

# **Understanding Resilience in an Art Music Intermediary Organization Within a Change**

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## **Abstract**

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<b>Abstract</b> <p>This thesis examines how organizational resilience emerges and operates within an art music intermediary organization in a changing societal and networked environment. Using a qualitative case study of Art Music Denmark (AMDK), the research explores how resilience is constructed internally through organizational practices, how it is shaped by external relationships such as cultural policy and networks, and how it manifests in collaboration and contributes to broader systemic change in the art music field. The study draws on resilience theory from social sciences, particularly conceptualizing resilience as a relational and processual “social fabric,” and combines this with perspectives from cultural policy and cross-sector collaboration. Empirical data consists of semi-structured interviews analyzed through thematic analysis.</p> <p>The findings suggest that resilience is not a fixed organizational attribute, but a dynamic, practice-based capacity embedded in everyday work, relationships, and identity. Internally, resilience is supported by trust-based leadership, flexible structures, and continuous learning. Externally, it is co-constructed through networks, funding structures, and policy frameworks. Collaboration emerges as a key mechanism through which resilience enables knowledge exchange, innovation, and gradual systemic change. The study contributes to understanding resilience in the arts by highlighting its relational, processual, and ecosystem-based nature, offering insights for both cultural policy and organizational practice.</p>	
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background of the study

Art music has been a part of my life since I began my violin studies at the age of seven. Since then, my path with music as a listener as well as in the field, both in violin and cultural management studies and work, has been diverse, continuously shaped by my personal growth and evolving interests. For a long time, my working experience and perspective to the field of music was through classical music organizations and opera. During my Bachelor studies in cultural management, audience engagement as well as new ways of operations were in the core of my interests, stemming from the idea of expanding the possibilities of art music from the perspective of societal accessibility.

As I delved more broadly into the topic and observed how institutions approach audience engagement, I became aware not only of the complexity of the ecosystem but also, on a deeper level, of the intentions, practices, and diverging principles that underpin these operations. We are taught to understand engagement primarily as a matter of numbers, as also funding evaluations often rely on numerical indicators of impact rather than qualitative insights. In this light, the term “audience engagement” itself appears somewhat limited, even problematic. As Fraser notes in *Sounds Now* (2024, p. 13), it can be understood as “a speculative construct driven by twenty-first-century capitalist anxieties – about growth, about success – and utterly divorced from the creative engagement in an art form.”

Simultaneously, new ways of operations were current interests for many arts organization globally, brought to the table by multiple global crises following each other, and the subsequent challenges which the art organizations faced, including disappearing audiences, collapse of funding and financial uncertainties, employment challenges and rapid shift toward digital environments. These events were followed by intensified public debates questioning the value and role of arts and culture in society – whether there is a need to change or not – contributing at times to polarization within the field.

I think the question of change is closely related to (musical) identity, and it's not. Does the identity have to change? Growing, learning and adapting to new things in the currents of life happens, from our personal human experience quite naturally along with a society that inevitably changes. There's space for even hybrid identities, (as literature

says when we get forward from here), but there must be equal starting points. As the literature points out, resilience is also not defined solely by a way to recover, neither by the openness to change, but also about actively and critically examining underlying motives, purposes and operational models.

My initial research plan focused on artistic programming and its impact on audiences and society. However, I later shifted my approach, as I believe the problem lies at deeper structural levels: in organizational practices, in the surrounding ecosystem and communities, and in the underlying ideologies and purposes that guide them. From this perspective, framing the issue simply as whether “to change or not” risks oversimplifying a far more complex situation.

My own musical taste and interests have always been broad, spanning multiple genres and artistic fields. Since the COVID period alongside with the expansion of digital offerings it brought and my international work experience, I have systematically explored developments in the global music scene. Reflecting on what I find meaningful, recurring elements include aesthetics and quality, contextual relevance, community, as well as the broader perspectives enabled by international collaboration. What has been inspiring to see, contemporary music scene in Europe is strong and actively reflecting itself to follow better the needs of society.

In general, large institutions play a significant role as employers and cultural actors within an otherwise relatively marginal art music scene. At the same time, they remain closely tied to established traditions, hierarchal structures and external cultural policy frameworks, including public funding systems. A growing concern is the ongoing reduction of already limited public funding further intensify existing challenges, potentially widening the gap between the sector and the broader economic, social, and ecological developments.

When following these ideas, I inevitably faced the topic of resilience. While widely studied in fields such as social sciences and economics, the term is a relatively new within the arts and cultural sectors and has been increasingly discussed from different perspective within the field. From organizations point of view in the widest, recent years they've been tested in the face of consequences following different global crises and technological change. Recent debates have also shown that, in the case of field of arts and culture, the current practical challenges include especially economic insecurity, limited resources, gaps in knowledge, differing perspectives related to social structures and

inequalities, as well as declining audiences. Under such conditions, organizations may become focused on sustaining their immediate activities, while closing off opportunities for long-term development, experimentation, and possible inner level change.

Alongside resilience studies, cross-sectoral collaboration and networks have been identified as important for building a more sustainable future in the art music sector (e.g. Dromey & Haferkom, 2018; Clarke & Crane, 2018; Pinheiro et al. 2022; Status, 2023; Pekkarinen et al., 2022). Here cooperation is seen enhancing diversity and flexibility to operating practices, enabling knowledge sharing and resources, supporting innovation, strengthening social engagement, and opening new revenue models. The University of the Arts' report *Reconstructing the Arts (Taidealan jälleenrakennus)* similarly emphasizes cooperation, networking, and resource sharing as key elements in fostering a more diverse and flexible field of activity (Pekkarinen et al., 2022, p. 14). However, the complexity and fragmentation of the arts ecosystem can make it difficult to identify and systematically develop such opportunities. Even when individual organizations evolve, their capacity to effect broader change within relatively stable structures may remain weak.

*...”if we pay attention to how our respective struggles intersect, change might come a little sooner.” (Fraser 2024, p. 21)*

In the final year of my Master’s studies, I sought an internship outside Finland to observe organizational practices within a broader ecosystem, with a particular focus networking and collaboration in the field of contemporary music. To identify a place that aligned with my interests, I conducted a mapping of key actors and organizations across the European contemporary music scene. This process revealed not only the scale of activity but also the extent of interconnectedness between them through various collaborations and partnerships. Ultimately, I found Art Music Denmark – a Danish genre organization representing contemporary music, classical music, and sound art – which provided both a valuable case for my research and a meaningful professional experience.

Too often, there are more words to say than acts to react. The aim of this research is to gain better understanding what the actual factors are leading to this discussion, what

are the circumstances for a change within a society and the foremost, to get ideas and examples of how organizations would manage with it – ideally.

## **1.2. How is resilience and change interpreted in the contemporary music scene after COVID**

In recent years, discussions within the art music field have increasingly emphasized the need for structural changes, particularly in funding and power dynamics, a stronger commitment to reaching and engaging more diverse audiences and communities, as well as a clearer definition of the field's relevance within society and the economy. This issue has surfaced repeatedly in panels, professional conferences, literature and discussions, where the same question keeps being asked: *Who makes the difference to change?* According to the literature – particularly in the field of contemporary music – I think this is not the question. Rather, the focus should be on critically examining our own practices and asking *why are we doing this and how?*

### **What's the question actually?**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting closures of institutions and events created a situation in which many actors in the arts and cultural sector were forced to acknowledge that a return to previous modes of operation was no longer possible. Consequently, attention has increasingly shifted toward where and how art and culture take place today, as well as toward the role of organizations in mediating between artistic practices and their audiences. Returning to the earlier question, *who makes the change*, the literature suggests that this may no longer be the most relevant point of asking. Rather, the emphasis has moved toward recognizing that change is already underway, and in many respects, has already occurred. The various challenges faced by cultural actors, shaped in part by broader societal transformations, have redirected the discussion away from metrics such as audience numbers and accessibility, toward questions of meaning, relevance, and the role of artistic practices within society.

The report *Taking the Temperature – Crisis, Curating, and Musical Diversity* (2021), published during the pandemic, brings together a series of insightful interviews

with contemporary music practitioners, reflecting on their experiences and perspectives during this period of crisis. Across these interviews, two recurring themes emerge: the urgent need for change and the pursuit of a more sustainable future, as well as the role of the contemporary music field in contributing to these developments in relation to society.

Contemporary music is widely seen as holding significant potential to engage broader audiences (Farnsworth et al., 2021). In contrast to the classical music field, institutions often remain strongly committed to upholding the traditional canon and its associated values. This is shaped both by economic pressures and by established funding structures and is frequently perceived as occurring at the expense of contemporary music and emerging forms of artistic expression. As a result, contemporary music practitioners and artists have increasingly sought alternative ways of creating, presenting, and contextualizing their work. At the same time, current discourse reflects a shift away from predefined modes of production and standardized processes of audience engagement toward questions of how art can be meaningful in relation to society. According to Marcela Lucatelli (p. 128), contemporary music can be understood as a space in which meanings and urgent issues can be explored in a multi-layered and non-binary manner, allowing for the emergence of hidden and unspoken forms of expression (Farnsworth et al., 2021).

In many of the interviews, a central question concerns how to reconcile artistic and political agendas and how to maintain artistic autonomy while responding to increasing societal expectations. This balance is sought in a context where aesthetic and social dimensions increasingly intersect and influence one another. However, as Haugan Holden (p. 137) points out, such a change is met with ongoing resistance, such as the notion that diversity is incompatible with artistic quality, or that efforts toward inclusivity threaten artistic freedom (Farnsworth et al., 2021). At the same time, Pauline Hogstrand (p. 118) highlights how both individuals and institutions are required to critically reflect on their implicit beliefs and routine operations, which are shaped by cultural norms and established practices (Farnsworth et al., 2021).

Alongside this process of critical self-reflection, the communal and structural dimensions of change become increasingly important. In this regard, the legitimacy of transformation is particularly strengthened when initiatives emerge from within the field itself and are advanced collaboratively across different actors, including communities, institutions, and political stakeholders. (Farnsworth et al., 2021.)

## **Redefining the relationship between art and society**

The contemporary music field constitutes a multi-actor and inherently vulnerable ecosystem, comprising performers, composers, funding bodies, production team, venues, organizers, and audiences. Within this complex constellation, curatorial practice has emerged as a relatively new and increasingly central mode of thinking. The role of the curator is understood as a process of balancing diverse and often conflicting interests, as artistic, institutional, political, and social. As Farnsworth argues (2020, p.31), curating is not merely about assembling a program, but fundamentally about mediation and contextualization, grounded in an ethical responsibility toward both artistic practice and broader societal discourse.

At the same time, the field is undergoing a period of transformation in which actors are compelled to reassess their goals, modes of operation, and core missions. As Mongeau (p. 63) notes, this is not simply a matter of adaptation, but of re-evaluating the very vision and mandate of institutions (Farnsworth et al., 2021). According to the interviews on *Taking the Temperature* article, such an opening, characterized by structural change, increased transparency, and the inclusion of a wider range of societal actors, should be understood as intrinsic to contemporary music itself, which is rooted in continuous transformation and renewal. This approach can be seen in the practices of festivals such as MUTEK, where the aim is not to predefine audiences or artistic content, but to continually interrogate aesthetic and social responsibilities in relation to the surrounding world. In this sense, curatorial practice occupies a central role in the redefinition of the arts field, not merely as an organizational tool, but as a key framework through which the relationship between art, institutions, and society is articulated and renegotiated.

## **Diversity and inclusion as a structural issue**

In the literature, diversity and inclusion emerge as central yet conceptually unstable phenomena. As noted in the foreword of *Taking the Temperature*, there exist multiple definitions of what “musical diversity” entails and how it can be understood

(Farnsworth et al., 2021). This suggests that diversity is not simplifiable to a single policy or intervention but instead reflects a broader shift in thinking from a focus on representation toward a more structural understanding of the field.

Several practitioners emphasize that diversity at the level of programming alone does not necessarily lead to meaningful change. For instance, Peter Meanwell and Tine Rude (p. 68) point out that even when a festival appears diverse in its program, underlying resource distribution may still reproduce structural inequalities. This challenges the idea that diversity is not just about visibility and shifts attention toward institutional practices such as funding allocation and decision-making processes. Here they emphasize that to be able to build such a platform where more people can commit and build trust, it's necessary to consider things like equity aspects and sustainable staffing. It is viewed as a long-term process to better enable the festival to become what it aims to be in the future. (Farnsworth et al., 2021.)

At the same time, the literature highlights reflexivity as a key factor for transformation. Barbara Scales (p. 164) emphasizes the responsibility of curators to critically examine their own positions, particularly in relation to how power and recognition are distributed within the arts field (Farnsworth et al., 2021). Similarly, Gabriel Dharmoo (p. 177) calls for continuous self-reflection extending from the individual to institutional levels, especially in relation to colonial legacies and structural inequality (Farnsworth et al., 2021). Juliana Hodkinson (p. 222) further emphasizes that change does not emerge from singular crises or trends, but from sustained, long-term processes in which organizations develop their practices gradually and from within (Farnsworth et al., 2021.)

Diversity is also closely linked to broader questions of knowledge-sharing, communities, and networks. Anna Xambó (p. 134) highlights the importance of open dialogue and accessible platforms through which knowledge and practices can circulate beyond specific groups (Farnsworth et al., 2021). Such networks are seen not only increasing visibility but also fostering trust and enabling the emergence of new modes of working. Moreover, they support interdisciplinary collaboration, which enriches the contemporary music field through new ways of thinking and understanding.

Generational change is identified as another key driver of transformation. Merja Hottinen (p. 79) notes that younger composers demonstrate a greater willingness to engage with societal issues and operate within international networks, thereby expanding

the contexts and meanings of contemporary music (Farnsworth et al., 2021). This shift also challenges established notions of artistic quality. However, Tanja Orning (p. 35) argues that the concept of “quality” is often deployed normatively to sustain existing structures, even though new artistic forms may require new evaluative criteria. (Farnsworth et al., 2021.)

Taken together, the literature suggests that diversity and inclusion are not isolated objectives but integral to a broader transformation in which the contemporary music field reconsiders its structures, values, and modes of operation. This transformation requires simultaneous conceptual clarification, institutional reconfiguration, and individual reflexivity, positioning diversity as both an ethical and a systemic concern.

### **Who has the power?**

The literature points out, that the contemporary music field is increasingly examined through the lenses of power, leadership, and decision-making. A central question concerns who determines artistic content, values, and directions, in other words, who exercises power within the field. Funding structures, in particular, emerge as a key mechanism of power. Sandeep Bhagwati (p. 57–58) emphasizes that the contemporary music field is highly dependent on public funding and grants, which creates a structural imbalance: those who control financial resources largely determine which artistic narratives and practices can be realized (Farnsworth et al., 2021). This highlights the need either to diversify funding models or to reform existing structures in ways that enable a broader range of aesthetic and organizational approaches.

