger corporate festival in terms of use value. The festival incorporates specific aspects into the curation of the event, even if that detail does not maximize profit. For example, if the festival wanted to maximize profit, it would hold the festival in one location and not allow patrons to re-enter the festival with food and/or drinks, somewhat forcing patrons to purchase food and drinks provided (and priced) by the festival. This is a tactic festivals like Bonnaroo and Coachella utilize to increase revenue. Instead, Pygmalion hosts shows near (or in) local bars and restaurants to encourage festival patrons to visit these establishments during the festival. It utilizes small scale capitalism with different cultural results than corporately produced festivals, which is significant in terms of alternative media because Pygmalion utilizes a model of their own rather than utilizing a model created by a corporate production company.

In addition, as Fein states “let’s all join the party and accept it” above, it acts as a testament to the power of capitalism as the dominant structure within the national (and global) economic infrastructure. Any exchange of good, no matter the value, utilizes a trade value defined by capitalism. Even the most basic aspects of our existence are products of capitalism. What Fein is describing is the limited power individuals have to act outside of this system. Pygmalion cannot act outside of capitalism, but it acts outside

of the corporate model as much as it can in order to sustain the type of festival it wishes to produce. Resisting corporatization is a reflection of attempting to act outside of the system, while simultaneously being a part of the system. Again, by resisting capitalism, the festival reinforces capitalism in the process. The “party” statement provides an interesting intersection between independence and corporate and the capitalistic system the concert industry is a part of.

Again, as Fein states above, the festival uses sponsors to fund “dismantles its independent status”, but as he stated earlier in the chapter, using these sponsors is “process” in order to produce the event from Fein’s perspective. Because Pygmalion only has so much power of resistance within the capitalist structure, it cannot be entirely independent of those forces. As stated previously, the festival needs sponsors in order to produce the festival because it is attempting to pursue independent artists that cost money. Because these acts cost money to bring to Champaign-Urbana, Pygmalion relies on sponsorship in order to offset the costs of those artists that would otherwise have to be picked up by patrons of the festival. This method of production is similar to Cummings’ (2007) description of the Big Day Out Festival’s method of using sponsorship. Certainly Pygmalion could reject the use of sponsors altogether, but as Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for Pygmalion, discusses, it would drastically increase the cost of tickets for patrons:

If [Seth] didn't have sponsors, and say next year he's like, “I’m going to do this thing 100% independent, but I’m still going to bring in the bands that I did,” then the festival ticket prices start at \$200. Then people would basically be like, “What the fuck?” and are all pissed, saying “Why are you charging us that much more money?” Well, he goes “Last year you were all bitching about sponsors, so I cut all the sponsors, but then you have to pick up that cost.



By way of Armintrout's rationale, in order to keep ticket prices low for patrons of the festival, Pygmalion utilizes sponsors in order to offset those costs. If the festival rejected all sponsorship, the audience would have to pick up that cost, and potentially lose its patron base altogether. Although the festival utilizes sponsorship at the festival, it does so in order to subsidize the costs of tickets for the festival attendees.

However, it should be noted that Pygmalion is a for-profit festival. If the festival was non-profit, it would use revenue generated by sponsorship and ticket sales to solely offset all costs for the festival. Instead, the festival is for profit, which means the festival producers take part of the profit after the festival is complete. An alternative method for producing the festival would be to run the festival as a non-profit event, reusing profits from the festival each year in order to sustain Pygmalion's financial status and allow it to keep happening each year. Although it is problematic to utilize sponsors and ticket sales for the sake of individual profit, the festival could increase prices of ticketing to attempt to maximize profit. As discussed in Chapter 1, the intersection between independence and corporate within music has become increasingly blurred. Pygmalion's use of sponsorship, while maintaining creative control over the curation of the festival, creates an intersection that further complicates the grey area between the ambiguous division between the independent and corporate music industry.

### **Locality**

Alternative media organizations are community focused as well as being independently run (Coyer, Downmunt, Fountain, 2007). In this section, I will discuss Pygmalion's focus on integrating locality into the festival through the use of local artists.

In this sense, I am using the term locality to discuss how the production of Pygmalion has been influenced by its surroundings and environment in which it originated.

Pygmalion showcases its ability to incorporate a very specific type of artist into the festival because the festival seeks to incorporate the community from which it originated. This community is what Fein was involved with prior to creating the festival, and he continues to create the festival in relation to that scene. As discussed in the previous chapter, he performed in the indie rock scene in Champaign-Urbana, which is indicative of why Pygmalion chooses the acts it does to perform at the festival. It was the point of the festival to begin, as Fein discusses:

That was kind of the point of the music festival with which to begin. It is to create a situation where the local music scene had an event that they could rally around and look forward to, and hopefully, aspire towards playing. Plus, it wouldn't be much of a music festival if it didn't reflect our own community.

Pygmalion has a history of incorporating local acts into the festival's bill every year, and as Fein suggests, the local music scene (one that he has been involved with) was the point of producing the festival initially. Again, as Duncombe (1997) discusses, DIY culture incorporates individuals "making your own culture" (Triggs, 2006, p. 69). Pygmalion utilizes its independence in order to incorporate the local indie music scene festival founder Fein was a part of and creates media in that way, instead of only consuming the media that is produced by the dominant culture, often without any reference to locality. In a corporate-run festival, the inclusion of locality would not occur because those artists would not have massive appeal across a wide audience. Those local acts would appeal to a select group of individuals within a very specific community of Champaign-Urbana. Therefore, the incorporation of local artists is an important characteristic of Pygmalion that separates it from corporate-produced festivals. Although

it is possible for a corporate-run festival to incorporate local artists (i.e. Traveling punk rock festival Van's Warped Tour's use of a local stage at the festival). However, Warped Tour is not based around the punk rock music scene in one community. Pygmalion is based around the indie rock music scene in Champaign-Urbana, which is significant and different from how a corporate festival would use local artists.

Fein has even made strides towards including these more "distinguished" local bands (most of which do not perform often or are on hiatus) into the festival over the last few years, having Braid (hiatus from 2004-2011) and Hum (only performed in reunion setting a few times from 2000-2010) perform as headlining acts in 2011 and 2012, respectively. Sarah Halpern, Hospitality Manager for Pygmalion, discusses the local independent music scene of Champaign-Urbana and its place in the festival:

You can't really do anything in this town without showing love to the local bands. There are so many quality local bands in this town that it would just be a shame to not utilize them that we have here. In the 90s, the indie rock movement was huge here, and like Hum was one of the bands that came out of it. So it's like kind of just the history of the town lends to that really well.

Although Hum was signed to a major label, RCA, in the 1990's, the band has a strong following as popular local artist from Champaign-Urbana. With all the history within Champaign-Urbana's indie rock music scene, it lends to even more rationale to why local artists are included in the festival. Pygmalion maintains its independence because it has the ability to incorporate local artists into the festival each year. This is not a freedom that can be exercised by all concert producers or venues in Champaign-Urbana and larger festivals. Oftentimes, nationally touring artists have the power to choose what bands accompany them on any given bill the band headlines, or contracts do not allow local acts to perform. This comes into play even in local venues in Champaign-Urbana,

like the Canopy Club located in Urbana (a venue used during Pygmalion). Nationally touring acts perform at the venue on a weekly basis, and as Mike Armintrout, Production Manager for Pygmalion discusses, he does not have the freedom to add local acts to concerts at the venue:

We try every time when we book a larger show at the Club, we try to like, if there's a local band that we think would make sense to put on the bill, we're always going back to the agent and say "we're going to add a local band here, check it out." However, that is so very rare when we actually get to add someone. But anytime we get to add someone, we can because we want to be a friend to the local scene.

One of the goals of Pygmalion is to uplift the local music community by pairing them with these nationally touring acts that will attract hundreds, or even thousands, of patrons for their show. Although not all local bands perform in front of a large crowd at Pygmalion, the festival has the ability to incorporate local acts wherever it sees fit (although oftentimes the bands are used as opening slots for nationally touring artists). As Armintrout points out, venues around town, like the Canopy Club, attempt to do this but do not have as much power to execute.

This contrast in freedom from Pygmalion's ability to incorporate local acts compared to a local venue booking nationally touring acts, it showcase Pygmalion's ability to produce the type of media and performance it wants. In terms of alternative media, this is significant because Pygmalion maintains its ability to produce the media it wants to and is not controlled by any outside parties when producing the festival. With that said, because Pygmalion utilizes local acts, it increases the locality incorporated into the festival. Again, a key characteristic of alternative media is the incorporation of locality and community. Because Pygmalion has the ability to produce the media it wants

and chooses to incorporate locality and community into the production, it is significant in terms of alternative media theory.