Power is also enacted through curatorial and programming practices. According to Anne Marqvardsen and Anna Berit Asp Christensen (Farnsworth et al., 2021, p. 83–84), the development of festivals has increasingly involved a redistribution of power, specifically, reconsidering who decides which works are produced and how they are framed and presented. This becomes visible in curatorial framing, thematic choices, and the construction of encounters between different art forms. Such approaches require an awareness not only of visible decision-making processes but also often invisible power structures that shape both aesthetics and institutional practices. At the same time, leadership models are evolving. The shift from guest curator models toward more long-

term strategic planning reflects an effort to build sustainable collaborations and institutional continuity.

These developments are closely linked to a broader debate surrounding the crisis of the concept of “quality.” Traditional criteria of artistic quality are no longer perceived as universal or neutral, but rather as historically and institutionally constructed, and deeply intertwined with existing power structures. As a result, curatorial practice has emerged as a central operational logic within the contemporary music field. As Farnsworth (2020) argues, curating is not merely the assembly of a program but represents a broader shift toward a reflexive and contextual approach, in which attention is directed to how works are presented, framed, and made meaningful. In this sense, curating functions not only as an organizational practice but also as an epistemological one: it actively participates in shaping what is considered meaningful, valuable, and possible within the contemporary music field.

### **Sustainability and Change in Balance – As deep as DNA (identity)**

Sustainability and change are increasingly understood as deeply intertwined with organizational identity, operating at what may be described as a “DNA level.” According to Meanwell and Rude (p. 73), the development of festivals does not merely involve programmatic or operational adjustments, but requires a fundamental rethinking of organizational structures, values, and modes of operation (Farnsworth et al., 2021). They argue that transforming an organization directly affects who is recognized as a composer or artist, as well as which practices and actors are valued, thereby shaping the broader structures of the arts field.

Christine Fischer, similarly, emphasizes that each festival should cultivate a distinct and recognizable identity, rather than relying on standardized models (Nonnenmann, 2017). Central to this is the role of risk: both curators and artists are expected to challenge established practices and engage in aesthetic and organizational risk-taking to enable new developments to emerge. In this sense, risk becomes a key condition for both artistic innovation and the vitality of the field.

At the same time, sustainability is also grounded in community, trust, and shared agency. Pauline Hogstrand (p. 120) highlights that functioning collective structures depend on a sense of ownership and trust – both in one’s own actions and in the processes

of the group (Farnsworth et al., 2021). This requires transparency, the sharing of information, and the ability to address differing motivations and power dynamics among participants. Organizational sustainability thus extends beyond structural considerations to encompass social and affective dimensions, such as trust and the experience of meaningful engagement.

Furthermore, the literature underscores the importance of values in building sustainable systems. Terri Hron (p. 148) suggests that self-sustaining structures emerge when organizations are grounded in their own values and develop distinctive modes of operation that are not solely driven by external pressures (Farnsworth et al., 2021). Such an approach integrates political, aesthetic, and organizational dimensions, enabling the development of practices that are both context-sensitive and sustainable over time.

Taken together, the literature indicates that sustainability in the contemporary music field is not a static condition, but an ongoing process of balancing continuity and change. Organizational identity, values, and cultures of practice form the core of this balance, where change is not merely reactive adaptation, but an active and conscious process of redefinition.

*“Now I realize that it is probably an efficient way to create a self-sustaining system that has its own flavours and its own ways of being. Of course, it is also about politics (that is always the case) but in many ways, it is more sustainable.”*

(Hron, as cited in Farnsworth et al., 2021, p. 148)

### **How to go forward?**

Based on the literature, the future direction of the contemporary music field does not emerge through isolated solutions, but rather through a broader shift toward more reflexive, sustainable, and context-sensitive modes of operation. According to Farnsworth (2020), curatorial thinking becomes central in this process, where leadership is not limited to selecting content but involves constructing contexts, situations, and meanings. This requires balancing diverse stakeholders while creating space for new narratives and practices that better respond to ongoing societal transformations.

Similarly, Meanwell and Rude (Farnsworth, et al. 2021) emphasize the development of organizations as sustainable “ecosystems,” in which festivals function as platforms for broader change. This implies a shift from individual programming decisions toward structural thinking, including long-term investment in organizational capacity, staffing, and operational models that enable both artistic and societal impact. In this context, resilience emerges as a key condition – not merely as the ability to withstand change, but as the capacity to build trust, continuity, and openness toward new audiences and communities. Without such infrastructure, even the most ambitious artistic ideas risk remaining disconnected.

Equally important is the understanding of curating as a process that constructs meaningful experiences for audiences. The shift described by Meanwell and Rude (Farnsworth, et al. 2021) from individual concerts toward holistic “journeys” highlights the importance of contextualization, framing, and audience engagement. At the same time, Marqvardsen and Christensen (Farnsworth, et al. 2021) argue that relevance requires programming to reflect the surrounding society: reaching more diverse audiences is not possible without both content-related and structural change.

The literature suggests that the future of the field rests on three interrelated dimensions: structural sustainability and resilience, reflexive and responsible curatorial leadership, and a stronger connection to the surrounding society and its diversity. Achieving these requires long-term commitment, institutional rethinking, and a willingness to critically examine existing practices. In this sense, change does not appear as a singular intervention, but as an ongoing process through which the contemporary music field continuously renegotiates its meaning, values, and future direction.

### **Refining the perspective**

While going through the literature with the thoughts in mind, I came across the book by Pinheiro et al. (2022) on public sector organizations “Towards Resilient Organizations and Societies – A Cross-Sectoral and Multi-Disciplinary Perspective”. The book highlights a range of different cross-sector and multi-disciplinary perspectives on understanding and building organizational resilience. According to the authors, resilience is often understood as capability to recover from crisis, but the book presents, among others, Shatzk's conceptualization of resilience as “a social fabric” emphasizing aspects

of adaptation, learning and change, rather than a spontaneous response to events, and its many invisible links between structures and activities (Pinheiro et al. 2022, p. 122). I saw this perspective serving the topic, especially as I see the growing societal perspective in the field of art music important, linking the sector to a wider intersectoral network/ecosystem, consisting of multiple relationships of benefit, need and dependency. The book, released in 2022, also highlights the need for studies to explore resilience in the practice of organizations and the dynamics that underpin it.

### **1.3. Aim of the research and questions**

Organizations operate in a complex and changing environment that is increasingly interconnected to its ecosystem and society. In my research I am particularly interested in exploring the perceived impact of learning and change in a single intermediary organization, and the systematic strengthening and development of these – in relation to cross-sectoral collaboration and wider systemic change or the promotion of resilience in the sector. To stay relevant in a longer term, this needs deeper level analyses on different levels of operations. In this research my aim is to examine organizational resilience, how does art music organization navigate and adapt to a changing environment from an administrative-operational perspective and does this change manifest itself in cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary networks and cooperation.

I have chosen as my analytical perspective Art Music Denmark, a public–private organization operating in the field of art music. I saw AMDK as a relevant organization for my case study, because it operates in the position of intermediary in the field of art music that I am professionally interested of, and its approach to operate and continuously develop the field is holistic, acting as a facilitating organization and “partner” within close collaboration and networks in its diverse ecosystem between different sectors, connecting freelance artists, foundations, municipalities, the state, other arts institutions, and businesses, both nationally and internationally.

To research this topic, I have the main question and three supporting questions:

**How does organizational resilience emerge and operate in an art music intermediary organization within a changing societal and networked environment?**

- 1) How is resilience constructed in practice within AMDK through organizational processes, strategies, and ways of working?
- 2) How is AMDK's resilience shaped through its relationships with the surrounding environment, including cultural policy, networks, and cross-sector collaboration?
- 3) How does resilience manifest in and through collaboration, and to what extent does it enable broader learning and systemic change within the art music field?

In the Danish art music scene, Art Music Denmark (AMDK) plays a significant role by supporting both artists and the field. Its position at the intersection of multiple sectors and actors enables the organization to maintain a broad perspective and a nuanced understanding of the elements that shape more sustainable and supportive conditions for the field. AMDK represents classical music, contemporary music, and sound art, which share many commonalities within the music ecosystem while also differing in their operational cultures. This makes the research object particularly diverse and opens new perspectives on the system itself, as well as on the interdependencies between genres. It also allows for a multidisciplinary examination of the organization as an integral part of society, informed by the perspectives of arts professionals navigating a complex operating environment and its associated benefits and challenges. Given that AMDK already encompasses multiple genres and that its activities are fundamentally based on collaboration, the scope of this study is limited to examining the organization's capacity to adapt to changes in its environment and in society at large.

This thesis is qualitative research and a case study. Its theoretical framework is based on *organizational resilience, including perspectives on Danish and Nordic cultural policy, arts management and multi cross-sector/interdisciplinary collaboration*. The methods of the research are semi-structured interviews then examined through thematic analysis.

In developing the theoretical framework of my research, I delve quite deeply into resilience theory and the literature I have chosen. I was aware (and had been warned) of the breadth of the topic when discussing resilience. I nevertheless considered this theoretical immersion essential to move beyond the surface level and to examine details,

which I saw as having the potential to influence the organization as a whole and its various directions of activity.

To study organizational resilience, I found it important first to outline within the scope of a Danish or on a general level the cultural policy guidelines in the Nordic countries, which I identified as having an impact on organizational practices within the context of my research. Because resilience is a broad and multidimensional theme, I also considered the possibility of expanding the theoretical framework by incorporating perspectives from leadership theory, strategic thinking, and organizational structures. However, at this stage, I can acknowledge that these areas are part of resilience and address them in the results, while a deeper theoretical examination may be left for future research.

## **1.4. Structure of the thesis**

The structure of the thesis follows a logical progression from contextual framing and theoretical grounding to empirical analysis and conclusions. It's structured into six sections. The first section, the introduction, outlines my personal research interests and the considerations that led to the selection of the research topic, as well as relevant contemporary perspectives from public discourse that support the study. It's followed by aim of the research and questions, as well as the structure of the thesis.

The second section establishes the theoretical framework that informs the analysis and supports the interpretation of the empirical findings. It begins with a brief discussion of Nordic cultural policy perspectives on interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration, followed by an examination of organizational resilience theory. It then explores resilience first as a concept, then in a broader societal context, and finally in greater depth at the organizational level.

The third section presents the qualitative case study design, including data collection and analysis processes, ethical considerations, and my positionality as a researcher. Qualitative case study as a methodological approach enables an in-depth exploration of organizational operations and perceptions.

The fourth section presents the research findings and analyses. The findings are structured around key themes derived from the research questions, linking empirical

insights to the theoretical framework; Art Music Denmark – Organization and the working environment, Relational Dimensions of Resilience – Collaboration as a Mechanism of Change and finally “Learning to Learn”, “Trust as a Strategy” and Structure as a Method” based on the key findings of the research.

The fifth section is conclusion that summarizes the main findings, reflects on their implications, and suggests directions for future research, and it’s followed by the references.

## **2. Thematical Framework**

The thematic framework of the study focuses on organizational resilience, including aspects of multi-disciplinary and cross-sector collaboration. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding, it also draws on Nordic cultural policy perspectives as well as perspectives of these topics within the art music ecosystem and society. As the case study is situated in Denmark, I begin by examining the cultural policy framework in the Nordic countries, with particular attention to Denmark, in order to gain insight into the foundational principles and conditions within which actors in the field balance with and which have implications for operational strategies. I will also explore the current challenges facing the Nordic art music sector as well as relationships and implications of cross-sector cooperation and networks to these challenges.

### **2.1. Nordic cultural policy perspectives on multi-disciplinary and cross-sector collaboration between cultural organizations and changing society**

To comprehend inter-sectoral activities and dependencies within the art sector, it's essential to explore the relationship between cultural policy and the ecosystem of organizations, addressing their key challenges and needs. I aim to establish connections and examine literature from perspectives relevant to my research and the activities of the AMDK organization. Moreover, I'll integrate current discussions and literature on the necessity of multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration in Finland's arts and cultural field, focusing specifically about the art music industry and its cultural sustainability today.

Within the arm's-length model characteristic of Denmark and other Nordic countries, public funding for the arts and culture sector is largely directed toward established artistic and cultural institutions, which play a central welfare-oriented role in ensuring universal and regionally equal access to cultural activities and serve as key employers within the field (Nordisk kulturfakta, 2022). At the same time, literature highlights that these institutional structures tend to adapt slowly to societal change, as

Nordic cultural policy developments are often embedded in post-crisis political continuums (Kangas & Vestheim, 2010). The concentration of power and financial resources within institutions aligned with prevailing policy objectives may, however, limit diversity, innovation, and creative development across the broader field (e.g. Dromey & Haferkorn, 2018; Sokka, 2022; Pekkarinen et al., 2022). Moreover, differences in cultural policy guidelines, along with complex and opaque inter-sectoral governance structures, contribute to uncertainty and unpredictability, hindering systematic planning and development and reinforcing fragmentation and inward-oriented practices among cultural actors.

The literature generally emphasizes the importance of sustainability in responding to future challenges, a responsibility shared by state funding bodies, cultural institutions, the private sector, and individual actors within the field, all of whom operate amid multiple and often conflicting objectives and policy frameworks. The *Cultural Reconstruction* report (Pekkarinen et al., 2022) identifies several factors contributing to vulnerability in Finland's arts and culture sector, including challenges related to identity, social inclusion, structural rigidity, limited capacity for change, and shortcomings in support systems. These issues can be considered broadly applicable across other Nordic contexts as well. The report further highlights deficiencies in strengthening shared capacities to support cultural sustainability, particularly in relation to sectoral renewal, intercultural dialogue, and the diversity of cultural expression (p. 19–24). From a development perspective, the diversity and equal standing of different arts and cultural sectors and genres are emphasized as key conditions for adaptability and continuous diversification within the cultural field (p. 37).

From the perspective of the art music field, challenges emerge in responding to the evolving expectations of both internal and external stakeholders, often resulting in inequalities and internal divisions (Dromey & Haferkorn, 2018, p. 130). The coexistence of diverse structural and ideological paradigms complicates shared understanding and hinders the identification of collective approaches to change. Beyond sector-specific challenges, the literature highlights broader pressures stemming from globalization, demographic shifts, digitalization, and climate change, alongside underlying processes of postmodern change such as marketization, increased mobility, individualization, de-institutionalization, fragmentation, de-differentiation, and politicization, all of which increasingly shape and challenge the cultural field (Sokka, 2022, p. 14). At the same time,

growing diversity within the field also generates new encounters, interactions, and forms of interconnection between actors and practices, opening up potential pathways for renewal.

According to Pinheiro et al. (2022), the key lies in stakeholders' own capability to think and act flexibly, reflected in identity, behavior, and other organizational traits. From a cultural policy perspective, the ability and freedom of established institutions to define their own purpose, problem-solving approaches, and objectives are often seen as challenging and largely “pre-scripted.” At the same time, the Nordic Kulturfakta report (Sokka et al., 2022, p. 15) identifies room for maneuver in the reconfiguration of practices, and institutions operating within the framework of Nordic cultural policy have demonstrated ingenuity in adapting to new operational environments. In this regard, Denmark in particular has been seen to develop new approaches through societal values, audiences, and performance indicators – approaches that consciously diverge from the traditional notion of the “autonomy of the arts.” (Kann-Rasmussen & Hvenegaard Rasmussen, 2020). Here, the authors therefore raise the question of how, in light of these identified challenges, the diverse and at times conflicting objectives of cultural policy can be aligned, particularly within an multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral operational environment. Beliefs and traditions prevailing in the field may be strong that stakeholders easily become blind to how they perceive their identity compared to how others see them.

In current literature on cultural policy is also emphasized the need for deeper networking, collaboration and partnerships among public organizations as well as across different sectors, alongside the development of new collaborative models (Sokka et al., 2022; Ruokolainen et al., 2022). This has been seen enabling collective development and knowledge sharing, promotes systemic thinking, and streamlines sectoral development. For example, the Nordic Cultural Policy report highlighted that Danish cultural organizations have successfully utilized new approaches, increased the field's autonomy and diversified operational models. Such collaboration is seen to assist in addressing practical challenges, diversifying funding sources, reaching audiences, while also advancing discussions on the diversity of the field and interdependencies among stakeholders. In addition to requiring flexibility and adaptability from organizations regarding resources and structures, willingness, and motivation to share resources and develop networks are seen important for organizational capabilities. These differences are also influenced by the distinct historical trajectories of the Nordic countries. For

example, in Iceland, where the institutionalization of the cultural sector has occurred relatively late, cultural administration tends to be more agile and quicker to organize than in the other Nordic countries (Sokka et al. 2022, p. 13).

According to Bariccon (Dromey & Haferkorn, 2018. p. 173), the rapid advancement of technology has enabled horizontal and network-oriented operations, with the formation of new meanings and values at its core. He describes intersections between different worlds as "systems of passages," where digital communication shapes our behavior. As an example, he points to the internet, where practically anyone can easily discover new music and inadvertently expand their musical preferences. While the merging of communities and new engagements may not yet appear as natural in practical life, I believe that stronger development of inter-network and horizontal relationships as well as internal capabilities in resilience of organizations could replicate this phenomenon. Both the advancement of technology and the numerous platform possibilities, as well as all factors related to the activities of art music organizations (venues, partners, topics addressed, target audiences, etc.), require significant resources and continuous planning, clarifying their purpose and intended messages. However, often challenges arise from resource shortages and entrenched practices or rigidity in routines, as well as cognitive frameworks such as differing preferences, identities, or values within the organization (Dromey & Haferkorn, 2018. p. 130).

In Copenhagen there are four music genre organizations, providing comprehensive consultation, advancing field activities and structures by organizing new projects and initiatives, and serving as a "bridge" for networking and inter-sectoral collaboration alongside with having residences and distributing travel supports. A diverse understanding of the field's operational logics enables stakeholders to grasp interdependence relationships and adopt a more far-sighted and holistic approach to strategy planning. However, multi-disciplinary, and cross-sector collaboration can also be complex, as stakeholders strive to align their goals and values with democratic laws, public values, and efficient cooperation while fostering creativity. Therefore, periodic reevaluation and redefinition of guiding principles are occasionally necessary, requiring organizational flexibility.

In summary, art music institutions play a central role in interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration within an increasingly dynamic and changing society. Examining culture through values, traditions, and identity highlights the importance of

dialogue and interaction among individuals, communities, and institutions. Full participation and the realization of collective potential require dynamic engagement, a mindful approach, and openness to change, while also acknowledging power relations and resource challenges embedded in the relationships between administration and cultural actors. In this context, the coherence of the values and identity represented by organizations serves as a key driver of change. Contemporary cultural policy emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration, adaptability, and the promotion of cultural sustainability and diversity as responses to structural challenges and gaps in support. Consequently, fostering a sustainable and dynamic cultural sector calls for expanded perspectives, innovative operational models, and value-based collaboration across multiple levels of society.

In the following section, I first introduce the concept of resilience in both organizational and societal contexts, drawing on primary literature to outline the foundations of the research perspective. I then proceed to examine in greater detail the key elements, strategies, and processes of resilience from the organization point of view more comprehensively.

## **2.2. Resilience in Organizational Fields and Societies**

As the field of arts and culture is deeply interconnected across disciplines and societal levels, it operates within a complex network of nested systems and interdependencies. As literature suggests, in this context, societal-level changes and challenges call for a multifaceted and interdisciplinary examination of social entities from scientific, theoretical, and conceptual perspectives (Pineiro et al., 2022, p. 4). Accordingly, this study draws primarily on *Towards Resilient Organizations and Societies*, which adopts a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach to resilience research from organizational and institutional perspectives. This framework aligns closely with the focus of the present research and offers a comprehensive lens for examining organizations' resilience within contemporary society, capacities that are here explored in relation to the art music field.

Previous research has often defined resilience as the capacity to recover from crisis. However, scholars such as Schatzk conceptualize resilience as a social fabric rather than a reactive response, emphasizing the invisible links between structures and practices through which resilience emerges via interaction between individuals and organizations. This perspective frames resilience as a complex, interconnected, and emergent pattern of relationships within and across organizational and institutional environments (Frigotto et al., 2022, p. 5). From a socio-ecological organizational perspective, resilience is built through continuous awareness, collective learning, and the capacity to adapt, renew, and change. These capabilities – often described as “learning to learn,” adaptability, and renewal – are understood as ongoing processes that involve experimentation, innovation, and knowledge sharing, enabling organizational learning to contribute to broader system-level transformation (Frigotto et al., 2022).

Relationships between complex organizational and societal entities are rarely linear or straightforward. As discussed in the previous section, Young and Pinheiro (2022) highlight significant differences between systems in terms of structural configurations, ecosystem dynamics, and capacities for flexibility, innovation, and change – differences that are strongly shaped by organizational characteristics, identities, and value systems, which both guide and constrain behavior. This perspective brings the discussion back to the relationship between freedom and resilience, particularly from an attitudinal perspective. As according to Emirbayer and Mische (1998), agency is a temporally embedded and distributed process of social engagement, in which actors simultaneously reproduce and transform their environments through purpose, imagination, and judgment.

Within the field of art music, and particularly in relation to public art institutions, resilience is therefore closely linked to forms of strong agency. However, such agency should not be understood as resilience in itself, but rather as part of a broader societal and operational capacity to anticipate, adapt to, and shape changing environments in interaction with other actors. This includes the ability to create new and modify existing modes of operation. Pinheiro et al. (2022, p. 252) emphasize the importance of strong agency in the transformation of social values and societal structures, while I see also important cautioning that such processes require critical awareness of whose values are promoted and whose interests guide change.

Building on this, Young and Pinheiro (2022, p. 175). identify three key differentiating factors for the collective creation of a resilience environment: (a) the fragmentation of organizational units and knowledge domains (ideologies), (b) the mediating role of norms and values (beliefs), and (c) authority systems and structural arrangements (structures). At the same time, the literature cautions that an excessive or unbalanced pursuit of resilience may generate additional tensions, stress, and conflict, potentially leading to fragmentation within communities or ecosystems and ultimately undermining the collective capacity for resilience.

To address resilience more comprehensively at the societal and organizational levels, previous literature also points out that it is necessary to first define its diversity – the starting points, elements, and meanings in various contexts. In the following section, I will attempt to clarify the theoretical and conceptual foundations and terms, enabling us to understand the characteristic and diversity of resilience, thereby facilitating its examination from various essential perspectives.

### **2.3. Resilience in Social Sciences: Antecedents, Paradigms and Perspectives**

In recent years, resilience as well as its organizational and societal interconnection has renewed policy and scholarly interest. Global crises and the following social, economic, and political changes increase the pressure on societies and organizations to keep pace with change. Here, resilience has emerged as a key concept in various social science disciplines and has seen appropriate when dealing with contexts or situations that seem increasingly unstable, uncertain and complex.

However, understanding organizational resilience has proven challenging due to its varying definitions, interpretations and approaches across disciplines, contexts, and perspectives, with its meaning changing over different timeframes and in response to various change phenomena or environmental factors (Pinheiro et al., 2022, p. 4). When Martin-Breen and Anderies (2011) suggest that to study resilience effectively, one must first determine "resilience to what?", Hillmann and Guenther (2020) are sifting the perspective on measurability of resilience without being too descriptive and outcome-

focused, that often neglects the antecedents or sources that contribute to resilient outcomes. However, the latter authors also note that resilience can be examined through various lenses including its evolution, constructive capacity, flexibility, trajectory, or ongoing strategic planning process. This variability suggests that resilience is context-dependent and can be understood in relation to specific phenomena.

Pinheiro et al. (2022) address resilience from a more holistic perspective, focusing on continuously existing qualities and capabilities. At first they compile definitions of resilience from various authors, wherein it is described as an individual's acceptance and belief, the ability to recover more effectively from adversities and changes, adapting and managing environmental variability, reorganizing while retaining basic functions, structure, identity, and feedback, recognizing and strengthening relationships with other actors and the surrounding ecosystem, and promoting structural changes from a broader societal and sustainability perspective. However, they also note that earlier research has been criticized of using concept of resilience too broadly covering endless spectrum of elements and capabilities and acknowledge that the focus in these definitions lies in the context and the scope of the perspective from which it is viewed. To outline the continuously existing perspective they also highlight the definition of resilience by Bhamra (2016) in a way that “regardless of context, the concept of resilience relates to achieving stability within the functioning of an element or system.” (p. 18).

### **2.3.1. Approaching resilience**

When examining organizational resilience within cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary environment, the study needs an empirical approach to cover multiple perspectives and characteristics that have implications for strengthening internal resilience and the longer-term change, and for identifying and managing the external environment and interrelationships between systems and entities. In addition, compared to other disciplines, studying the field of arts and culture must consider the specific characteristics of the field, such as the role and importance of creativity and innovation, the nature of the working relationships of individual actors and the interdependencies between many factors (e.g. society, audience, partners, funding) that govern the field, as well as the weight of cultural and identity issues.

Previous literature shows that when analyzing social entities, it is essential to be aware of the complexity, variability, and relationality of resilience, and thus important to determine the time/duration, space/environment, and level of analysis to which resilience is referred (Frigotto et al. 2022, p. 26). For example, something that reflects flexibility in the present moment might appear as undesirable changes in elsewhere or may over time be reflected as unfavorable effects on other areas of operations or environment. Here the interpretability and outcome of the change will depend on the perspective of the evaluator as well as the temporal, spatial and social scale. To emphasize that it is more a question of awareness, and interdependencies should be considered, since the aim of approaching resilience involves social entities.

Frigotto et al. (2022) present three social levels at which resilience can be analyzed: the individual (micro), the organization (meso) and the system (macro). In this study, I am especially interested in exploring whether an individual organization can act as a facilitator of (transformative) resilience at other levels. However, in previous literature there are divergent views on whether resilience individuals can translate or embed resilience from one level to another. Frigotto et al. (2022) also brings up, following Giovannini et al. (2020), the aspect that public interventions are to strengthen already resilient individuals, while on the other hand, according to Carpenter and colleagues (2001) these levels are not seen at all consistent with each other, and that the evolution of nested and overlapping systems are interacting in unpredictable ways. (p. 26).

As the Nordic cultural policy-oriented perspective was described earlier, cultural policies aim to strengthen cooperation between these societal levels, aiming at equal access to artistic and cultural activities. However, it is important to recognize that cooperation between these levels often starts with funding and resources from the top down, from the decision makers to organizations and content creators to audiences, which can lead to gaps in the planning of activities and a lack of knowledge about the situation and needs of the end users. Therefore, particular attention needs to be paid to the interdependencies between the above-mentioned levels, the structures, cooperation projects and systems, actively engaging sufficient skills and vision from within the actors themselves in the field, if not from their starting points.

As noted earlier, according to Frigotto et al. (2022), resilience represents the ability to learn, adapt and change in a process, to achieve stability within the functioning of a social entity (e.g. individual, organization, system, or society) while responding to

adversity (p. 9). Authors put it under two basic perspectives as 1) the ability to bounce back to a state of normality following disruptive and unexpected events and 2) flexibility to adapt to new, emerging situations without crossing the threshold (2022, p. 7). Since the encounter with an adversity causes new learning, there is inevitably a change in the process relative to the initial situation. In this context, it is essential to consider the continuity of change, and its various characters of stability and novelty, for example in identity, process, or ways of thinking.

Authors divide the process of learning, adaptation and change into three different types of novelty profile: absorptive, adaptive, and transformative (Frigotto et al., 2022). In considering these types, it is seen as essential to outline the readiness of an entity or system for change and the level (individual, organization, system) at which change occurs in relation to its basic functions and environment. Here authors present five essential questions to help to build an understanding of the resilience under study. I use these questions as a starting point and support for my own research as well, as they allow to outline the dynamic nature of social systems, their complexity, and to interpret resilience across multiple levels of analysis, as well as the interdependencies between them.

At first Frigotto and the others (2022) determine whether resilience is viewed as an operation, a trait, a philosophy, or ability – to clarify *what is the core of resilience*. Without a clear picture of the investigated subject there is a risk for too broad interpretations, making it difficult to characterize and explore concepts, ideas, and practices in more detail. Hillmann and Guenther (2020) also confirm that only clarity on the concept of resilience and its variables will allow its evaluation and continuous development over time. However, for my research I aim to create a comprehensive picture of the composition of organizational resilience in general, so I will remain open to exploring the perspectives.

Secondly the authors define *what is the outcome of resilience?* This will help to clarify the relationship between resilience and persistence, and the change over time in relation to the initial situation and the final state. Here they consider whether resilience is a return to the status quo or rather a change in relation to time and external events, forming a new form of resilience. Followed by that, they suggest determining *how the disturbance, adversity or perhaps change is interpreted?* Different situations and changes can be experienced from different perspectives, both as challenges and as opportunities to be pursued. For example, from an organizational perspective, stability in the pace of societal

change can bring security but at the same time be seen as adverse to more sustainable ways of operating and from the perspective of value propositions.