Locality is a significant aspect of alternative media theory because it seeks to create media that is reflective of community (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 7). Alternative media theory emphasizes this control (similarly to DIY culture) because it emphasizes creating an alternative social space in opposition to passively participating as a consumer in corporate culture (which often has no regard for local culture). An example of this would be community radio stations, which provide a platform for local community members to participate in radio and program their own radio shows. In addition, spaces like the Independent Media Center in Urbana allow space for people to produce their own DIY concerts. Pygmalion was built with the help of the local, indie music scene, which is something Fein was a part of and initially built the festival around. In addition, Fein wants to keep the festival closely linked to Champaign-Urbana, according to Isaac Burgess, Operations Manager for Pygmalion:

[Seth] tailors it to our community. Our community doesn't need a super strict corporate run festival. It would lose a lot of its fun if it were run that way. Those are certain things that Seth definitely likes to stay away from.

Avoiding corporatization is important to the producers of Pygmalion. If the festival grew to become a corporate festival, it would move further away from where the festival began, which was to support the local music scene and provide a music festival for local artists to mesh with nationally touring artists. Maintaining this model of production is important to Pygmalion because it allows people within these specific communities to create culture by forming bands, zines, labels, rather than passively consuming it by just listening to the music. Integrating locality into Pygmalion creates a

positive connection to alternative media theory because it perpetuates a participatory culture (incorporation of local artists, sponsors, venues, etc.), and reflects the local community.

As Isaac Burgess discusses, the festival utilizes these specific communities within Champaign-Urbana in order to produce media that is different from corporate culture.

Burgess discusses how utilizing locality enhances the festival:

It helps add to the genuine feel. I mean, it is something. This is Seth's hometown. It is something he is passionate about and he wanted to bring a good festival to his hometown. It helps add to the genuine feel I would say. At one point, Seth was a part of a local band. I know he likes to give opportunities to them. So, there are more opportunities for [local artists] to play. A lot of local bands are in demand for the festival. They have a strong following, and a lot of people are looking for them to be in the lineup every year.

In terms of alternative media theory, this is an important part of the production of the event because it incorporates ideals outside of maximizing profit and producing an event that does not align with the corporate methods of producing media. Fein incorporates the local music scene into the festival's lineup each year because in order to provide an opportunity for some local bands to perform alongside nationally touring talent. These bands might otherwise not be seen by the amount of people that attend the festival. It promotes a local indie rock scene, much like other regions with strong indie music scenes (i.e. Washington, D.C., Portland, Chapel Hill), but on a smaller scale. Pygmalion is promoting the local independent music scene from which it originated, which is significant because it maintains the local aesthetic and community ethic rather than a standardized form of media, which is an important characteristic of alternative media.

Because Pygmalion places local bands alongside national artists that attract a lot of patrons, it exposes local artists to more people. Although local acts could be overlooked, Pygmalion provides the possibility that more patrons will be exposed to local artists than a concert taking place separate of the festival. Fein does this in order to showcase a music scene that he has been a part of for many years. As discussed in the previous chapter, Fein has been involved with the local music scene in Champaign-Urbana for over a decade and formed and performed with indie rock bands before he created Pygmalion. Mike Armintrout discusses his involvement with the local independent music scene:

Seth was obviously a part of the local scene for so many years with Absinthe Blind and Headlights, and obviously his sister and his good friend are still in Psychic Twin. Seth also has such strong relationships with a lot of other local bands, like Common Loon, Elsinore and Grandkids.

Fein's involvement with the local indie music scene in Champaign-Urbana prior to creating and producing Pygmalion provides credibility to the festival's motivation to incorporate and uplift this particular local community. Although Pygmalion is only utilizing a very specific music scene, it is still utilizing local, independent acts into the festival, which corporate festivals would not do. The incorporation of a local music scene into the festival provides an avenue to break away from the standardization of a corporate music festival that excludes local culture. In terms of alternative media theory, this is a significant part of defining what makes Pygmalion alternative. The festival reflects notions of DIY culture, and to reiterate what Duncombe (1997) discusses, DIY culture should represent a "shared creation" of a producer's own culture. Burgess points out how Fein's involvement with the local independent music scene determines how he incorporates local artists into the festival:

At one point, Seth was a part of a local band. I know he likes to give opportunities to them, so, the more opportunities you have to play. They have a strong following, and people are looking for them to be on the lineup every year.

Not only does Fein incorporate local artists into the festival because he wants to support that area of the community, but Burgess believes patrons at the festival want to see local artists as well. Although local artists are not the main reason patrons attend the festival, the incorporation of those bands is still significant because other concerts and/or festivals might not even consider booking local talent for a music festival because it would not generate as much revenue. For example, relating back to Armintrout's discussion of incorporating local bands into his shows at Canopy Club. The Canopy Club does not always have the power to incorporate local artists into shows at the venue because the nationally touring acts (and their tours often produced by corporate production companies) have the power to choose which bands accompany them for their shows. Pygmalion has the ability to incorporate local artists into any part of the festival it wants because it maintains its independence from a corporate production company.

In this sense, although Fein controls the artists that perform at the festival, some people who attend the festival want to see local artists perform. It is important to Pygmalion to incorporate local artists in order to reflect a music scene in Champaign-Urbana, which allows the festival to break away from the corporatized festival that would not incorporate local artists. Because Fein has created Pygmalion as a reflection of the culture which he has been involved with for many years, the festival reflects an ethic outside of creating an event to simply maximize profit. Pygmalion reflects a local, independent music scene that Fein has been involved with, which is a key characteristic of DIY culture and in turn, alternative culture. It creates a more participatory festival that



local artists are incorporated into, which has been a conscious decision of Fein and Pygmalion since the festival began in 2005.

Fein also discusses how Pygmalion was built to reflect the indie community of Champaign-Urbana. Once again, as he discusses Champaign-Urbana at large, the artists used for Pygmalion merely represent a small portion of the music community in the area. Many local artists are excluded from the festival, including genres like hip-hop, heavy metal, and hardcore punk, amongst many others, which is not indicative of the Champaign-Urbana music community at large. However, Fein has made it clear that he is specifically targeting local indie rock groups because he performed in many bands in the community prior to producing the festival. Pygmalion aligns with DIY culture because of how the festival incorporates locality. Fein discusses why he incorporates local acts into Pygmalion every year:

Only Pygmalion can sound like it does because of the local bands that perform. You could put Grizzly Bear and Dinosaur Jr. and Dirty Projectors on a stage in any community across the world, and it would sound like them. But Pygmalion Music festival will only sound as it does with bands like Grandkids, Common Loon, and Elsinore, and you know, the rest of the names. That's why I use local acts. I do this for the same reason I do anything, Patrick, which is because I want it to be unique to Champaign-Urbana.

Although the bands might reflect a very specific community (the indie rock music scene) of Champaign-Urbana, he believes that Pygmalion is produced to make the festival "unique to Champaign-Urbana" because it incorporates local culture and music into the festival. Locality opposes the homogenization of culture, and this is a reason why local scenes in punk and indie have such historical importance. In a similar manner, Gracon (2010) discusses the significance of local record stores incorporating local music

in order to reflect the subculture from which the store was a part of, and the importance of utilizing that piece of a community:

The store maintained a cultural grittiness that emphasized the obscure fringes of underground music, as well as supported the local music scene. It was a unique place where a subcultural community (although not all shoppers fit within a specific subculture or considered themselves subcultural) could gather, exchange ideas and learn about bands and musical scenes that existed on the cultural margins. It was a place that existed outside of the narrow margins of what the dominant music industry considered to be popular and marketable (p. 29).

Through the incorporation of the local music scene into the record store Gracon is discussing, it creates a locality that opposes homogenization that the corporate and “popular” music industry strives to achieve. Local music scenes exist “outside the narrow margins” of the dominant, corporate music industry, and challenges the corporatization of music. What Pygmalion does by incorporating local artists into the festival aligns with this model discussed above by Gracon (2010), because it creates a unique place within a specific subcultural community that people can interact with the local music scene. Pygmalion creates a space that uplifts the local music scene, creating a participatory culture used by alternative media organizations. In terms of a DIY ethic, it is important to produce a form of media that reflects the community from which you belong because it combats the standardized corporate culture. In relation to the research question, locality is a specific characteristic that is important in understanding what aspects of Pygmalion designate it as a form of alternative media.

### **Chapter Conclusions and Findings**

After a thorough analysis of the data collected, there were various findings regarding Pygmalion and its position within the live music industry. This analysis builds

on the existing theory regarding alternative media theory and the monopolization and consolidation of the music industry. The key findings of this chapter include:

- Pygmalion is resistant to the monopoly of Live Nation Entertainment because it is independently owned and curated.
- The festival maintains creative control over the festival through curation.
- Pygmalion relies heavily on sponsorship to fund the event each year, but is resistant to sacrificing creative control for the sake of economic profit.
- The festival's integration of locality reflects an alternative ethos.

Pygmalion is owned and curated each year by Seth Fein, with assistance from temporary laborers to execute the event each year. The festival maintains its independence from the monopolized corporate live music industry, resisting consolidation. The festival could be bought out by a corporate production company, but values curating the event each year and maintaining creative control over the festival. It continues to maintain its independence from Live Nation Entertainment, and has increased in the number of attendees each year since it was created in 2005. The festival's growth, alongside their resistance to corporate ownership, is significant because of the neoliberal economic system the festival exists in. Neoliberalism promotes maximum growth to increase revenues because economic contributes to the free market economy of capitalism. Pygmalion's resistance of this system is significant because the festival resists consolidation (unlike the majority of the live music industry), challenging the production methods set forth by corporate live music industry in favor of curating the festival independently each year. Alternative media theory favors active production of media over passive consumption of media, and Pygmalion is actively producing its own event each year, rather than selling the festival to the highest bidder for their own economic self-interests. The festival's ability to maintain its independence while continuing to grow each year is significant because it resists consolidation in favor of creative control.

In addition, the festival's resistance to consolidation in favor of maintaining creative control is significant. The festival values curating the event each year, diligently and specifically choosing artists and venues that they want each year. Although the line between indie and mainstream artists has become more ambiguous with the consolidation of record labels in recent years, Pygmalion prefers independent artists on indie labels for the festival each year. Although the division between corporate and independent labels has become more unclear, the festival utilizes some distinctly independent/alternative groups (such as Xiu Xiu and Willis Earl Beal) that reflect a raw sound and rough aesthetic. Although the festival utilizes artists that are known within indie culture, its selectivity when choosing artists to perform at the festival is significant because if the festival was interested in producing an event to maximize profit (like many corporately produced festivals), it would choose artists that have widespread appeal, rather than their sound or aesthetic. The objective of the chapter was to understand the characteristics of Pygmalion that designate the festival as a form of alternative media as well as analyze the nuances with alternative media. The festival values curation over economic profit, which is significant because it resists (to a certain extent) the neoliberal system which emphasizes economic growth above all else.

However, the festival's use of sponsorship is another intriguing finding in this chapter. The festival is dependent upon funding from sponsors each year for the festival to exist, but sacrifices no creative control over the curation of the festival in the process. Although the festival's independent status is jeopardized by relying on sponsors to fund the event each year, the festival maintains its ability to curate the festival without influence from its sponsors. Technically, the festival could be controlled by sponsors

threatening to pull sponsorship if the festival does not address their requests for an aspect of the festival (a sponsor wants a certain artist billed, or else they will pull sponsorship), this has not been the case with Pygmalion. Certainly sponsors could dictate aspects of the festival, but this did not appear in the data. While the festival has become co-opted because the audience is being sold to sponsors, the festival curates the event each year independently. This is a significant finding because alternative media maintains ownership over the media it creates, while bypassing a passive consumption of media and values curating the festival over maximizing economic profit.

The festival incorporates local independent artists, which supports an alternative ethos because alternative media attempts to reflect the community from which it is created. Alternative media theory stresses a participatory culture, which is what Pygmalion does by incorporating local indie artists to perform at the festival. By incorporating this local aesthetic, it reflects the indie rock community from which it began, as Fein performed in several indie rock bands in Champaign-Urbana prior to producing Pygmalion.

This analysis provides additional research on the consolidation and monopolization of the music industry, problematizes the dominant live music industry, addresses music festival production and the significance of curation and creative control in media-making. In addition, it helps illuminate neoliberalism in relation to the live music industry, demonstrating how a music festival can toe the line between independence and corporatization through valuing creative control and independence rather than economic profit, while still incorporating sponsorship to fund the festival.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Conclusion & Findings: Making Sense of Pygmalion's Identity and Place within the Music Industry**

#### **Introduction**

Throughout this research project, I critically examined Pygmalion Music Festival through an alternative media lens. I utilized this method to contribute to the evolving alternative media discourse. In addition, this method contributes to research surrounding the independent music industry, and the state of the alternative music festival and concert production industry. I was intrigued to study this topic because of the ambiguous division of indie culture and corporate culture due to the recent progression in consolidation within the music industry. However, through this research, I found those two spectrums of the music industry are not binary entities. Rather, the line between the independent music industry and corporate music industry has become increasingly blurred as indie culture has become commodified and consumed by the mainstream culture industries.

Through my experience attending music festivals, such as Bonnaroo Arts and Music Festival, Lollapalooza, and Pitchfork Music Festival, Pygmalion was a festival that I was drawn to because of its incorporation of local artists with nationally touring independent artists. This combination felt unusual because it was something I had not seen in other festivals. The incorporation of locality felt like an aspect that was bypassed by other festivals I had attended. Although the previously mentioned festivals are much larger than Pygmalion, the process of producing these events is what caused me to create this study. Pygmalion's placement in the music festival industry and meanings of independence struck me a starting point for this research. This then grew into a larger study regarding alternative media theory, organizational structure, notions of independence in the contemporary music industry, the monopolization of the music festival and concert industry, and the co-option of music festival culture by the dominant culture industries.

Through the theoretical lens of alternative media theory, this study is grounded by a theory that upholds alternative characteristics and ethics (subvert society's hierarchical social relationships, profoundly different structure than corporations, establish new ways of organizing and producing alternative content, thus creating a different reality), combined to combat corporate culture and produce a counter-culture that fundamentally differs from mainstream media. This case study utilizes Pygmalion Music Festival to expand on and critique the perpetually shifting state of the music industry. The study builds upon the critical communication studies field of research in relation to alternative media theory. The study examines the intersection between "independence" and corporatization, creating a nuanced view of the music industry that remains

predominantly unexamined by researchers. This is especially the case in terms of live music festivals, which are often not the centerpiece of a research study. This study examines differentiations in production practices between alternative and non-alternatively produced media within the music industry that are often overlooked (in this case, music festival production), yet have implications that influence and alter the way live music events are produced. Music is a topic that is somewhat neglected in the field of communication, and although some research has been done regarding the commodification of concerts, this study is filling a gap in the field of research because of its specificity and nuanced viewpoint of the concerting industry and “independent” music festival production.

In this chapter, I briefly return to the theoretical goals and research questions presented in order to emphasize the contribution of the study to the field of critical communication research. I discuss my contributions to the field by building on and extending alternative media theory. I make suggestions for further research, discuss the limitations of this research, and the overall significance of the research. In addition, I suggest ways Pygmalion Music Festival could benefit by acting more alternatively in the festival’s production.

### **Key Findings, Part I: Organizational Structure & Implications**

The goal of Chapter 2 is to examine and analyze the organizational structure of Pygmalion. The key findings of the chapter include:

- Pygmalion’s organizational structure mostly does not align with alternative media theory.
- The festival’s structure is exploitative via the use of temporary laborers and volunteers for the economic benefit of a few individuals (mainly Fein).



- Pygmalion's hiring practices are not alternative or traditional, but exclusively selective and favors individuals that share subcultural capital with Fein.
- Participation in Pygmalion is a privilege and the festival is indicative and perpetuates class differences within society's dominant capitalist structure.
- Indie culture is reflective of class privilege within society among participants and cultural producers.

### **Organizational Structure**

Analyzing Pygmalion's organizational structure was vital in order to analyze the festival through alternative media theory. The hierarchical structure of Pygmalion was revealed through data collection, with Fein at the top of the hierarchical structure, above a group of managers and volunteer/temporary laborers. This is problematic because of the power structure enforced by the use of hierarchy within the organization. Although the festival's vertical organizational structure is not as complex as it could be (consists of three levels — could incorporate many more levels, extending the vertical structure of the organization and separating power further). Alternative media organizations utilize a horizontal organizational structure to eliminate power division within the organization.