Fourth, they examine *the temporal relationship with resilience*. This looks at the reaction of the social entity to the adversity before, during and after its occurrence, and the extent to which it is considered in the moment. This temporal dimension is also referred to as dynamic resilience. Finally, *the level of analysis* is determined by answering the question "*which resilience to what?*". As mentioned earlier, resilience can be studied at micro, meso, and macro levels, and it is important for this study to consider the relationships and correspondence between these, as they are often systematically linked and interdependent. It should also be recognized that, for example, resilience at the individual level does not guarantee resilience at the higher, organizational level and conversely, a community can be resilient even if its individuals are not. However, clarifying the relationships between resilience also helps to explore the wider interplay of change.

### **2.3.2. Different phases of resilience**

In this section, I present, according to Frigotto et al. (2022), the different stages of resilience, which allow us to better outline the analytical framework of resilience of the study, and to map resilience in a coherent way in different perspectives. The authors compile the above questions in the previous chapter under three key characteristics that allow for theoretical and empirical analysis: *stability and change*, *adversity and novelty*, and *temporality*. Here, stability and change focus at the core of resilience, adversity and novelty compares responsiveness and resilience to disturbances, and temporality investigates predictive and subsequent changes and their implications for more sustainable and deeper systemic change. To consider the temporal order of anticipation, mechanisms and outcomes, the literature has also defined resilience typologies of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacity, which will be presented in this section.

## Stability and change

According to Frigotto et al. (2022), resilience is commonly used to express the ability to maintain function and its stability in the face of adversity, and to recover and learn from them, referring to both stability and change. However, the degree and depth between stability and change has been seen as challenging to interpret in previous research. Authors point out, that resilience differs from survival, as resilience is always linked to a previous state and action and a process over time, with continuity of action at its core. Here, most often resilience is conceptualized as a recovery process or change within a certain threshold, whereby crossing a threshold is no longer seen as comparable to resilience. In this context, it is important to distinguish the coping mechanisms that occur in emergency situations from other appropriate longer-term elements that create stability and change between the dynamics of a system. (p. 12–14.)

Drawing on previous research, the authors present different interpretations of 'adaptability' and 'transformability' in terms of maintaining the original state or identity on the process of change caused by disruption. In terms of 'adaptation' and 'adaptability', the former refers to the ability to use what already exists in terms of 'exploitation', while the latter refers to the development and adoption of new things or ways and means in terms of 'exploration'. Transformation and transformability on the other hand, are more often associated with flexibility and adaptability in the face of change. (Frigotto et al. 2022, p. 13.) However, as we understood earlier, the process is continuous and based on dynamics of the system and the area where stability and change are balanced and occur in relation to each other.

Looking at resilience solely in terms of identity or choice-based capabilities can be misleading in the light of environmental influences. For example, Pinheiro et al (2022, p. 228) present three pressures; coercive, normative, and mimetic that may drive organizations to change. These includes laws, and regulations, pressures to conform to shared values, standards, and practices, and the need to emulate established role models. Often public organizations and institutions face all these pressures, with the elements and characteristics of internal resilience playing an increasing role in relation to resilience and capacity for change. These may include innovation, identity, trust, etc., which I will discuss in more detail later.

From the perspective of stability and change, *absorptive resilience* describes the stability of a system and its ability to return quickly and efficiently to its original state, and when the change is only temporary (Frigotto et al. 2022, p. 15). On the other hand, according to Hillmann et al. (2020), it can also be interpreted as reflecting the ability to appreciate, transform and use new knowledge for strategic purposes - to learn and absorb effectively. In this way, it can help to maintain stability in the face of external change while developing situational resilience to prepare for potential change.

*Adaptive resilience* refers to resilience as a consistent and sustainable process of change, where a system is able to adapt to a new state by strengthening the resilience of an entity and reducing the impact of disturbances and vulnerabilities in a situation. During social change, adaptability allows units to create more resilient ways of working by adapting to the changes around them, while still preserving the essence of the social entity (Frigotto et al. 2022, p. 15). For example, adaptability can be enhanced by means such as broadening one's own specific knowledge and understanding or adopting new tools to identify and proactively act against possible adversity.

*Transformative resilience* reflects more significant and sustainable change. It reflects the change from an existing system to a new one and the ability to interact continuously with disruptors and contribute to wider and deeper systemic change. Central to this is the ability to change established behavior or structure in fundamental ways. Theorists such as Padgett and Powell (2012) also refer to this as 'cooperative evolution'. In the cases introduced by Frigotto et al. (2022), change is seen as a challenge, especially at the level of large institutions, whose systems are deeply entrenched and resistant to changing established patterns (p. 16). Although adaptation has been understood to occur within a certain threshold, it is important to recognize that this threshold itself can shift over time. Resilience, therefore, lies in the ability of a social entity to adjust and remain within these evolving boundaries.

### **Adversity and Novelty**

As we have learned, change happens in response to adversity. Pinheiro et al. (2022, p. 309) argue that for adversity to be classified as resilience, it must be at a level that threatens the continuity or essence of a basic function or character and, consequently, change its state or identity. However, for example, literature points out that in societal

sciences, the environment and its changes are driven by ignorance rather than risk and uncertainty, and thus the resilience framework classifies adversity primarily as the ability to resist the unknown, rather than the source or manifestation of adversity being seen as relevant (e.g. Frigotto et al. 2022, p. 8; Bahmra 2016). On this basis, when we do not know which adversities to prepare for, the focus of my research shifts more strongly to the internal characteristics of the organization that maintain a certain level of ongoing resilience suitable to its environment.

To continue, regardless of the situation, time, or duration, or whether the change is external or internal, learning requires openness and willingness to learn new – resilience thinking and behavior. Pinheiro et al. (2022) refer to resilience as a learning process (adaptation and assimilation) based on novelty (p. 16). Following them, facing novelty requires the ability to perceive, interpret and use the environment and existing capabilities and resources in a holistic way, to constantly reorganize and adapt to adversity and the following situations. The faster an organization can adapt to change and novelty, the more resilient it is to sustain the balance between operations and external conditions. Through learning and adaptation, the organization's ability to renew and change in relation to its own resources makes the transition more sustainable.

Frigotto et al. (2022) defines resilience to novelty in terms of three "novelty profiles", which determine the amount of knowledge required to deal with a new phenomenon. The first degree of novelty involves a perception of how far the novelty trigger is from what is already known. It reflects the amount of knowledge required to make something familiar, predictable, and expected to be dealt with constructively. Second, novelty is seen as spatially and temporally relative, looking at the capacity and ability to constantly change as new challenges arise on a situational basis and in relation to a specific time. Thirdly, referring to novelty awareness, they highlight the heterogeneous distribution of knowledge, whereby novelty and knowledge are perceived differently by different actors ('known unknown' or 'unknown unknown') (p. 17–18). Inevitably, I also wish to raise the question of how behavior influences the acceptance of novelty, specifically whether this concerns the recognition of a knowledge gap associated with novelty or the willingness to acknowledge and engage with that gap.

From the adversity and novelty perspective, *absorption resilience* is targeted at situations where the novelty profile of the disturbance is low and expected. In this case, the change can be anticipated and managed based on previous experience (Frigotto et al.

2022, p. 19). For example, the effects of reduced funding for culture and the arts on the amount or number of performances by arts organizations. *Adaptive resilience* is subject to a medium novelty profile, where disturbances are not yet well known but can be understood based on existing knowledge or require moderate knowledge development. This could be understood as creating a new concert concept based on previous ones to reach new audiences.

*Transformative resilience* responds to a high novelty profile and to adversities that are not predictable or expected. In this case, the change may be a significant transition or a more profound change at the system level. According to Frigotto et al. (2022, p. 19–21), this requires exploration based on Marchin’s theory, where ”learning encompasses all aspects of the social entity and entails the acquisition of solutions that are distant from those building the stable response system”. Transformative resilience could be seen in situation when the changing behavior and taste of audiences’ impact on the redesigning of programming and the creation of new content.

## **Temporality**

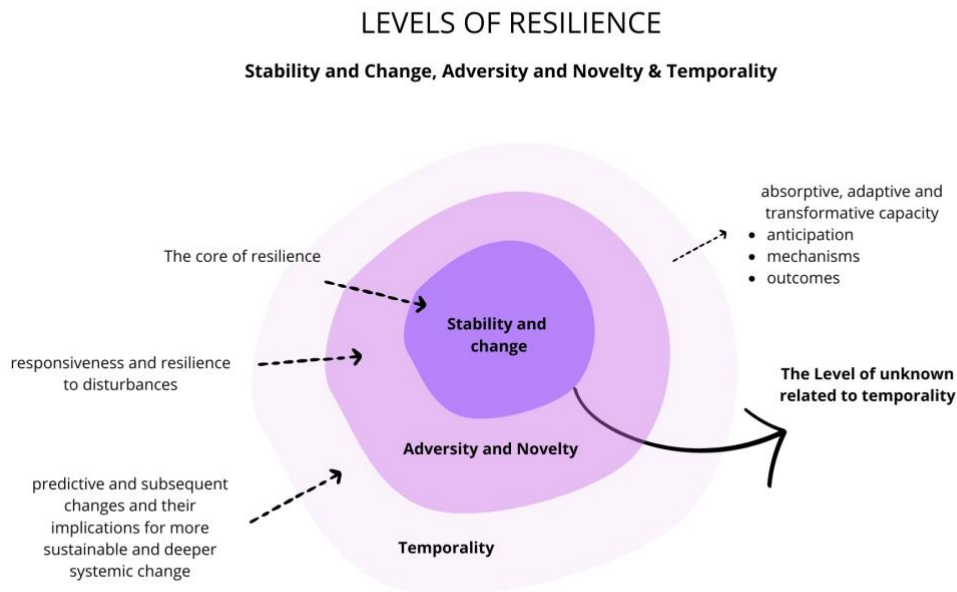
The third aspect of resilience analysis is temporality, as resilience can be measured over time before, during and after adversity happens. Literature also points out that this process includes various temporal dimensions, such as continuous repetition, practical evaluation, and the project nature, the replication of the whole (Magro et al. 2022, p. 284). It is therefore important to recognize that its conceptualization cannot be based on a single concept such as a state of being, a state of readiness or a structural characteristic, but rather as a process of “becoming something” in the process of change. Frigotto et al. (2022) define resilience on temporal stages as resilience foresights, resilience mechanisms and resilience outcomes (p. 23). Since resilience is inherently temporal, it always requires comparison between at least to points in time.

The different stages of resilience can be interpreted in terms of different goals per stage or outcome, but for the purposes of my research I am interested in the view of resilience factors presented by Frigotto et al. (2022), which can be characteristics or traits in the self or the environment that reflect a broader and more sustainable view of maintaining positive adaptation combined with change. Here, the authors point out that

if the focus is instead on assessing the state of resilience, attention is often drawn to other criteria, such as employee satisfaction and well-being or financial success.

Understanding resilience in the context of organizations involves recognizing different types of resilience based on the novelty and complexity of the adversity faced. From a temporal perspective, absorptive resilience that responds to a low novelty profile of adversity means the ability to anticipate and prepare for the future by making risk assessments and contingency plans – by practicing what is known in theory. The medium novelty profile of adaptive resilience in the face of adversity tends to review the information available from others ("from known to unknown"), and the resilience outcome reflects the process of change during and after the response to adversity. The high-level resilience, transformative, is associated with hard-to-find and hard-to-implement factors that trigger a high novelty profile and can only be proactively addressed by making efforts with unknown knowledge (Frigotto et al. 2022, p. 24). In such cases, the outcomes of resilience can lead to significant changes and innovations and can result in a very different outlook for the social entity under consideration. Thus, by promoting different types of resilience in a holistic way, an organization can significantly improve its ability to cope with and thrive in the face of different challenges.

Organizational resilience consists of multiple and interrelated dynamics, which we have classified under stability and change, adversity and novelty, and temporality, as well as different types and levels of resilience of these factors. To put it simply, there are things that can be anticipated and things that consist of the completely unknown, as well as everything between. In relation to these, my research sought to explore the ongoing and existing capacity and characteristics of an organization to operate and deal with new situations holistically within this range of knowability, and thus assess its ability to learn, adapt and prepare for or face change.



In the next section, to understand what leads to resilience, I will go into more detail about the resilience of the subject of the study, the organization, and the internal elements and characteristics at different stages of learning, adaptation, and change.

## 2.4. Resilience in Organizations – What leads to resilience

According to Pinheiro et al. (2022), organizations are seen as having two ways to increase resilience: by reacting to situations in the process by adapting their responses to the needs of the new situation, or by working before the situation arises to try to extend solutions to fit any possible new situation (p. 49). To approach this, so to say, ‘mind set’, and the aimed outcomes due to resilience, it needs to be investigated at the deeper level of an organization of which elements the resilience consists of.

Looking at the organization from a societal perspective and as aiming to create a holistic approach to its ecosystem, the literature points out themes to investigate as *learning, identity, behavior, structure, and practice* (Pinheiro et al. 2022, p. 49). On the other hand, from the operational perspectives of resilience diversity research, Hillman

and Guenther (2020) present six conceptual domains in a process of learning, adaptation, and change; *awareness and sensemaking, stability, change, behavioral, growth and performance domains*. Since I see the categorization of these areas as strongly interlinked, in this section, I will include the latter under the main themes presented by Pinheiro et al. (2022) and discuss them from a comprehensive perspective to create an understanding of the characteristics of resilient organizations.

## Learning

According to Pinheiro et al. (2022), "learning to learn" refers to an organization's capacity to remain active and reflective by nurturing productive doubt, reconnecting with its mission, continuously redefining purpose, and innovating while being aware of internal values, goals, and meanings. In this way, it constantly aims to be capable of evaluating and acknowledging its actions in relation to the environment and creating new meanings alongside to the question *why we are doing this*. From this perspective, organizational resilience is understood as a learning process that shifts attention away from linear decision-making models toward the underlying premises of decision-making, problem representation and role systems. Resilience is framed as a holistic capacity that enables organizations to adapt by actively examining and questioning established practices and structures.

However, in many traditional organizations, resources and decision-making have been concentrated in the hands of a few high-level executives. This system reflects the distribution of power and resources, which can hinder the organization's ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances (Dromey & Haferkorn, 2018, p. 144). Recent developments indicate a gradual shift toward more distributed forms of leadership, particularly through the redefinition of organizational roles. These processes are often closely linked to financial considerations, as redefining roles inevitably raises questions about which functions are essential and how organizational resources are aligned with underlying motivations and purposes for change.

In such complex and multi-actor context, Pinheiro et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of trust and shared understandings of problems, while leaders play a critical role in enabling growth strategies, supporting employees, and managing resources. Similarly, the authors highlight according to Herbert Simon, that clearly defined and

shared roles help organizational members understand their responsibilities and support effective decision-making at the individual level.