### **Exploitation of Temporary Labor**

Each year Fein utilizes temporary laborers that assist in the execution of the festival. Fein works to construct and organize the festival independently throughout the year leading up to the event, but relies on temporary laborers to carry out the duties and responsibilities during the festival. Although volunteerism is seen as a rewarding experience for those temporary laborers (these laborers occupy a class of privilege), the hierarchical structure of Pygmalion is reinforced, where Fein ultimately profits off the inexpensive labor. Although profiting off of this labor is problematic (and arguably

exploitative), the volunteers belong to a class that can afford to give their time to help produce the event. These individuals are privileged, and have social and cultural capital to participate. The festival's structure reinforces the dominant class system, perpetuating a privileged subculture that can volunteer for the festival (mostly white, educated, University of Illinois and Parkland College students). The festival co-opts the indie subculture, and in turn, profits off of the work done by temporary laborers.

### **Hiring Practices**

Pygmalion does not utilize a formal hiring process as Fein hand-selects individuals for his managerial staff to help him produce the festival. Again, the use of temporary laborers is problematic and exclusive as is because the festival volunteers come from a privileged class. The hiring practices perpetuate the class division further because Fein selects individuals from the community (the communities from which he belongs, including educated, mostly white indie subculture) to assist in the event's production. Although these positions are skill based, and Fein selects the managerial staff according to those skills, hiring for the festival is closed off and these positions are only available to a select group within the aforementioned communities. Although this strategy is useful for Fein, because these individuals are friends of his from the community of Champaign-Urbana, a closed hiring process is problematic in terms of alternative media. Alternative media would support a more participatory form of the event, which encourages participation from the community, incorporating a diverse group of individuals participating in the creation of the event. The festival's hiring practices follow neither an alternative nor a traditional practice of hiring, but an exclusionary

practice that perpetuates class differentiation and subcultural seclusion by incorporating individuals from certain areas, rather than gathering a diverse pool of applicants and conducting interviews and hiring people (as a traditional organization would).

### **Perpetuation of Privilege**

As touched on briefly in the above sections, the festival is a reflection of privilege within the dominant capitalist system. The festival perpetuates class distinctions and benefits a very specific group of communities within Champaign-Urbana, not the community at large. The “communities” that benefit from the festival are people in the position of power and privilege that have the ability to produce an event that benefits a niche subcultural group. The festival reinforces and perpetuates the hegemonic class structures and socially constructed divisions between communities. This practice is problematic in alternative media because the goal of alternative organizations is to critique the dominant class structure and challenge that oppressive system.

### **Key Findings II: Intersection of Independence and Corporatization**

Shifting the focus to the intersection of independence and corporatization in Chapter 3, the chapter yielded findings that build on the existing theory regarding alternative media theory and the monopolization and consolidation of the music industry.

The key findings include:

- Pygmalion is resistant to the monopoly of Live Nation Entertainment because it is independently owned and curated.
- The festival maintains creative control over the festival through curation.
- Pygmalion relies heavily on sponsorship to fund the event each year, but is resistant to sacrificing creative control for the sake of economic profit.
- The festival’s integration of locality reflects an alternative ethos.

### **Resistant to Corporate Industry**

Pygmalion's resistance to corporate ownership is a significant finding of this study. The festival's ability to grow each year and resist being entirely co-opted by the monopolized live music industry is revealing. The festival has progressed since it began in 2005, incorporating more artists, venues, and sponsors, and continues to grow each year. The study critically examines Pygmalion and how it functions independently within the highly monopolized and corporatized live music industry, as well as examining the ambiguous division between the independent and corporate music industry. It reveals how the term "indie" has become a vague term when describing artists and live concerts and events within the music industry. Fein's ownership of the festival is a distinct indicator that the festival functions independently from the corporate live music industry, which is a significant finding from this chapter because of how consolidated the music industry as a whole has become (record industry and live music industry).

### **Curation as Creative Control**

The festival's resistance to consolidation in favor of maintaining creative control is significant. The festival values curating the event each year, diligently and specifically choosing artists and venues that they want each year. Pygmalion utilizes artists that are considered "indie" artists, and although these artists are profitable and marketable, oftentimes, this type of music is not particularly appealing to a mass audience. However, indie music has become much more appealing to a mass audience in recent years, further blurring the line between corporate and independent artists, thus creating a grey area

between that this study is analyzing. The festival values curation over maximizing economic profit, which is significant because it resists (to a certain extent) the neoliberal system which emphasizes economic growth.

### **Sponsorship**

As Fein pointed out in Chapter 3, Pygmalion being funded by sponsorship technically dismantles its independent status. The festival is dependent upon sponsorship funding each year to cover the costs of artists, production and staff. However, as addressed previously, the festival maintains creative control over the event. The sponsors are only used to fund the event and have no creative control over the event. Although this is true, the sponsors indirectly affect the creative aspects of the festival because they control the funding. If the sponsors control the funding, technically they control the amount of money that can be sent on artists at the festival. If the sponsors were to pull or decrease their funding, the caliber of artists the festival would be able to bring to Champaign-Urbana (not a major market) would change drastically. In addition, the festival is selective with sponsors (as it is with the types of artists) that they incorporate into the festival. Again, the festival values creative control and curation over and would not sacrifice these aspects of production to increase their economic profits. Fein profits off of Pygmalion each year, and could maximize his profits even further, but chooses to maintain ownership over his festival instead of sell it to a corporate production company.

### **Integration of Locality**

Pygmalion's steadfast stance for integration of locality is a significant finding of this study. The festival strikes a balance between being an independent and corporate festival, falling somewhere in between. Where Pygmalion succeeds in terms of alternative media theory is their incorporation of local artists, organizations, and venues into the festival. I focused on the incorporation of local indie artists through this study, because of how it is incorporated into the curation aspect of Chapter 3. The festival showcases its ability to maintain creative control over the festival because it wants to provide a space for independent artists in Champaign-Urbana can gain exposure to the patrons of Pygmalion that might not otherwise see these artists. In terms of alternative media, the festival provides an alternative space that is reflective of the community from which it originated, which is significant because a wide majority of festivals of this size could bypass incorporating local artists into the festival.

### **Contributions**

As discussed in Chapter 1, music is a neglected topic in critical communication studies. More specifically, music festivals are not often studied critically using the framework of alternative media theory. As discussed previously, the concert and music festival industry is not uncharted in terms of research (Frey, 1994; Frey, 2000; Bowen & Daniels, 2005; Cummings, 2005; Cummings, 2007; Dowd et. al. 2004; Jordan, 2012; Grose, 2011; Eckard & Smith, 2012; Black, Fox, Kochanowski, 2007; Hibbett, 2005) but this research produces an analysis of the live concert and music festival production which produces a case that specifically focuses on alternative media theory.

### **Tensions in Alternative Media Theory**

The live concert and music festival industry has grown, adding more players to the system, while simultaneously becoming more consolidated. With this consolidation, ownership over music has become much more unclear. The live music industry has found another method of co-opt music by creating these events that have been bombarded by corporations in efforts to commodify the music as well as the audience viewing the music. Most genres of music have been subjected to this increasingly commodified system of live concerts, regardless of whether the concert is on a small or large scale. As the size of the event increases, the more likely corporate interest will increase. Forms of alternative media fight off this co-option, resisting corporatization altogether. However, through my analysis of Pygmalion, corporate involvement can be incorporated without sacrificing control over the event.

As Pygmalion maintains its independence in ownership from the monopolized live music industry by Live Nation Entertainment, the festival's ability to grow while maintaining its independent ownership is significant. As Fuch's (2010) describes, alternative media is "media that challenges the dominant capitalist forms of media production, media structures, content, distribution and reception" (p. 178). My study incorporates that notion and builds on existing theory by providing a case within the live music industry that demonstrates this challenging ethic. The festival challenges the dominant capitalist form of producing a live music festival by resisting consolidation and maintaining creative control and curating the festival each year.

By focusing on Pygmalion through an alternative media theory lens, my study examines the tension between alternative and corporate produced media, and the intersection between the two industries and the implications of that intersection. There is much overlap between the two industries and many forms of media fall in the grey area between alternative and corporate media. I think alternative and non-alternative are less mutually-exclusive than research on alternative media theory would lead us to believe. This is a weakness of alternative media theory that is more apparent after examining Pygmalion because the division between independent and corporate is not cut and dry. The media landscape is evolving, constantly redefining the lines between what makes a form of media alternative or non-alternative. My analysis of Pygmalion is a testament to the ambiguity between alternative and non-alternative, focusing on the grey between the two ends of the spectrum in the live music industry. Research of alternative media theory often focuses on the extreme examples of media that is overtly alternative and media that is overtly not.

Although research is often done on alternative media and do-it-yourself culture (Albert, 1997; Fuchs, 2010; Downing, 2001; Duncomb, 1997; Sinker, 2007), oftentimes that research is focusing on those subcultural practices in a general sense instead of specific cases. Through the investigation and analysis of Pygmalion, this study examines the intersecting area between corporate and alternative culture. Because the music industry is constantly evolving (and becoming more consolidated), this study focuses on how a specific festival continues to function within this grey area despite the constant pressures to consolidate by the corporate system of capitalism and neoliberalism. Because Pygmalion continues to grow, and in many ways, resists co-option (main simultaneously,



this study provides an example that contributes to explaining the intersection between alternative and corporate cultures.

### **Building on Existing Theory**

My examination of Pygmalion contributes to alternative media theory by showcasing the importance of creation over passive consumption. It builds on alternative media theory because it analyzes how the important ownership and creative control is in the world of media-making. Similarly to the most alternative players in the music industry (overt DIY culture and radical media), Pygmalion maintains creative control over the event it is creating. Much like Fugazi and their ability to maintain creative control over every aspect of their musical careers, Pygmalion is not willing to sacrifice creative freedom for the sake of profit. This study builds on that aspect of alternative media theory, even despite Pygmalion's use of sponsors to fund the festival. Even though the festival is funded by corporate sponsors, the festival producers have complete control over the festival creatively. Through this study, I find that creative control is the most significant portion of alternative media theory because that freedom dictates the media being produced. This is ultimately the goal of alternative media creation: to create media freely without the influence from third parties. I think this is a way which we can reconsider how we think about alternative media theory.

### **Weakness of Alternative Media Theory**

Examining alternative media theory has provided insight into methods of producing media that function in opposition to the dominant culture industry. Although

my analysis addresses how Pygmalion aligns with the ethics of alternative media theory, the theoretical framework should be thought about differently. I would say a weakness of alternative media theory is it confines media to highly specific boundaries. Although there is research that stresses media is “more alternative” if it shares specific characteristics with the most radical of media (Albert, 1997), I would argue that the distinction between alternative and non-alternative media is largely ambiguous. In many cases, a form of media can share characteristics with mainstream or corporate produced media as well as alternative media. I believe Pygmalion is an example of this uncertainty.

The festival shares characteristics with corporate produced media (organizational structure, dependence on sponsorship), while the festival also has several characteristics that alternative media upholds (independence via ownership, creative control, locality). This confliction between alternative and non-alternative media is problematic, and the study of alternative media theory stresses the extreme forms of alternative media as the “ideal” forms of alternative media. Although the theory of alternative media is outlined specifically by many theorists (Downing, 1984; Fuchs 2010; Sandoval & Fuchs, 2010; Albert, 1997), the theory has many gaps in research. The media landscape is continually changing, so continuing to research forms of media using alternative media theory contributes nuanced findings to theory. My examination of alternative media theory and Pygmalion is a prime example of how ambiguous the division between alternative and non-alternative can be, and this research fills a gap by researching a form of media that is largely indicative of this division.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

There are many other ways to investigate and analyze Pygmalion Music Festival. Because of the intersections between alternative and corporate culture, the festival provides potential to continue and produce further studies. This study addresses Pygmalion through the theoretical lens of alternative media theory, but could be investigated through many different theoretical perspectives.

To begin, the festival could be investigated more critically in terms of the socioeconomic implications and the perpetuation of class structure. The study shows how the festival reflects class distinction in terms of producers, staff and consumers of the festival, and how indie culture more broadly seems to reflect a classist structure. However, my research collected data only from the producers of the festival. If I wanted to gain a broader perspective on the festival's impact on the Champaign-Urbana community, interviewing individuals not involved with the festival or in the subcultural scene would be a significant study. There are populations within Champaign-Urbana that may oppose Pygmalion's existence in the area, or simply could care less about it, and the perspective of those individuals would be insightful. These additional perspectives would be insightful because it would gather more data to analyze, and create. In addition, discussing the festival with unprivileged classes, or comparing the festival with the privileged class, would be insightful. It would address how the event perpetuates the division of classes based on capitalistic structures.

As I discussed previously, indie culture is very homogeneous in terms of class and race and is generally exclusive. Collecting data from excluded populations (uneducated, lower class, racially diverse populations) would provide additional research and

perspectives on the classist and whiteness structure of indie culture and how this culture potentially reflects the larger class frameworks of our society. Discussing the festival with individuals involved with musical genres like hip hop, metal or classical music would provide interesting perspectives on the festival because it is exclusionary of those genres that exist in the Champaign-Urbana music community. Because Pygmalion reproduces class divisions via the exclusionary nature of indie culture, the festival could be problematized from the perspective of these excluded populations.

The ambiguous nature of indie culture is an intriguing aspect of the music industry that could be studied further through Pygmalion. The evolution of the term “indie” and notions of “independence” were discussed in this study; however, focusing on the co-option of indie culture through a political economic critique would provide research on a growing area of the music industry. By researching Pygmalion through the theoretical lens of political economy of communication, a study could examine indie culture and the commodification of the subculture and its implications under the auspices of neoliberalism. Because the term “indie” has become increasingly complex and would provide an excellent case to examine from a political economic standpoint. Indie culture has become big business, and music festivals are an interesting progression of how the dominant music industry is continuing to co-opt areas of music culture.

Another form of research could discuss the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in relation to music festival culture. Kim and Reber (2008) ground their understanding of the concept according to a few others, but believe CSR relates to ethical codes, corporate philanthropy, community relations programs, and law-abiding actions (p. 338). They use Carroll’s (1991) definition, which states that CSR “means that

organizations act as good citizens. It is rooted in systems theory in that organizations are interdependent with people and other organizations in their environment” (p. 285).

Essentially, the concept is rooted within a moral standard held within organizations.

Through this concept, organizations have a public responsibility that must go beyond their own self-interest (Kim & Reber, 2008, p. 338). Another study could investigate music festivals through these concepts of public relations, drawing conclusions relating to organizational identity and how brands function to maintain a specific identity according to the requests of stakeholders.

Other further research could examine only performers at the festival. This would include national and local artists to gather the perspective of the bands performing at the festival, their experience with Pygmalion, their thoughts on the music festival and concert industry and indie culture. In addition, comparing Pygmalion to other music festivals more thoroughly would also be another area to explore. These comparisons could be through research of corporate concerts or alternatively structured festivals. Another interesting aspect of music festival and concert production would be from a branding perspective and analyzing Pygmalion in terms of brand presence and the co-option of indie culture.

### **Research Limitations**

This study has several limitations. Due to the time constraint to complete the study, there are many areas of the festival and the indie music industry that this study falls short of discussing. As discussed in the previous section, there are several areas of Pygmalion to discuss further in future studies.

In addition, the amount of interviewees and the type of interviewees I utilized for this project was limited. In order to address other aspects and perspectives of the festival, I would have to interview individuals involved with the festival that are not managers, as I did with this study. Interviewing individuals that volunteer for Pygmalion, representatives from festival sponsors, attendees of the festival, venue staff for the festival, and even individuals from Champaign-Urbana not involved with the festival could be interviewed to gain their perspective on the event. This would provide a more holistic view of the culture. In addition, investigating other music festivals, such as Pitchfork Music Festival in Chicago and South By Southwest in Austin, would be an interesting perspective to analyze in order to compare to the production practices of Pygmalion. Overall, the amount of interviewees was sufficient for this particular study, but many other subjects would provide useful perspectives that I could not pursue due to time constraints.

In addition, the interviewees I did speak with could conceal information about the festival in the interviews. The interviewees could conceal sensitive information about the festival that they did not want to contribute or disclose to me, as my study is critically examining the festival. It is possible that the information I collected was the entire truth about the festival. Also, I was not given access to the financial records of the festival, which would reveal the financial breakdown in terms of artists fees, sponsorship, laborer wages, and profits. This is important to note because having access to these records would be very informative. Perhaps if I was doing a political economic study of Pygmalion, I would have been given access to those documents (although unlikely).