The division and definition of roles are therefore closely connected to organizational resilience. They are closely tied to organizational values and norms, as well as to the ideologies, shaping perceptions of who is needed, for what purpose, and why. Recruitment decisions, expectations of individual contribution, and the organization's tolerance for setbacks in pursuit of desired qualities all reflect deeper assumptions about meaning and value. In this context, processes of socialization and trust become central. For example, Pinheiro et al. (2022) point out, that less socialized individuals tend to gravitate more toward research activities, thereby expanding organizational knowledge, while potentially generating tensions if shared values and norms are not aligned. Trust and shared value base are therefore seen as crucial for effective knowledge sharing and learning, as they foster innovation and encourage the questioning of established practices. Maintaining a work environment that tolerates failure while preserving sufficient stability enables organizations to absorb disruptions and transform experience into future resilience.

## **Identity**

Geschwind et al. (2022) as well as Stensaker (2015) brought up in the literature, that identity formation is often understood as a social construction shaped by interpretive processes, negotiation of interests, and social interaction. Following them, from the perspective of organizational resilience, identity formation and change are influenced by multiple factors, including founding conditions, strategic leadership, recruitment practices, and demographic characteristics. Based on this, an organizational identity defines shared values, norms, and practices, which give the organization its unique character and a sense of continuity.

Here, identity is seen as an ongoing process that evolves over time and influences how the organization adapts to changing circumstances and responds to external pressures. The key elements of identity mentioned by the authors include centrality, endurance, and distinctiveness. When identity is strong and well-defined, it provides a certain stability that, in an ideal situation, does not falter even when freedoms are taken within and at the boundaries of the identity. As mentioned earlier – particularly in creative

industries – creativity, innovation, and risk-taking are inherent parts of identity, and activities may take highly diverse forms. This can also present challenges if activities deviate from the organization’s values or vision due to reasons related to stability or dependency, such as financial pressures, which may in turn negatively affect internal motivation and previously mentioned “mind set”.

However, Pinheiro et al. (2022) highlight the importance of the relationship between the organization and its environment in understanding stability. They refer to the threshold as a structural feature within which individuals, organizations, or institutions can operate and develop their identity. In addition, authors also note that organizations can develop their identity not only by remaining within their functional threshold but also by enabling the emergence of new identities. Here, although, as discussed in the previous chapter, employee socialization and a shared identity (norms, values, practices) often appear as a strength, the authors suggest, that from a resilience perspective, it may be advantageous for an organization to have fewer entrenched identities (Pinheiro, 2022, p. 199–200). The threshold thus becomes a conceptual tool for understanding how organizations negotiate continuity and change, whether by crossing existing boundaries or redefining them (going beyond the threshold vs. moving the threshold).

External factors and stakeholders, technological development and digitalization, as well as regional and societal changes, also affect organizations’ capacity to operate and shape their identity over time (Phillips et al., 2016). Especially public organizations often exhibit strong outward-facing identities while simultaneously engaging with diverse internal and external actors. This complexity may necessitate the adoption of multiple or hybrid identities that operate differently across contexts, raising questions about the boundaries between internal identity and externally oriented identity, and about when and how these boundaries shift.

In summary, identity plays a central role in organizational resilience by providing coherence, meaning, and direction. At the same time, resilience is enhanced by adaptability, reflexivity, and the capacity to accommodate evolving identities. In addition, entrepreneurial orientation, curiosity, and openness to new solutions further support this process. As a dynamic and ongoing process, organizational identity enables both continuity and transformation, strengthening an organization’s capacity to adapt to and withstand change.

## Behavior

Pinheiro et al. (2022) draws on earlier literature on organizational resilience, that behavior is understood as a central domain through which resilience becomes observable and enacted in practice. Here, resilience-related behavior encompasses an organization's capacity to accept uncertainty and reality, overcome denial, and operate constructively under conditions of disruption and ambiguity, as also Hamel & Välikangas (2003) point out. According to the authors, such behavior is also seen including the ability to perceive positive aspects in adverse situations, make meaning of challenging circumstances, restore confidence, and recognize emerging opportunities to move forward.

Importantly, the literature emphasizes that resilient behavior is strongly grounded in organizational identity and values. When these are coherent and robust, they provide a behavioral foundation that enables organizations to respond creatively and constructively to disruption rather than merely react defensively. Similarly, the literature highlights the role of a clearly articulated organizational purpose and continuous awareness of that purpose in guiding behavior, particularly in recognizing and acting upon opportunities that arise in uncertain or crisis situations (Pinheiro et al., 2022, p. 199).

At the organizational level, behavior is also manifested through patterns of collaboration, including cooperation among colleagues, the sharing of knowledge and resources, and coordination across teams, networks, and functional boundaries (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Mitchell et al., 2015; Hardy et al., 2005). Also, Padgett and Powell (2012) further underline the role of individual actors whose ability to draw on prior roles, networks, and expertise across different levels can open new pathways for strengthening organizational resilience. From this perspective, resilience is not solely an internal capability but is enacted relationally, through how the organization positions itself as an actor within its wider environment. This can be seen as including the willingness to build, utilize, and reshape networks, as well as to engage in cross-organizational and cross-sector collaboration

Resilient behaviors may take the form of both incremental adjustments and more radical transformations, and they can be proactive (adaptability) or reactive (adaptation), depending on how organizations anticipate, interpret, and respond to change. Notably, while resilient behaviors are closely connected to outcomes such as job satisfaction, engagement, commitment, and wellbeing, the literature suggests that they are analytically

distinct and precede these attitudinal states rather than result from them. (Magro et al., 2022).

Taken together, the behavioral domain highlights resilience as an ongoing, practice-based capacity that is enacted through everyday organizational actions, interactions, and decisions, shaped by identity, values, and purpose, and continuously negotiated in relation to internal dynamics and external environments.

## **Structure**

As we have previously noted, change requires both continuity and novelty in appropriate proportion. Public organizations in the arts and cultural sectors are, due to their funding and administrative structures, tied to numerous obligations and established practices that define their operations and their pace. At the same time, a stable financial foundation, clear structures, and shared roles allow resources to be allocated more evenly, thereby increasing the possibilities for long-term and comprehensive planning aimed at systematically achieving established goals. On the other hand, private sector organizations are more flexible and quicker to adapt, able to change both roles and practices even within a short period of time. However, in such cases, there is the risk that the organization and planning of the work suffer, and consequently so does the achievement of goals. Also, responsibility and burden of rapid changes might fall on individual employees compared to the operating models of larger organizations. (Pineiro et al. 2022.)

According to Pineiro et al. (2022, p. 314), a resilient organization appears as a flexible and innovative entity that seeks to diversify its structures. This is supported by a readiness and ability to make use of the different perspectives and competencies available within the organization as innovatively and broadly as possible. In this context, diversification may be understood as, for example, the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, the mixing of working groups, the creation of new tasks or roles, changes in working hours – measures that enable more effective sharing of knowledge and resources as well as more flexible decision-making.

For structural diversification to be realized, however, one must again look back to the organization's mindset and characteristics beneath the surface. Frigotto et al. (p. 49) present March's (1991) ideas on how organizations should combine the previously

introduced strategies of exploration and exploitation. In this case, exploration would encourage curiosity, risk-taking, experimentation, play, and innovation, while exploitation would simultaneously support carefully considered choices, production efficiency, and execution. From a resilience perspective, innovativeness also enables the creation and maintenance of a competitive advantage (Hamel & Välikangas, 2003). In this context, competitive advantage can also be interpreted as monitoring the environment and adapting to it innovatively, finding new pathways.

In addition, the authors emphasize the importance of utilizing and expanding both individual and organizational “loose ties,” not only in terms of knowledge and concrete actions but also for their role as protective factors. Since networks in the creative industries are by nature relatively small and dense, the sharing of knowledge and resources, as well as collaboration and joint projects, are to some extent already an inherent part of the field. However, in today’s changing environment, the concept of environment itself is constantly expanding, making it increasingly important to systematically identify and take advantage of the opportunities brought by digitalization and the networking it enables – reaching points we do not yet know.

## **Practice**

In the practical domain, resilience is closely linked to growth and learning. In the resilience literature, it is understood as the ability to emerge stronger from crises by learning and developing new skills to achieve success (Pineiro et al., 2022). This perspective emphasizes an organization’s ongoing broad awareness, making leadership that strengthens resilience a central aspect of the practical domain. According to Pineiro et al. (2022), such leadership focuses on developing employees, supporting their personal goals, providing challenging tasks, and creating a safe environment for failures, which in turn enhances organizational growth and development even under challenging conditions. The authors also note that growth-oriented and forward-looking leadership can help reduce additional stress and workload on employees (p. 152–155).

From a practical perspective, resilience can be viewed both strategically and operationally. The literature suggests that strategic resilience focuses on long-term growth and maintaining competitiveness, whereas operational resilience is concerned with ensuring continuity of operations and services during crises (e.g. Jüttner & Maklan,

2011; Välikangas & Romme, 2012). A key challenge identified in previous research is achieving a balance between strategic and operational resilience so that both mutually support the organization's various functions in a comprehensive manner.

In this chapter, we examined organizational resilience through the lens of learning, identity, behavior, structure, and practices, which together enable an organization to adapt and thrive in a changing environment. Resilience can be developed either reactively, by responding to changing situations, or proactively, by creating solutions that address a range of potential scenarios. At its core, these elements are connected through a “mindset” shaped by deeper values, identity, and the organization's purpose. This mindset influences how the organization perceives, interprets, and engages with its environment, allowing it to adopt a holistic perspective and understand the broader context in which it operates.

## 3. Methods and data collection

### 3.1. Qualitative research

This thesis is qualitative research and a case study. Its theoretical framework is based on *organizational resilience*, including perspectives on *Danish and Nordic cultural policy*, *arts management* and *multi cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaboration*. The methods of the research are semi-structured interviews then examined through Thematic analysis.

Qualitative study design allows to gather information of social phenomena across disciplines to cover a depth understanding of the topic (Leavy, 2017, p. 124). It can explain and describe meaning-making, different perspectives and individual's experiences which then can be compared and examined. A case study fits well with an exploratory or descriptive study, which answers questions that start with how or why. It can also be used to analyze different aspects of the subject's life and history to look for patterns of behavior and reasons for behavior in that organization (Leavy, 2017, p. 124). The data will be generated through semi-structured interviews with representatives of Art Music Denmark. The data was analyzed by content (under themes) using coding and categorization. The research paradigm might be ethnographic research, as the strategy aims at a holistic understanding and description of the research subject and is based on a multifaceted observation of people and environment.

Semi-structured interviews consisted of three parts, including ten questions, slightly adjusted to the person who was interviewed. The first part of the interview addressed employees' views and experiences regarding the elements, strategies, and processes that constitute organizational resilience. The second part sought to examine how the environment and various forms of collaboration and networking processes influence AMDK's resilience. Finally, the interviews explored how resilience is transmitted through collaboration, and whether it has implications for broader learning and change within the field. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, after which the responses were organized by interview question in an Excel spreadsheet. From this material, the key recurring points and categories were extracted into separate columns, providing an overall view of the topics for the purpose of thematic analysis. As this study is a case study, the use of descriptive analysis was a natural choice.

## The Case: Art Music Denmark

I have chosen Art Music Denmark (AMDK) as the analytical perspective for this study. AMDK is a public–private, network-based specialist organization operating in the field of art music, and it serves as an intermediary within a diverse and complex ecosystem. I consider AMDK a relevant and appropriate case organization due to its central position in the Danish art music field, which aligns with my professional interests, and its holistic approach to supporting and continuously developing the field. The organization functions as a facilitating partner within close collaborative networks that extend across multiple sectors, connecting freelance artists, foundations, municipalities, the state, other arts institutions, and businesses at both national and international levels.

AMDK represents classical music, contemporary music, and sound art – genres that share commonalities within the music ecosystem while also differing in their operational cultures. Its activities focus on fostering interdisciplinary partnerships across genre boundaries and cultural industries, investigating and challenging practices to identify shared elements, challenges, and potential opportunities for the benefit of professionals in the field. The organization functions as a partner to artists and other stakeholders by offering advisory and consultancy services, international mobility support, and developmental projects, among other activities.

Within the Danish art music scene, AMDK plays a significant role in supporting both individual artists and the field. Its position at the intersection of multiple actors and sectors enables a broad, relatively neutral perspective on the field, informed by the viewpoints of diverse professionals navigating a complex and constantly changing operating environment. This makes AMDK a particularly multifaceted research object and opens analytical perspectives on the system itself, as well as on interdependencies between genres. It also allows for a multidisciplinary examination of the organization as an integral part of society. Given that AMDK already encompasses multiple genres and that its activities are fundamentally based on collaboration, the scope of this study is therefore limited to examining the organization’s capacity to adapt to changes in its environment and in society at large.

## 3.2. Data collection and analysis process

The research data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Initially, my plan was to interview only three professionals from Art Music Denmark, but to obtain a broader dataset and a more comprehensive understanding, I decided to interview all employees present in the work environment, including the director. Therefore, the interviewees and their roles were as follows:

- 1) Laura Dalgaard Christoffersen, project manager (8.5.2024)
- 2) Rune Søchting, consultant, sound art (10.5.2024)
- 3) Anja Nedremo, consultant, classical music (10.5.2024)
- 4) Alexander Julin Mortensen, communication manager and project manager (21.5.2024)
- 5) Morten Ogstrup Nielsen, project manager, documentation & data (23.5.2024)
- 6) Regin Petersen, director and consultant, contemporary music (23.5.2024)

Three of the interviews were conducted during the final week of my internship at the Art Music Denmark office in the Music House in Copenhagen. The remaining three interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom after I had left Denmark. All interviews were conducted in English, recorded, and transcribed. Each interview lasted between approximately 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, resulting in a total of around 7 hours of interview material.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of ten questions, which were divided into three sections according to my research questions: 1) Internal elements, individual & organization 2) Relationship with the external environment and cooperation in networks 3) Elements promoting change in the field of art music. The interview questions were broad and even complex to interpret, but for my research, it was interesting to hear the interviewees' personal experiences and perspectives on the topic, as well as to compare their similarities and differences in relation to the thematic framework and theory. For each interview, I found it best to tailor the questions slightly according to each interviewee's role to identify the most essential aspects regarding their tasks and perspectives. The aim was also to allow space for personal descriptions, discussions, and unpredictable insights.

I compiled the key points from the interviews into an Excel spreadsheet organized by question and identified the most relevant themes for analysis. These were grouped under the categories of perspective *learning, identity, behavior, structure, and practice*, drawing on Pinheiro et al. (2022). The interviews revealed a significant amount of consistency, which proved the existence of the organization's resilience.

I divided the results and analysis sections into two parts. In the first part, I present more concrete findings by addressing my first six research questions. In the second part, I analyze the themes by addressing the final three questions, which concern collaboration and the role of the organization as part of a broader ecosystem. The nature of the interviews in the second part was more reflective and discussion-oriented compared to the first.