Because the festival is something I attended first and researched second, the study contains potential for researcher bias. I have known Seth for several years and I work for a magazine he publishes, *Smile Politely Magazine*, so this has potential for researcher bias. Although this is a critical study of the festival and analyzes and problematizes many areas of the organizational structure and the festival's place in the music industry, I began this study and continue as a supporter of the festival and how it is produced every year. Being closely involved with the festival could be viewed as problematic from other perspectives because that relationship could be seen as a conflict of interest when studying the festival he produces critically, as well as my personal relationships with the individuals who produce the festival outside of this study.

During the process of producing this research, Fein approached me about working for Pygmalion after the completion of this study. This could affect the outcome of the research and my ability to critically reflect and analyze the festival because of how it could potentially affect my relationship with Fein and the festival after the completion of the study. However, upon holding several discussions off the record with Fein, he understood the objective of the study and I was assured the study would have no effect on our future relationship as friends, colleagues, and business partners. Although these aspects may be true, he still is in a position of power over me within the organization, which could potentially influence the results of this study.

In addition, there are limitations of the research methods I use for this research. Because I only had time to use one method (field interviews) to gather data, the lack of triangulation is a limitation. Triangulation provides more detail to the study, balancing out perspectives in order to gain a clear picture of the situation (Altrichter et. al., 2008).

Combining research methods (i.e. using qualitative and other quantitative methods) would create a more dynamic collection of data. However, due to time constraints, I could only use qualitative interviewing methods to collect data for this study.

### **Recommendations for Pygmalion**

Although the festival showcases some characteristics that align with alternative media theory, there are ways in which the festival could utilize a more alternative model of production. The organizational structure, use of sponsors, types of volunteers, location of the event, and the artists could all better reinforce the tenets of alternative media theory.

Alternatively structured organizations seek to eliminate hierarchy, difference in compensation, and erode power differences within the organization. If the members of the organization all had equal say in which type of artists would perform at the event, all made the same amount of money (and split profits equally from the festival), the individuals involved with producing the event would all be equally as powerful within the organizational structure. Although the festival would function similarly to how it does now, this would make the festival much more alternatively produced, aligning closer with the ethic of an alternative organization. In addition, if the hiring process was opened to the community at large, the festival's hiring practices would be less exclusionary and promote the involvement of anyone from the Champaign-Urbana community. The festival could also explore new ways to incorporate diverse volunteers by offering alternative methods of payment for their time aside from admission into the festival.



Through sponsorship, or active participation in the festival, Pygmalion could incorporate many other activist groups, local non-profits, and artists into the festival. If the festival allowed non-profit organizations that were seeking to improve Champaign-Urbana to set up booths and tables during the outdoor shows on Saturday to promote their causes and create discourse with the patrons of the festival, this would be much more alternative than how the festival is currently set up. The festival only allows a select few organizations to set up booths and tables during the outdoor show every year, but if the festival opened up that space to causes that would benefit the community and better promote civic engagement to improve Champaign-Urbana, it would be incorporating a much more alternative ethos than it does currently. Examples of this would be incorporating organizations such as the Champaign community radio station WEFT, the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center, the Art Theater Co-op, Polyvinyl Records, zine producers and creators, political activists, environmental activists, among many other groups would be a very alternative method to incorporate.

Pygmalion has utilized some of these organizations previously (has held shows at UCIMC, The Art Theater Co-op in previous years of the festival, as well as incorporating Polyvinyl Records into the festival heavily in 2011), but not on a consistent basis. The festival could host workshops during the outdoor shows making zines and promoting DIY culture, booths on how to produce your own concert, start your own record label, start a band, as well as promoting gender equality by promoting women to start bands and produce their own music in the scene. As the festival uplifts local independent artists to perform at the festival and giving them a stage to be seen, the festival could use that power to uplift others in the community working for just causes. It would promote the

community in addition to promoting community made alternative media, which would encourage active participation instead of passively consuming media or live music.

Pygmalion could incorporate a conference-like structure similar to South by Southwest, a music festival, conference and film festival held annually in Austin, Texas. The festival holds a conference to coincide with the festival, which could be advantageous for Pygmalion in terms of alternative media theory. If the festival utilized a conference style festival that coincides with the music festival, it could encourage community members to speak about issues within the Champaign-Urbana community, as well as invite individuals from outside the community to discuss and promote other causes (i.e. national and global issues of marriage equality, environment and climate, political activism). South By Southwest hosts a conference alongside the music and film festival, discussing the arts, music and film. However, this conference could be used to promote more just causes (listed above) rather than promote the arts.

The artists at Pygmalion could be more diverse and politically challenging than they are currently. Although the festival utilizes diverse sounding artists (like Xiu Xiu and Willis Earl Beal), the festival could incorporate other genres of artists as well. There are many genres of music present in Champaign-Urbana, such as punk, hardcore, metal, hip-hop, EDM, folk, and country. Although “indie rock” is a catch-all at times, the festival strays away from diverse, politically active acts.

The festival could act as a platform for voices to be heard that might not otherwise be exposed to many people in the community. The incorporation of a more diverse pool of individuals involved with the festival would promote diversity in the community. If the festival invited speakers (political, environmental, social justice

activists) of many cultures (international and national) aside the homogenous indie culture (white, educated, classist), it could encourage diversity and attempt to challenge society's hegemonic social hierarchies.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This research problematizes several areas of the independent music industry. Watching the individual recorded music sales decrease and the see the popularity of music festivals increase drastically, this area of the industry is a rich area of investigation because of the social and economic implications of these events. Music festivals like Coachella and Bonnaroo generate millions of dollars each year for the corporations that produce them, and in turn, those corporations are commodifying a musical art form, as Pygmalion does but on a smaller scale. Although Pygmalion has been co-opted because it uses sponsors, the festival has opposed co-option in several ways (discussed in Chapter 3) unlike the majority of the live music industry.

This process is problematic because these businesses are profiting off of music, and while individual artists who perform at festivals are compensated, the producers of these corporately produced events continue to earn profit. The producers of music festivals are co-opting the live music experience for profit, which is problematic because it has the ability to alter the experience, and it continues to perpetuate the dominant course of consumption produced by capitalism. Producers of music festivals have continued the co-option of the indie subculture by co-opting the live music experience that a concert provides and expanding on that experience to produce a festival. These events are capable of generating thousands (or even millions) in revenue by co-opting the

concert experience. In addition, the festivals are sold to the highest bidding sponsors so those companies can paste their brand all over the event in order to gain exposure and (hopefully) have consumers consume their products. The music industry is a playground of commodities, and music festivals are another portion of that industry to be co-opted by corporate culture. Music festivals are no exception to the world of capitalism and co-option. The live music experience can be drastically affected by the incorporation of co-option, but is often unnoticed by the wide majority because neoliberalism is hegemonic and seen as normal.

Pygmalion Music Festival is a part of the music industry which seeks to make a profit off an event, and integrates artists and sponsors into a marketable event, which makes the festival bought and sold within the marketplace. However, after analyzing the festival, areas of the production of the event were revealed, illuminating issues of creative control, ambiguities of “independence,” and commodification that exist in the independent music industry. Pygmalion functions both within and outside the corporate music industry simultaneously because it utilizes both indie and corporate bands, local artists, and sponsorship (corporate and local sponsorship). The festival began as a small event that incorporated a few touring artists and local indie artists, and has evolved into a much larger event not only in relation to Champaign-Urbana, but the music festival industry at large. The progression of the festival reflects capitalism, which has created a system of growth that has been normalized and the correct way to conduct business.

The festival’s progression since its inception is largely reflective of the industry it exists in. The festival began as an event focused on uplifting the local indie music scene and functioned differently than corporate-run events in Champaign-Urbana. Indie music

culture stems from punk culture and developed a particular aesthetic that opposed corporate culture. Due to the popularity of Pygmalion, it has gradually become co-opted by the corporate industry via sponsorships, but continues to demonstrate its independence from a corporate production company. It continues to maintain its independence (with varying degrees of success) because Seth Fein is the sole producer of the event and has motivations and goals specific to Champaign-Urbana. A corporate production company would potentially overlook aspects of Champaign-Urbana in favor of a profit-driven model that overlooks the integration of locality and community. Although Pygmalion incorporates specific groups within the Champaign-Urbana community, the festival still utilizes locality (artists, sponsors, organizations, venues, organizers) when producing the event. As discussed throughout the study, the integration of locality through artists, venues, sponsors, and organizers is significant because it incorporates characteristics that prevent Pygmalion from following a standardized and predictable path of production similarly to how the mainstream music industry produces music and events. In addition, it keeps money within the confines of Champaign-Urbana, which is important to the local economy.