### **3.3. Descriptive Reflections of the Study, ethical considerations, and research position**

In developing the theoretical framework of my research, I delve quite deeply into resilience theory and the literature I have chosen. I was aware (and had been warned) of the breadth of the topic when discussing resilience. I nevertheless considered this theoretical immersion essential to move beyond the surface level and to examine details, which I saw as having the potential to influence the organization as a whole and its various directions of activity. To study organizational resilience, I found it important first to outline within the scope of a Danish or on a general level the cultural policy guidelines in the Nordic countries, which I identified as having an impact on organizational practices within the context of my research. Because resilience is a broad and multidimensional theme, I also considered the possibility of expanding the theoretical framework by incorporating perspectives from leadership theory, strategic thinking, and organizational structures. However, at this stage, I can acknowledge that these areas are part of resilience and address them in the results, while a deeper theoretical examination may be left for future research.

This study is guided by an ethical commitment to recognizing the agency of the participating organization and its representatives, and to representing their perspectives accurately and respectfully. Particular attention is paid to the advocacy role of the

organization and to its function in supporting the development of artists and the art music field more broadly, and is therefore not entirely one voiced. As Art Music Denmark operates as a partner across sectors and within both national and international contexts, the research seeks to acknowledge the complexity of these relationships and to avoid reductive or instrumental interpretations of collaborative practices. The study further considers how the organization's activities reflect societal values and respond to societal needs, while respecting the professional expertise and artistic quality that underpin its work. Throughout the research process, care is taken to ensure that the analysis does not compromise the integrity of the organization or its stakeholders, and that ethical responsibility is maintained in the interpretation and presentation of findings.

As for my own position as a researcher outside the organization, I must consider that I come from Finland and that my knowledge and understanding of Danish cultural policy and the cultural sector is limited. I try to form as neutral and informed picture as possible of the issues and avoid making assumptions based on, for example, Finnish cultural policy and industry structures, or my previous experiences. AMDK is a public organization with specific governmental tasks and objectives and is therefore not entirely unanimous. However, in my research I aim to recognize, discuss and explore the findings openly, while considering the different values and responsibilities in the field. The research will follow the Guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012).

## 4. From Discussion to Analysis and Discussion

In the following sections, I will present results on the themes discussed in the interviews through the different objectives of organizational resilience, with analysis of the relation to the theory of organizational resilience in a cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation and society. First, I examine the internal elements of resilience (stability and change) through the organization's role and purpose, structure and activities, which were explored from different perspectives through the first interview questions. As the final six interview questions addressed more broadly AMDK's relationship with its environment and other actors, and shifted to open and reflective discussion, I then move on to a broader analysis of how the operating environment, external stakeholders, and externally imposed principles shape resilience, and reflect on AMDK's behavior in the face of change (adversity and novelty).

### 4.1. Art Music Denmark – Organization and the working environment

To identify the internal elements of resilience within the organization, I approached my research question by exploring how employees perceive the organization and its working environment, as well as which factors contribute to their most effective and positive work experience or outcome. I examined these factors through the themes the literature suggested, *learning, structure, identity, behavior and practice* in mind. The responses strongly highlighted the organization's structure and operational methods, which support a flexible and open working approach. This is fundamentally based not only on the stability provided by external funding but also on internal elements such as professional interdisciplinary expertise, trust, identity and values, as well as mind set.

### **4.1.1. The concept of resilience**

At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked how they understand the concept of resilience and whether they had previously considered organizational resilience. As the literature suggests, resilience is still perceived as a relatively new perspective and concept within the arts and cultural sectors (Pekkarinen et al., 2023). This was also reflected in the interviews, where the concept of resilience was perceived as somewhat vague due to its multifaceted nature and the lack of a clear contextual framework. Additionally, the English term was not immediately self-evident to everyone and required some explanation.

When asked, director Regin revealed that resilience had not been a topic of consideration until it was brought up in our discussions at the beginning of my internship. Despite this, all respondents described characteristics and aspects that align with the definitions found in the literature I've examined. According to Frigotto (et al. 2022), resilience represents the ability to learn, adapt and change in a process, to achieve stability within the functioning of a social entity. In the interviews, resilience was seen as a long-term process of assessing and identifying the environment and operations, as well as a continuous adaptation, "floating through change." The qualities of persistence and sustainability were also highlighted in many responses, described through phrases such as "keeping the nerve" and "believing in something."

Furthermore, a strong sense of meaning and consistency emerged as key aspects, closely linked to ongoing dialogue and communication with the surrounding environment. The responses highlighted an underlying ideology of resilience as a process of change unfolding over time, which is described in the literature through the concept of temporality.

### **4.1.2. Purpose & Role in the Field**

Art Music Denmark is one of the four genre organizations within the Danish music sector, representing classical music, contemporary music, and sound art. Like the other Danish genre organizations, its primary role is to serve as a supporting factor for professionals in Denmark's art music field, fulfilling the mission in various ways. These

organizations are mainly state funded and thus operate in a close collaboration with it. The interviewees also emphasized, that their values, goals, and activities align with broader industry guidelines while maintaining strong internal expertise and consistency. This enables them to operate effectively in a marginal, highly creative, and diverse field.

Interviews described Art Music Denmark's distinctive role as a network-based, accessible and widely available partner sharing knowledge, providing resources, creating and strengthening both new and existing networks within the field nationally and internationally, and serving as a unifying link between sectors. Additionally, it acts as a collective voice and advocate for the field in political contexts. Through concrete actions such as offering residencies, collecting data, organizing open calls, and facilitating a variety of activities, including workshops and projects, AMDK provides tailored consultation and support to individual professionals, adapting to specific situations and needs. Its mission is to foster stability and continuity for those working in the field, improving working conditions and opportunities for continuous artistic innovations. However, AMDK characterizes itself as a "silent partner" and catalyst – providing resources for new initiatives and projects while allowing them to develop organically and evolve in their own direction.

Pinheiro et al. (2022, p. 252) emphasize the importance of strong agency in the transformation of social values and societal structures, while I see also important cautioning that such processes require critical awareness of whose values are promoted and whose interests guide change. Regarding their awareness of diverse roles and ecosystems, AMDK is able to stay informed and gather insights from various actors, thus constructing a comprehensive picture of the most pressing problems to be addressed. It was also emphasized, that they do not participate in collaborations or activities where stakeholders would oppose or compete with one another. In the interviews, it was mentioned that the problems they tackle are complex and challenging, often requiring tools or resources that other entities may lack. Their role, therefore, is to identify the methods for initiating problem-solving by utilizing their networks, expertise, and organizational capabilities. In strategic planning, the focus is on identifying the most significant broader issues and topics in the field in relation to their existing resources and possibilities.

In organizational research, resilience is not understood merely as recovery, but as a continuous process of learning, adaptation, and change ('learning to learn'), which is

constructed through relationships between actors and embedded in everyday practices, manifesting as a ‘social fabric’ (Pineiro et al., 2022). When comparing this conceptualization of resilience to AMDK, it appears as a relatively inherent logic of operation embedded in its practices. From this perspective, resilience is interpreted holistically as a guiding principle of action rather than as a single organizational attribute. It emerges as a processual capacity, manifested through continuous adaptation in relation to its operating environment.

### **4.1.3. Structure**

The organization, which operates privately but in close collaboration with and funded by the state, consists of a musical committee and a board that provide stability and strong guidelines for the organization's activities, and the staff/office consisting of six people. As also noted in the literature, while stable funding and clear structures provide the conditions for long-term and comprehensive planning, organizations are simultaneously bound by numerous obligations and established practices that shape their operations (Pineiro et al., 2022). In the case of AMDK, the board is responsible for the overall direction of the organization, after which responsibility for implementation is transferred to the office, which determines the specific methods for carrying out the strategy and achieving the set goals (with the ‘office’ referring to AMDK staff interviewed in this study). In this sense, they operate in a manner similar to private sector organizations, allowing for greater flexibility and a capacity to adapt more rapidly. The organization operates network-based, which means that the strategy and objectives are formed with the perspectives of various stakeholders in mind. A result of collaboration with the board, the state, other genre organizations, and field actors, the administrative side is seen as highly complex, requiring continuous evaluation of structures and operations through a strong inter-sectoral dialogue.

According to the interviews, without sufficient state funding, the activities would be considered impossible. However, it became clear that the amount of funding does not reflect the actual existing need for the operations within the field, which manifests as a lack of personnel resources. These limited resources also significantly impact the organization’s ability to address specific issues within the sector. They continuously aim

to be aware of and identify recurring problems, which then form a "pattern," allowing the effectiveness of their actions to be targeted at areas deemed most essential from the sector's perspective.

Pinheiro et al. (2022) emphasize, the importance of trust and shared understandings of problems, while leaders play a critical role in enabling growth strategies, supporting employees, and managing resources. Also in the interviews, leadership and shared decision-making based on trust were seen as encouraging and positively influencing work outcomes. Despite the traditional institutional structure (board, music committee, director, etc.), each interviewee strongly emphasized the organization's flat and holistic hierarchy, decision-making process, and shared responsibility, which were seen as key factors behind the diversity and quality of the work. The leader's key characteristics were seen as open-mindedness and entrepreneurial innovation, which were conveyed to employees through the equitable sharing of information and responsibility, thus positively affecting work outcomes.

To make this possible, trust was mentioned as the key element in every interview response. With trust, employees felt they could carry out their work independently and in a way that suited them, within the framework of existing consistencies (strategy and values). Strong trust was also seen to provide a sense of security, which in turn encouraged creativity and risk-taking, as mistakes were not viewed as failures but as opportunities for learning, and multiple pathways to results were recognized. Even though a need for more motivating feedback was mentioned.

Trust was also seen as important from the perspective of open communication, enriching information sharing and, therefore, the quality of operations. However, Director Petersen emphasized that no decisions are ever made by a single person; rather, matters and issues are assessed, and final decisions are always made collectively. Additionally, Petersen stressed that this is not a matter of blind trust, but trust built upon existing rules, the established "hierarchy", and agreements that have been made. To enable this, key elements were seen as everyone's high-level expertise, a unified awareness and understanding of the operational guidelines and strategy, as well as mutual dynamics and the aim to engage in fruitful, open-minded, and constructive discussions. The strength of the organization was seen not only in internal trust but also in external trust earned from industry stakeholders regarding their expertise and the

purpose of their work. This was seen as having a significant impact on achieving both their own and the field's common goals.

#### **4.1.4. Practice & working methods**

Based on the interviews, working methods and practices were also seen as internal elements that strengthen resilience. Both in my initial exploration of their strategy and as confirmed by the interviews, Art Music Denmark's strategy is based on themes rather than individual, defined actions. This allows their activities to be directed towards specific areas of the field, or actors, such as large or small organizations. From the perspective of strategy implementation, methods such as "trust as a strategy" and "structure as a method" emerged. The theme-based strategy, with trust-based freedom and creativity being key methods for successful implementation, was defined as the approach that allows for thinking and assessing the most suitable form of activity on a case-by-case basis. This can be seen as increasing opportunities to think outside the box and address the various emerging "challenges" or adversity, while still containing the strategy within the framework of the defined themes.

In the interviews, decision-making and problem presentation were seen as collective processes, based on continuous evaluation and balancing between strategy and flexibility. AMDK's activities are project-based and particularly characterized by the initiation of initiatives (not only the statement "we did this"), which means that its operations are at different stages and in a constant state of change. Likewise, the diversity of activities requires the organization to be flexible and prepared to respond to changing needs and environmental shifts that demand renewal.

In addition, the topics and cases addressed come from outside the organization through active field interaction, but they also deliberately strive to identify areas for development and recognize new needs by following global trends (discussions and phenomena) and maintaining loose ties within the ecosystem. It was also mentioned that the administratively complex structure, including public funding, and the resulting requirements, have also been seen as challenges. Interviewees identified development needs in the activities regarding better evaluation and measurement of results, clearer objectives and more coordinated operations, as well as improved dialogue with

the state on funding allocation and clarification of project priorities. The role of state was also seen improving slowly based on their bureaucracy and compared to the needed development.

In relation to the number of contagious topics, the demands for productivity and the pressure to deliver increase and tend to fall, to some extent, on the shoulders of individual employees. As highlighted by Pinheiro et al. (2022), smaller organizations are able to adjust roles and make rapid changes even in the short term, which may come at the expense of organization and planning, with responsibility and workload potentially falling on individual employees. In this context, flexibility to invest one's own resources and the possibility for independent decision-making, both from the perspective of operational methods and the multidimensional nature of the work is essential.

In the interviews, it was experienced important to have a respect and trust to have a peace of mind to do the work and follow own interest and vision, as well as space for creativity and analyses. That was also reflected to the possibility "*to get the ball rolling pretty quickly*". Despite of this, the re-evaluation of working methods is still made relatively, and the topics of interest for genre neutral projects and research come from following the way the field works, not another way around. However, even trust was again seen as smoothing out the processes, too much independency was found also slowing the process to updating common internal tools and a need for more long-time thinking situations were mentioned.

When asked about practical working methods from the perspective of resilience, the interviews highlighted "Monday meetings," where current events and topics are discussed face-to-face situation with enough time, and within the whole office. From the employees' perspective, the opportunity to share information, problem presentation and joint evaluation of topics and issues at the table were considered particularly important. The meetings, supported by trust and open-mindedness, provided a space for continuous feedback between colleagues (including questioning and critical perspectives), for sharing responsibility, for getting support, and for increasing personal comfort and learning. Additionally, a new form of pair work was seen as a positive addition to enhance the organization's resilience: employees would be paired according to genre areas to improve information sharing and discussion, ensuring that no knowledge is solely dependent on one person, for example in the event of setbacks.

As a counterbalance to the otherwise independent nature of the work, flexible working hours and the organization's opportunities for travelling and participating in local and international events ("freedom to experiment") were seen as significant means both during the processes and in achieving sufficient outcomes. Many of the employees worked part-time weeks and possibly had other jobs alongside this work. However, weekly flexibility made it possible to plan the use of time, prioritize tasks, and use working hours efficiently. This was certainly also influenced by the employees' diverse and cross-disciplinary backgrounds, self-management skills, and entrepreneurial approach to work. Flexibility and financial resources for "room to maneuver" were especially seen as enhancing personal creativity, inspiration and motivation, as well as strengthening the sense of the meaningfulness of one's work also when being in the field (promotion, networking, evaluation, and recognition).

Following the nature and character of AMDK as an organization, in addition to consulting and gathering information in the field, they are actively gathering new and utilizing existing data, doing research and publishing for future discussions. That could be seen as stabilizing characteristic in managing information in temporal dimensions. Based on theory this reflects to the idea of having absorptive and adaptive resilience, where transformative resilience is more difficult to approach when initiating new projects. After doing the background research, analysis, creativity and innovativeness have a part in planning the next steps in process. In the interview, the data coordinator mentioned the inspiration coming often also from the rest of the businesses. He noted its not a usual way to operate within the funded music industries but something interesting to discover and way to think outside of the box. Also, it was recognized, that overall development needs visibility (publishing, marketing and communication), where increasing digitalization plays a big role, but is still challenging especially in the art music industry, what comes to the lack of criticism and media coverage.

#### **4.1.5. Identity and behavior**

As noted earlier, the literature highlights the significant role of identity in research on organizational resilience. As discussed by Geschwind et al. (2022), and drawing on Gioia

(2000) and Stensaker (2015), identity formation is often understood as a social construction shaped through interpretive processes, the negotiation of interests, and social interaction. As touched upon in the previous section, the high level of professional competence, diverse backgrounds, and broad yet converging interests of AMDK's employees simultaneously build stability, flexibility, and freedom to work and interpret the field from a comprehensive perspective. Together, employees' identities – including forms of multi-identity (“wearing many hats”) – were seen as enabling mutual understanding and the formation of diverse perspectives also at the organizational level.

The interviews also highlighted the entrepreneurial spirit of the arts field, along with the ability to recognize opportunities and act with openness, as unifying factors that support the development of shared resilience at the level of behavior. Awareness of the continuously changing environment, and a shared understanding that objectives should guide the adaptation of practices to fit this environment (rather than the reverse), were widely recognized. When discussing change, identity was nevertheless perceived as relatively stable despite multiple roles, while curiosity and openness were seen as its defining characteristics. Petersen illustrated this with the example that “changing into a new T-shirt does not change you, but it changes the environment.”

Both the literature and the empirical data strongly suggest that organizational resilience is closely intertwined with identity and organizational behavior. Previous research emphasizes that resilience is not merely a structural or strategic attribute, but becomes visible at the level of behavior – through how an organization responds to uncertainty, interprets change, and acts in relation to its environment (Pineiro et al., 2022). Similarly, Hamel and Välikangas (2003) highlight the behavioral capacity to recognize positive aspects in adverse situations, make sense of challenging circumstances, restore confidence, and identify opportunities that enable forward movement.

Crucially, such behavior is grounded in organizational identity, which defines the shared values, norms, and practices guiding action. These deeper meaning structures also include recruitment practices, expectations regarding individual contributions, and attitudes toward failure. From this perspective, resilience can be understood as a “DNA-level” phenomenon, where change occurs as part of the organization's core essence and way of operating, rather than as a series of isolated, project-based interventions. The data indicates that key characteristics of AMDK's identity and behavior are built upon a

mindset grounded in trust, openness, and curiosity. The multi-identities emerging from employees' diverse backgrounds and competencies support a broad understanding of the field and facilitate both knowledge acquisition and sharing. Likewise, an entrepreneurial attitude, openness to new solutions, and the ability to perceive challenges as opportunities and new pathways in the middle of change emerge as factors strengthening resilience. At the same time, awareness of the constantly evolving operating environment guides action such that practices are adapted to environmental demands, rather than the other way around.

If identity and behavior are understood as the core of resilience, they can also be seen as largely defining the thresholds discussed in the literature, which regulate the sustainability of action. As noted by Pinheiro et al. (2022), these thresholds are not fixed but can shift over time through learning. Considering AMDK's high level of (transformative) resilience, this idea can be related to Petersen's T-shirt example – “changing into a new T-shirt does not change you, but it changes the environment” – illustrating the relationship between identity and change. In this sense, continuous renewal does not require abandoning identity, but rather builds upon it.

At the same time, public organizations often exhibit strong outward-facing identities (or brands) while engaging with a wide range of internal and external actors. This complexity may necessitate the adoption of multiple or hybrid identities that function differently across contexts, raising questions about the boundaries between internal identity and externally oriented identity, and about when and how these boundaries shift. Ultimately, this is closely linked to the nature of the organization's activities and structures, and to whether resilience manifests in more adaptive or transformative forms.

## **4.2. Relational Dimensions of Resilience – Collaboration as a Mechanism of Change**

Through three broad questions, I sought to gain an understanding of the interviewees' views and examples of how AMDK monitors societal change and responds within a changing operating environment, what kinds of impacts diverse forms of collaboration have on its activities and the achievement of its objectives, and conversely, what kinds of

potential change effects AMDK may have on its operating environment in order to achieve goals aligned with its purpose. The questions generated in-depth and open discussion, and in the responses, the effects of multidisciplinary collaboration on achieving AMDK's objectives and its impact on the operating environment were closely intertwined. This was influenced by its distinctive role and the core of its activities, which are fundamentally based on continuous dialogue with its operating environment and on acting to facilitate change.

Because the impacts sought by the question are encountered through practice from a highly holistic perspective, they were challenging to delineate. Nevertheless, several clear themes emerged in the discussions: challenges related to measuring impact and defining outcomes, different forms and dynamics of collaboration and the importance of networks, the relationship between change and identity, as well as notions of positive “vibes” and “waves.”

Through the discussions conducted in the interviews, as mentioned earlier, AMDK was emphasized as a support organization for the music sector (rather than one that competes with other organizations), whose role is to remain continuously aware of and responsive to developments and changes in society and its operating environment while engaging in multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral cooperation. Thus, it's clear that AMDK as an organization is not directly comparable to other art music organizations in terms of its purpose. However, its core functions also include the ability to remain adaptive and flexible, to move toward the unknown and tolerate the uncertainty this entails, to seek information and tools for problem-solving, and to assess potential change from the perspective of the music field. Based on the interviews, structures and practices appeared primarily as factors that create stability for core operations, whereas characteristics related to organizational identity and behavior were seen as strong drivers of change. These were viewed as facilitating and enabling the realization of the organization's core purpose within its operating environment.

In the light of a stable financial foundation, a strong internal organizational identity (for example, professionalism and education, passion for the field, diverse backgrounds, multidisciplinary, and traits of individual-level resilience), and its organizational purpose, AMDK can be perceived as an active identifier of its environment and a responsive actor within it. Through previously identified operational and instrumental practices and tools, as well as a combination of hard and soft skills (such as

collaboration, consultation, research and data collection, and field-based observation), AMDK maintains a presence in the field where access to information from multiple perspectives is possible. However, filtering and processing this information requires a high level of organizational resilience. In reflecting on this, supporting characteristics were identified, including a willingness and alertness toward organizational structural change, the organization's specialized expertise across different music genres, individuals' attitudes toward viewing change as an opportunity, and shared values and understandings regarding how activities should be carried out.

AMDK has undergone organizational change before, and both structural and personnel changes have been implemented to respond more effectively to the needs of the field and its prevailing characteristics at the time. One way of operating as an actor within the music sector has been to function as an organization representing sound art, contemporary music, and classical music – fields that today increasingly intersect. The growing diversity of the field is reflected, for example, in more multidisciplinary modes of operation, increasing competition for funding, audiences, and venues, as well as in festival programming, where it appears as both new challenges and opportunities.

The interviews also highlighted an example of growing interest in multi-aesthetic approaches within the field of art music. Through the diversity of genres and the varied backgrounds of their representatives, the organization has been enriched with new forms of expertise and perspectives, strengthening its position as an actor both within and between genres in monitoring and responding to developments in the field. Recognizing differences and appropriately targeting activities were seen as important, as was understanding the tensions between them to find a necessary balance – as Petersen noted, “Classical music isn't something that exists in a vacuum separate from the other genres that we work with”. At the same time, a broad and integrative perspective was viewed as supporting planning, prioritization, and creativity in identifying new kinds of solutions.

In responding to a rapidly changing field, the most important factors were seen at both the individual and organizational levels as a particular mindset – a constant orientation toward the future, an understanding of the continuity of change, and experiencing change as a positive “challenge” and opportunity, or as “being ahead of yourself.” As noted earlier, continuous, practice-based exploration of the field, communication with actors, the further dissemination of knowledge, and learning in the

process were viewed as among the most effective tools for both staying up to date and lowering the thresholds between different operating environments.

Here, individual-level openness, curiosity, social skills, and the courage to go out and experience, to listen, and to ask questions were emphasized. However, limited resources for background work – such as extended reflection sessions and advance planning – were identified as challenges. Multidisciplinary and cross-actor collaboration was also seen as highly complex, and the interviews indicated that it requires a great deal of knowledge to cover even a portion of the existing issues. Consequently, many field visits are often connected to already existing projects and collaborations, which naturally create platforms for dialogue but may also have an effect by bringing together only certain people and topics.

#### **4.2.1. Challenges of Recognizing Impact**

In the interviews, it was noted that AMDK has very limited methodologies for measuring these so-called impacts. Also, when discussing impact, we were led to reflect on what such impacts or outcomes of activity might be, as the arts field itself carries a certain “promise” of producing something new and unexpected. In contrast to large institutions, AMDK doesn’t operate with milestones but instead, the nature of its work is to be innovative and creative, and to recognize and remain broadly aware of the field from a holistic perspective. Therefore, impacts were described as manifesting in many different forms and across multiple levels (such as information, modes of operation, practices, tools, and data).

However, AMDK’s essential role was seen primarily as supporting the existing field of activity and providing stability, which nonetheless requires moving toward the unknown to identify new solutions and address points of friction. The interviews also revealed that outcomes can be interpreted in many ways and from the perspectives of various actors’ intentions and needs, for example, creating awareness, building broader connections, or producing something visible such as a new ensemble or composition. At times, interviewees find themselves operating in a kind of blind spot – if they’re doing something beneficial without any concrete guarantee of impact. At the same time, development was seen occurring in a very organic manner.

#### **4.2.2. Power in Networks and Collaboration**

When operating in multidisciplinary networks within the field, continuous interaction and dialogue take place. According to the interviewees, at the core of their activities is the acquisition of diverse forms of knowledge – through verbal communication, written information and data, as well as practical examples and lived experiences. As we have noted, their task is to identify and respond to the operating environment, which also implies that the objectives of both AMDK and its networks should be aligned with one another. As Petersen commented, “hopefully our goals are not our own.” Because AMDK’s role in the field is more that of a catalyst, its primary purpose is not to manage or remain committed to projects from beginning to end over many years, but rather to initiate processes and set things in motion.

According to Padgett and Powell (2012), transformative resilience in cross-sectoral collaboration has also been referred to as ‘cooperative evolution’. In this context, collaborative structures function as the most central operational body and platform for AMDK’s activities. Networks have a significant influence on the potential scale of projects and on determining how long it is beneficial for AMDK to remain engaged in them. In this regard, AMDK appears as a distinct actor that does not have the same fundamental or existential need to commit to a project as many organizations operating in the same domain.

Project-based, multi-partner collaborations also enable projects to take shape and expand in different directions through the involvement of various actors, broadening the agenda so that it becomes relevant to an increasingly wide target audience. At the same time, partners enable projects to have a longer life cycle, rather than remaining pilot versions constrained by AMDK’s existing resources. The project-based nature of the work supports shared decision-making, team diversity, learning from others, and continuity over time (temporality), all of which contribute to enabling potential change. However, AMDK does not view itself as a guiding or directive force within the field, but rather as a platform for dialogue and support – providing tools and sharing knowledge so that artists and other actors can succeed in their projects as effectively as possible. This operational ideology aligns also with the curatorial approach, creating platforms that can

continue to evolve through their contributors, and from the perspective of organizational resilience it's closely linked to its behavior.

Not all knowledge and data accumulated from activities in the field or from AMDK's own operations are systematically archived as a "knowledge center through activities without storing knowledge" (always in a state of flux), rather, this knowledge is shared and put into practice through other means. From their perspective, this also supports the idea of remaining aware of and embedded in continuous movement. However, there are various approaches, aligned with their strategic orientation, to using and collecting existing knowledge in collaboration with different partners. Interviewees also emphasized, that the diversity of networks and the operating field also requires that collaborative projects establish clear, shared guidelines from the outset regarding what is being done and what the objectives are. This, in turn, excludes collaborations in which actors would primarily benefit commercially or through marketing. Instead, their aim is, for example, to exert broader influence by increasing knowledge and improving media representation by truthful new narratives – by challenging distorted preconceptions about marginal genres and encouraging audiences' curiosity to experience and be surprised.

Based on the interviews, networking events were seen as having significant potential for facilitating change. From AMDK's perspective, they are viewed as platforms to get to know others, enabling low-threshold discussion as well as more in-depth presentation and examination of ideas and topics, both cost-effective and efficient in terms of knowledge exchange among local and international actors alike. The exchange of knowledge and experiences that takes place in these settings was considered beneficial for participants both economically and in terms of competence development.

Collective and collegial events were also seen as having an encouraging effect on future operational conditions and ongoing communication, by creating low-threshold opportunities to participate without pressure or obligation, particularly from the perspective of artists. At the same time, it was emphasized, that even actors who compete with one another may share similar goals and challenges, making it easier to initiate dialogue around a common cause (for example, through delegate programs). The interviews also highlighted the importance of collective trust to participants to be willing both to receive and to share knowledge, that aligns with aspects of learning and a certain behavior. In this regard, it would also have been interesting to hear more about how the

creation of an environment and starting conditions to such dialogue can be achieved in the most effective way.

International institutional and project-level collaboration was also seen as having a significant impact on both the setting of operational objectives and achieving them. As one example, the interviewees highlighted the Nordic collaborative network STATUS, which focuses on supporting contemporary music and includes music organizations from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Its aims include knowledge sharing, comparative analysis of infrastructures, and exploring artistic and social developments within the genre (Status, 2025). As the Nordic countries operate within their respective cultural policy frameworks – which are nevertheless largely aligned with one another, looking beyond one’s own national context and maintaining interest in external perspectives were therefore seen as vital. In the context of globalization, I believe the greater scope and influence increase, the stronger the momentum and movement it can generate.

However, the interviews particularly emphasized a willingness to learn from others through the sharing of experiences and observations, while at the same time recognizing that not everything is directly comparable. Central aspects of this cooperation were identified as problem representation, comparing situations and challenges across different countries, as well as sparring and sharing approaches to overcoming common obstacles. Such forms of collaboration were perceived as strengthening the resilience of both the field itself and the organizations operating within it.

Forming a broader overall picture was also seen as supporting the articulation of a critical and constructive perspective at the political level. All collaboration and networks were understood as contributing to the shared ecosystem of the music sector and as demonstrating its strength and cohesion all the way to decision-makers. The more widely an issue reaches the awareness of different stakeholders, the more actors become interested in and committed to collective action and a shared sense of purpose. So, the sense of belonging comes evident. Interviewees described that AMDK’s role is to remain continuously aware and alert to movements within this environment, to identify points where and when responses are possible, and to generate, as it were, sufficient momentum from field actors to advance these initiatives.