The festival reflects how indie culture has become increasingly co-opted by the mainstream, corporate industry. It functions within the grey area between alternative and corporate production, much like where the term “indie” remains. Being “indie” used to mean you were in direct opposition to the mainstream. Because the corporate culture industry co-opted “indie” culture, it is increasingly evolving into a consumable industry by a mass audience. Due to this co-option, the line separating the two industries is blurred, and Pygmalion acts as a case that is difficult to explain in terms of being strictly

alternative or strictly corporate. The festival exists within this grey area, and continues to maintain its independence (more or less) and influence from the corporate industry. In this way, the festival showcases an alternative ethic as well as influences of co-option, even as the majority of the concert and music festival industry has been overridden with corporate control.

### References

- Albert, M. (1997). What Makes Alternative Media Alternative? *Z Magazine*.
- Albini, S. (1993). The problem with music. Retrieved from [http://www.negativland.com/news/?page\\_id=17](http://www.negativland.com/news/?page_id=17)
- Allen, B. & Tompkins, P. *University of Colorado* Chapter 24 in Stacks, D. & Salwen, M. (2008) *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*. Routledge.
- AllMusic (2013). Skatepunk. Retrieved from <http://www.allmusic.com/style/skatepunk-ma0000011954>
- Altrichter, H., Feldman, A., Posch, P. & Somekh, B. (2008). *Teachers investigate their work; An introduction to action research across the professions*. Routledge. p. 147. (2nd edition).
- Atton, C. (2001). *Approaching Alternative Media: Theory and Methodology*.
- Bailey, O. G., Cammaerts, B. & Carpentier, N. (2008). *Understanding Alternative Media: Issues in Cultural and Media Studies*. New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Bantz, C. R. (1989). Organizing and the social psychology of organizing. *Communication Studies*, 40, 231-240.
- Bennett, A. and R. A. Peterson. (2004). *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal and Virtual*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

- Black, G.C, Fox, M. A., & Kochanowski, P. (2007). Concert Tour Success in North America: An Examination of the Top 100 Tours from 1997 to 2005. *Popular Music and Society*, 30(2), 149-172.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bowen, H. & Daniels, M. (2005). Does the Music Matter? Motivations for Attending a Music Festival. *Event Management*, 9, 155-164
- Campbell, Richard, Martin, C. R., Fabos, B.(2007). *Media & Culture 5: an Introduction to Mass Communication*. Fifth Edition 2007 Update ed. Boston: Bedford St. Martins, (2007).
- Capanna, C., Steca, P., & Imbimbo, A. (2002). Un'indagine sulla motivazione al volontariato. (A motivational study among volunteers). *Rassegna di Psicologia*, 19, 73–90. In Marta, E. & Pozzi, M. (2008). Young People and Volunteerism: A Model of Sustained Volunteerism During the Transition to Adulthood. *Journal of adult development*, 15(1), 35-46.
- Case, D. D. (1990). *The community's toolbox: The idea, methods and tools for participatory assessment, monitoring and evaluation in community forestry*. FAO Regional Wood Energy Development Programme.
- Carroll, A. B. (1991). "The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders." *Business Horizons*, 34(4), p. 39–48.



- Couldry, N. (2003). Beyond the hall of mirrors? Some theoretical reflections on the global contestation of media power. In: Couldry Nick, Curran James (Eds.), *Contesting Media Power. Alternative Media in a Networked World*. Rowman and Littlefield, London, 39–54.
- Coyer, K., Downmunt, T. & Fountain, A. (2007). *The Alternative Media Handbook*. Routledge.
- Cummings, J. (2005) Australian Indie Music Festivals as Scenes. *TASA Conference 2005, University of Tasmania, 6-8 December 2005*.
- Cummings, J. (2007). Selling the Indie Scene. Music Festivals, Neo-Tribes and Brand Communities. *University of Western Sydney*.
- Daft, R. (2009). *Organization theory and design*. Cengage Learning.
- Douglas, M. (2013). The Only Black Guy at the Indie Rock Show. *MTV Hive*. Retrieved from <http://www.mtvhive.com/2013/01/16/the-only-black-guy-at-the-indie-rock-show/>
- Dowd, T.J., Liddle, K., & Nelson, J. (2004). Music festivals as scenes: Examples from serious music, womyn's music and skatepunk. In *Music scenes: Local, translocal & virtual*, ed. A. Bennett and R.A. Peterson, 149–67. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Downing, J. (1984). *Radical Media: The Political Experience of Alternative Communication* (1st ed.). Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press.
- Downing, J. D. H. (2001) *Radical Media: Rebelious Communication and Social Movements*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Duncombe, S. (1997). *Notes from underground: Zines and the politics of alternative culture*. London: Verso.
- Triggs, T. (2006). Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic. *Journal of Design Histor*, 19, 69-83
- Eckard, E. W. & Smith, M. A. (2012). The Revenue Gains from Multi-Tier Ticket Pricing: Evidence from Pop Concerts. *Managerial and Decision Economics*, 33, 463-473.
- Edwardes, B. (2012). Volunteering for Music Festivals. *Volunteer Global*. Retrieved from <http://www.volunteerglobal.com/blog/volunteering-music-festivals>
- Eells, J. (2010). Because Indie Rock Has Upgraded To Hi-Fi Sound. *Rolling Stone*, (1103), 63.
- Elliott, J. R. & Smith, R. (2004) Race, Gender, and Workplace Power. *American Sociological Review*, 69(3), 365-386.
- Fiske, John (1992). Popularity and the Politics of Information. In Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks (eds.), *Journalism and Popular Culture*, London: SAGE, 45-63.
- Fuchs, C. (2010) Alternative Media as Critical Media. *European J of Social Theory*, 13(2), 173-192.
- Frey, B. S. (1994). The Economics of Music Festivals. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 18, 29-38.
- Frey, B. S. (2000). The Rise and Fall of Festivals: Reflections on the Salzburg Festival. *Working Paper Series, No. 48*.

- Gracon, D. (2010). Exiled Records and Over-the-Counterculture: A Cultural Political Economic Analysis of the Independent Record Store. University of Oregon
- Gramsci, A. (1992), Buttigieg, Joseph A, ed., *Prison notebooks*. New York City: Columbia University Press
- Grief, M. (2010). The Hipster in the Mirror. *The New York Times*. Published 12 November 2010.
- Grose, T. K. (2011). Live, at a Field Near You. *Time International (Atlantic Edition)*, 178(19)
- Grossberg, L. (1986). Is There Rock after Punk? *Critical Studies in Mass Communications*, 3, 50-74.
- Hallinan, M.T., & Williams, R.A. (1987). The stability of students' interracial friendships. *American Sociological Review*, 52, 653-664.
- Hallinan, M.T., & Williams, R.A. (1989). Interracial friendship choices in secondary schools. *American Sociological Review* , 54, 67-78.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture, the meaning of style*. London: Methuen.
- Here Today, Gone Tomorrow (1998). *Socialist Labor party of America*. Retrieved from [http://www.slp.org/res\\_state\\_htm/here\\_today.html](http://www.slp.org/res_state_htm/here_today.html)
- Hibbett, R. (2005) What Is Indie Rock? *Popular Music and Society*, 28(1), 55-77.
- Houston, T. (2012). The Homosocial Construction of Alternative Masculinities: Men in Indie Rock Bands. *Journal Of Men's Studies*, 20(2), 158-175.  
doi:10.3149/jms.2002.158

- Jenkins, H. (2006) *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York University Press.
- Jordan, C. (2012). Live nation entertainment and the enclosure of the live music industry. *Conference paper delivered May 12, 2012 at Union for Democratic Communication Conference, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.*
- Karlsen, S. (2009). Learning Through Music Festivals. *International Journal of Community Music*, 2(2-3), 129-141.
- Kim, S. & Reber, B. (2008) "Public relations' place in corporate social responsibility: Practitioners define their role" *Public Relations Review*, 34, p. 337-342.
- King, S. (2003). Doing good by running well: Breast cancer, the Race for the Cure, and New Technologies of ethical citizenship. In: Jack Bratich, Jeremy Packer, and Cameron McCarthy (Eds.) *Foucault, cultural studies, and governmentality*. 295-316. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Klein, N. (2000). *No logo*. New York, NY: Picador.
- Lee, G. K. & Cole, R. E. (2003). From a firm-based to a community-based model of knowledge creation: The case of the Linux Kernel development. *Organization Science*, 14(6), 633-649.
- Lewis, P. (1993). Alternative Media in a Contemporary Social and Theoretical Context. 15-25. In Lewis, P (ed)., *Alternative Media: Linking Global and Local*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Leunissen, J. (1986). 'Community' en 'Community Development' bij de Australische Aborigines, in M. Van Bakel, A. Borsboom and H. Dagmar (eds) *Traditie in Verandering: Nederlandse Bijdragen aan Antropologisch Onderzoek in Oceanië*.

- Leiden: DSWO Press, pp. 57–82. In Bailey, O. G., Cammaerts, B. & Carpentier, N. (2008). *Understanding Alternative Media: Issues in Cultural and Media Studies*. New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Libes, S. C. (1997). The audition: A new trend in hiring. *USA Today Magazine*, 126(2626), 54.
- Lindlof, T. R. & Taylor, B. C., (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2001). The ruling class and the ruling ideas. In M. G. Durham, & D. Kellner (Eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords (Keywords in Cultural Studies)*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Marta, E. & Pozzi, M. (2008). Young People and Volunteerism: A Model of Sustained Volunteerism During the Transition to Adulthood. *Journal of adult development*, 15(1), 35-46.
- McKim, J. (2010). New York's Spontaneous 9/11 Memorials and the Politics of Ambivalence. *Borderlands E-Journal*, 9(2), 1-20.
- McQuail, D. (1992). *Media Performance: Mass Communication and the Public Interest*. Sage Publications: London.
- Mease, J. Teaching Difference as Institutional and Making it Personal. In D. K. Mumby (Ed.), *Reframing Difference in Organizational Communication Studies: Research, Pedagogy, Practice* (151-171). New York, NY: Sage Publications.
- music festival. (n.d.). © Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.. Retrieved May 20, 2013, from Dictionary.com website: [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/music festival](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/music%20festival)

Nielson Company (2012). The Nielsen Company & Billboard's 2012 Music Industry Report. *Business Wire*. Retrieved from

<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20130104005149/en/Nielsen-Company-Billboard%E2%80%99s-2012-Music-Industry-Report>

Parker, D. W. (1920). *Principles of Aesthetics*. Retrieved from

<http://www.authorama.com/principles-of-aesthetics-1.html>

Rubin, I. S., & Rubin, H. J. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rius (1976). Marx for Beginners. Pantheon Press (2003), 78-85.

Sandoval, M. & Fuchs, C. (2010). Towards a critical theory of alternative media. *Telematics and Informatics*, 27, 141-150.

Shedden, I. (2005). Sweat, rattle and roll for the Big Day Out at the coast. *The Australian*.

Shuker, R. (2008). *Understanding popular music*. London: Routledge.

Sinker, D. (2007). *We owe you nothing, Punk Planet: The collected interviews*. New York, NY: Akashic Books.

Skills-Based Volunteering, Corporation for National & Community Service. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/sbv>

Storey, J. (1993) *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. University of Georgia Press: Athens.

Thorsen, D. E. & Lie, A. (2000). What is Neoliberalism? Department of Political Science, University of Oslo.

- Thornton, S. (1995). *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tompkins, P. K. (1984). Functions of Communication in organizations. In C. Arnold & J. W. Bowers (Eds.), *Handbook of rhetorical and communication theory* (p. 659-719). New York: Allyn & Bacon.
- Tonic, L. (2010). Can't Afford Music Festival Tickets? Volunteer with These Music Organizations. *Yahoo! Voices*. Retrived from <http://voices.yahoo.com/cant-afford-music-festival-tickets-volunteer-with-6867792.html?cat=33>
- Touch and Go to cut staff, distribution services (2009). *LA Times Music Blog Pop & Hiss*. Retrieved from [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/music\\_blog/2009/02/touch-go-to-cut.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/music_blog/2009/02/touch-go-to-cut.html)
- Viswanthan, U. (2012). What Happens When the World's Poorest Volunteer? *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/uma-viswanathan/what-happens-when-the-wor\\_b\\_1119633.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/uma-viswanathan/what-happens-when-the-wor_b_1119633.html)
- Waterman, S. (1998). Place, culture and identity: Summer music in Upper Galilee. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 23(2), 253–267.

**APPENDIX I****CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH****The Implications of “Indie”: A Critical Analysis of the Pygmalion Music Festival**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Patrick Singer from the Department of Communication at Eastern Illinois University.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please feel free to ask questions about this research project before deciding whether or not to participate. If you wish to withdraw after the interviewing process, you have the right to do so, and the data from your interview will not be used in the study.

**• PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to look at the Pygmalion Music Festival in order to investigate the meanings and understanding of festival production, the culture of music festivals, and the implications of the festival upon the music industry. You should be giving your honest opinions about the festival and answer the questions as you see fit.

**• PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

Participate in an interview lasting approximately 60 minutes. The principle investigator will guide the discussion.

The discussion will be audio-taped. A recording device will be placed in the middle where it is visible to you. For purposes of perspective, your name can be used in the study in order to gain a better understanding of the standpoint at which your thoughts and opinions come from. If you do not wish for your name to be used in the study, you have the option of not participating in the study or withdrawing at any point after this interview. If you decide that you do not wish for your name to be used in the study and you wish to withdraw after the interview, the data from your interview session will not be used. Signing this consent form allows the investigator to record your responses and use them as research. Again, your name could potentially be used in the study.

**• POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Although you could have a negative reaction to the study, your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The study is working as a critique of the Pygmalion Festival, so your reactions, thoughts and opinions are beneficial to the study. You can choose to withdraw from the study at any point, however, I anticipate the risk to be minimal.



- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Although you, as one of the subjects in the study, won't receive any tangible benefits, you will be involved in providing very insightful information into the process and production of the festival. Potential benefits to society include further contributing studies to the field of research of the music industry.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All data will be kept under lock and key by the principle investigator (PI) and only the PI and his head advisor will have access to the data. The data will be kept for three years before being discarded. All recordings will be used for educational purposes only.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:  
Principal Investigator: Patrick Singer at [prsinger@eiu.edu](mailto:prsinger@eiu.edu)  
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. David Gracon at [dgracon@eiu.edu](mailto:dgracon@eiu.edu)

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board  
Eastern Illinois University  
600 Lincoln Ave.  
Charleston, IL 61920  
Telephone: (217) 581-8576  
E-mail: [eiuirb@www.eiu.edu](mailto:eiuirb@www.eiu.edu)

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

---

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time. I have been given a copy of this form.

---

Printed Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

## APPENDIX II

## QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWEES

- State your name, age, where you're from and where you currently reside?
- What is your role in the production of Pygmalion Music Festival?
- How would you describe Pygmalion Music Festival?
- How has the festival changed over time?
- What are the goals of the festival?
- How would you characterize the bands that perform at the festival?
  - How are they selected?
  - Does the type of label the band is on a factor into the decision to book them?
  - Do these bands have a particular type of sound? How would you describe it?
- Would you consider this an independent festival? If so, how?
- Why choose bands that are not typically considered "mainstream"?
- Would you consider this to be an "underground" music festival?
- Why are local bands used in the festival?
- What types of sponsors are used for the event?
  - Are sponsors necessary for this event? Why or why not?
  - What is the process like for choosing sponsors?
  - Does or can sponsorship affect the authenticity of the event?
  - Does (or has) sponsorship conflict with ideas of an indie music festival?
- Describe the organizational structure of Pygmalion in terms of hierarchy.
- Describe how the decision making process is conducted.
- Is there much thought regarding organizational structure?
  - Do you try to challenge other more traditional models?
  - Is the staff predominantly volunteer based?
  - What are people paid? How many people are paid? What do people make?
- Does the festival turn a profit each year? If so, where do those profits go?
- How would you describe the makeup of the organizational hierarchy? Is it diverse (in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, etc)?
- Is PMF a form of cultural resistance in any particular way? Please describe.
- Do the bands at PMF demonstrate any particular politic?
- Is it a conscious decision to consider this when developing the bill of bands?
- Does PMF have a specific political orientation?
- Is there anything at the festival that promotes activist/social/democratic causes/civic engagement/etc.?
- Is PMF resisting corporate culture or anti-corporate in any way?
- Does PMF provide an alternative experience to other music festivals?
- What does Pygmalion Music Festival mean to you?
- How do you think PMF impacts C-U culturally? Economically?