Continuous dialogue and diversified approaches, as well as cooperation in external networks across disciplinary, sectoral and national boundaries, proved vital to support and develop the ecosystem in a fruitful way and on its own terms – in line with societal developments. Thus, AMDK’s resilience can be understood as a capacity to navigate and mobilize these relationships, positioning collaboration as a central mechanism of adaptation.

### **4.3. “Learning to Learn”, “Trust as a Strategy” and “Structure as a Method”**

Finally, I outline the key ideologies or approaches that emerged from the interview data as the most prominent internal factors of resilience when operating within a broader ecosystem in the context of change: ‘learning to learn’, ‘trust as a strategy’, ‘structure as a method’, and ‘mindset’.

#### **4.3.1. Trust as a Strategy**

A key finding emerging from the data is that change is closely linked to adversity. In this context, organizational resilience appears as the capacity to adapt and maintain internal stability in the face of challenges. However, the literature also emphasizes that environmental changes are often not based on known risks or uncertainties, but rather on fundamental unknowability (Knight, 1921; Frigotto et al., 2022, p. 8; Bhamra, 2016). In such conditions, resilience cannot primarily be built on control or predictability, but must instead rely on trust.

Pinheiro et al. (2022) likewise highlight that in complex contexts, trust and a shared understanding of problems are key factors in the construction of resilience. This also underscores the role of leadership in supporting growth-oriented strategies, managing resources, and developing employees. Similarly, Simon (1991) argues that clearly defined and shared roles help organizational members understand their responsibilities and support effective decision-making at the individual level. Based on

the data, trust also appears as a deliberate operating principle within AMDK, reflected in the interviewees' reference to "trust as a strategy." In many responses, trust and freedom emerged as central elements in implementing strategy from an individual perspective. This approach enables flexible, case-by-case evaluation of practices and supports the "thinking outside the box" mindset highlighted in the interviews, while broader thematic and strategic frameworks provide stability.

In a work environment characterized by unknowability and problem-solving, trust promotes innovation and encourages the questioning of established practices, as well as risk-taking – without guaranteeing the avoidance of failure. In this sense, trust also plays a central role in knowledge and learning, creating an environment that tolerates failure, enables reflection, and allows experiences to be transformed into future resilience. At the same time, the interviews pointed to the need to maintain a balance between trust and freedom: while trust distributes responsibility to individuals, there remains a need for shared responsibility and collective, long-term reflection.

Thus, the capacity to cope with uncertainty does not appear merely as reactive adaptation, but as an active and enabling logic of action, in which trust functions as a central strategy for building resilience.

#### **4.3.2. Structure as a Method**

Based on both the literature and the interview data, AMDK's resilience is primarily constructed through its practices, where organizational structure does not appear as static, but rather as an active tool for continuous adaptation. As Petersen describes in the interviews, this reflects the idea of "structure as a method," where strategy does not manifest as a predefined plan but as practice that evolves in interaction with the needs of the environment.

AMDK's operations are characterized by a flat hierarchy, shared responsibility, and a high level of autonomy grounded in expertise, all of which enable flexible decision-making and rapid responses to changing situations. At the same time, activities rely on extensive knowledge-sharing across networks, supporting continuous learning. Pinheiro et al. (2022) associate such practices with the "practical dimension" of resilience, where a key element is the organization's capacity to maintain broad awareness of its operating

environment while supporting learning and development in everyday practices. In this context, leadership appears primarily as an enabling function, supporting employees, providing space for development, and maintaining structures (stability) within which failures can be understood as part of a positive learning process.

The literature also emphasizes the challenge of balancing strategic and operational levels in the field (Farnsworth et al., 2021). Strategically, resilience is oriented toward long-term development and competitiveness, while operational resilience focuses on ensuring continuity (Jüttner & Maklan, 2011; Välikangas & Romme, 2012). In AMDK's case, these dimensions are intertwined, particularly in project-based work, where multiple initiatives proceed simultaneously at different stages and require constant prioritization and adaptation over time (temporality).

Based on the interview data, decision-making within AMDK appears as a collective and evaluative process, continuously balancing strategy and flexibility. Key enabling factors include a flat hierarchy and shared responsibility, which were seen to support both the quality and diversity of work. Trust-based leadership was also identified as a factor that facilitates workflows and improves outcomes. The interviews further highlighted how independent working practices signal respect and trust, directly contributing to motivation and a sense of meaningfulness. At the same time, responsibility extends beyond the organization itself, as genre-neutral projects and research topics emerge from the dynamics of the field rather than being imposed upon it.

This emphasis on collectivity and trust can be linked to a broader shift toward more decentralized forms of leadership, contrasting with traditional models where power and resources are concentrated among a few actors (Dromey & Haferkorn, 2018). It also aligns with resilience literature portraying organizations as flexible and innovative entities that diversify their structures by redistributing responsibilities and reshaping roles, thereby enhancing knowledge-sharing (Pinheiro et al., 2022). Such structural arrangements enable more flexible decision-making and more effective responses to change.

Decision-making can also be understood following the forementioned March's theory through the balance between exploration and exploitation (Frigotto et al. 2022), where organizations must simultaneously support experimentation, risk-taking, and innovation, while ensuring efficiency and continuity. In AMDK, this balance is reflected in shared decision-making practices, such as forming teams across areas of expertise and

maintaining multiple genre perspectives within the same organization. Given the breadth of the field, the organization must also maintain the capacity for rapid decision-making and flexible task allocation when needed. These dynamics resonate with ongoing discussions in the contemporary music field, where decentralized leadership, curatorial thinking, and thematic approaches have gained prominence as ways to connect artistic practices more meaningfully with society. At the same time, limited resources in relation to the number of emerging topics require continuous prioritization, enabling the organization to address broader and more widely relevant issues.

Although AMDK operates flexibly and relatively independently as a “private” organization, its structure also includes traditional elements such as a board and expert committee. This stable foundation provides continuity and strategic direction, supporting long-term planning. However, as a publicly funded organization, it is also subject to responsibilities and obligations related to cultural policy frameworks and field-level expectations. At the same time, the data indicates that public funding remains limited relative to the needs of the field, manifesting for instance in constraints on human resources.

Questions related to the adequacy of funding and operational capacity are also linked to broader discussions on the development of the sector, such as audience development, inclusion, and alternative funding models. The data suggests that AMDK responds to these challenges by continuously identifying recurring patterns and issues within the field, which can then be organized into broader thematic priorities. This requires the organization to balance multiple, and at times conflicting, expectations while adapting in different directions simultaneously. In this context, its values, objectives, and practices are partly aligned with broader policy frameworks, while maintaining strong internal expertise and coherence within its own operational thresholds.

The interviews also emphasized the perspective to rather than changing the organization itself, it may be possible to influence and reshape the surrounding environment. This involves what was described as “good vibes and waves” – shared enthusiasm and momentum. By building trust, lowering barriers, and facilitating knowledge-sharing and collective action, the organization can create conditions for synergy, leading to new pathways, shared learning, and broader change.

Thus, AMDK’s practices build resilience by combining structural stability with operational flexibility, structure does not constrain action but serves as a platform through

which the organization continuously learns, adapts, and renews itself in relation to its environment. Rather than dismantling power structures, AMDK redistributes and reorganizes them through its intermediary role.

At the same time, the data highlights areas for development at the individual level, including delays caused by excessive autonomy (as not all tasks can be shared), the need for clearer objectives, and improved methods for evaluating and measuring outcomes. As the literature suggests, resilience inherently involves tensions between stability and change. In AMDK's case, these tensions could be seen between freedom and coordination, flexibility and clarity, and exploration and efficiency. In this light, despite its high level of resilience, there remains room for development in balancing between strategic and operational levels.

#### **4.3.3. Do I have to change my T-shirt and would I?**

*Stability in something that is always changing. I think... From what we've talked about, my answer is identity. You can change your T-shirt, you can be a different person in many ways — but as long as you stay true to yourself, you're still you. – Regin Petersen*

“Good vibes” may sound somewhat lighthearted, but the interviews also demonstrated that they can be more powerful drivers for moving things forward than might be assumed. Within theories of organizational resilience, what resonated most strongly with me in my role as a researcher, was the significance of organizational identity and behavior as elements of willingness to change and the capacity to remain relevant. As Petersen noted in the interview, change does not negate an underlying level of stability (identity), even if elements built upon it evolve.

Making impact can be about good vibes and waves – shared enthusiasm. Through knowledge sharing, collective action, and shared experiences, synergy can be created, leading to the emergence of new shared pathways and ways of thinking, learning something new, and ultimately fostering change in a holistic sense. Such vibes can

originate simply from human encounters – bringing people together and introducing them to one another which immediately helps create an open environment and lowers the threshold for discussion. It was also recognized that at times it can be challenging to address certain issues or objectives directly, which requires narrative resources: ways of communicating matters truthfully through storytelling and positive experiences, where mutual understanding enables reciprocity and openness.

At the same time, it is important to remain aware of AMDK's role in the field as a neutral actor, although one with a specific multidisciplinary identity and perspective. Each organization may be striving toward similar goals, which inevitably gives rise to tensions and opposing views regarding desired directions. However, when organizational resilience is high, navigating these complexities becomes easier and encourages innovative solutions. In this way, the field can remain more flexible and forward-looking – an outcome I see as far preferable to expending energy on highlighting conflicts or digging one's own trench.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine, through a case study approach, how organizational resilience emerges and operates in an art music intermediary organization within a changing societal and networked environment. The findings suggest that, in the case of Art Music Denmark (AMDK), resilience does not manifest as a single organizational attribute, but rather as an ongoing process grounded in continuous learning. It appears as a relational capacity, constructed within networks and everyday practices, which is closely linked to its role as an intermediary organization. The study also demonstrates that resilience is not formed solely through reactive responses, but instead, it emerges as a proactive and temporally embedded capacity that enables ongoing alignment with the ecosystem, its multiple actors, and evolving objectives. In this sense, resilience can be understood as a form of embedded practice or “social fabric,” rather than a distinct organizational capability.

### **How is resilience constructed in practice within AMDK through organizational elements, strategies, and ways of working?**

The first sub-question demonstrated that resilience is internally constructed through the dynamic interaction of trust, structure, and identity. Instead of clearly defined strategies, key ideologies supporting resilience emerged, such as ‘trust as a strategy’ and ‘structure as a method.’

In this context, trust functions as a strategic foundation that encourages innovation, enables risk-taking, and supports learning in the face of adversity. This reflects a high level of resilience, as the organization is able to tolerate uncertainty and actively engage with the unknown. Structure, in turn, is not perceived as static, but as a flexible tool for adapting to changing situations and environment. A flat hierarchy and autonomy enable flexibility and rapid responses, while also supporting employee motivation.

At the same time, organizational identity was identified as a key source of stability. However, tensions emerged between different operational dimensions, such as freedom and coordination, as well as autonomy and efficiency. These tensions reflect the core logic of resilience as a continuous balancing act between stability and change.

**How is AMDK's resilience shaped through its relationships with the surrounding environment, including cultural policy, networks, and cross-sector collaboration?**

The second sub-question showed that resilience is strongly shaped by, and connected to the organization's environment. As a publicly funded organization, AMDK's activities are influenced by cultural policy frameworks, funding structures, and expectations from the broader field. At the same time, its role as an intermediary actor positions it as a mediator and catalyst, requiring continuous awareness of developments across the field. In this context, networks function both as sources of knowledge and as key enablers of action. Through maintaining a broad perspective and engaging in ongoing dialogue, AMDK is able to remain responsive and adapt to the diverse and evolving needs of its environment.

**How does resilience manifest in and through collaboration, and to what extent does it enable broader learning and systemic change within the art music field?**

The third sub-question revealed that resilience manifests primarily through collaboration, enabling collective learning and gradual systemic change. In this context, collaboration is not only a tool, but functions as an infrastructure through which resilience is enacted. Networks were understood as systems of learning, where AMDK does not act as a controlling authority, but rather as an initiator and enabler of processes.

The actual impacts were perceived as indirect and difficult to measure. Instead of producing immediate or clearly defined outcomes, change appeared as an organic process aligned with both organizational practices and broader societal developments. In addition, "good vibes" were identified as a soft yet powerful mechanism – shared enthusiasm and trust, that facilitates collaboration and may contribute to deeper, systemic change over time.

Based on the case of Art Music Denmark, resilience does not appear primarily as crisis management, but rather as a continuous process of navigation within a complex and evolving environment. It emerges as a relational and processual capacity, embedded in

what can be described as a ‘social fabric’ of interactions, practices, and shared understandings. In this sense, resilience is closely linked to curatorial ways of working and functions as a form of relational infrastructure that enables coordination, knowledge exchange, and the emergence of new initiatives across the field. Rather than being confined to the internal characteristics of a single organization, resilience extends beyond organizational boundaries and manifests as a field-level phenomenon, co-constructed through networks, collaboration, and ongoing interaction with the surrounding environment.

### **Practical Implications**

This study provides insights into the functioning of contemporary art music organizations operating within complex and evolving ecosystems. The findings are particularly relevant for cultural policy-makers, art organizations, and network-based actors working within the field, as well as individual actors.

The results suggest that organizational resilience is not strengthened through increased control, but rather through the cultivation of trust, the support of networks, and the creation of stable conditions that allow for uncertainty. Instead of rigid structures and predefined solutions, resilience is fostered by enabling flexibility, continuous dialogue, and experimentation. For cultural policy, this highlights the importance of funding models and governance structures that support long-term stability while allowing room for adaptive and collaborative practices. For organizations and network actors, the findings emphasize the value of relational approaches, shared learning, and openness to emergent processes as key elements in navigating change and fostering sustainable development within the field.

### **Limitations**

As a single case study, the findings are based on a unique organizational context and are therefore not directly generalizable or comparable to other organizations. Second, the empirical data is based on interviews, which reflect the perspectives and experiences of the participants rather than objective measurements. In addition, the assessment of

impacts presents a challenge, as the effects of the organization's activities are often indirect, difficult to measure, and largely based on subjective experiences.

### **Future Research**

This study identified several topics for future research. Comparative studies across organizations in different artistic fields could provide deeper insight and foster discussion on how resilience manifests in varying institutional and cultural contexts. The role of networks in enabling systemic change also requires further investigation, particularly from the simultaneous perspectives of multiple actors and in relation to collaborative and cross-sectoral practices. Finally, more in-depth research on resilience from the perspectives of leadership, strategic thinking, and organizational structures could deepen understanding of change processes and serve as a tool for internal development within individual organizations.

### **Finally**

This research aimed to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of resilience in an art music organization. Connecting ideas, artists, disciplines, funding structures, and organizations has become increasingly valuable in today's cultural landscape. As the ecosystem grows more complex, shifting values, meaning, and the growing prominence of identity-related questions play an increasingly significant role. In contemporary society, resilience extends beyond financial resources or institutional power; it is grounded in a communal and entrepreneurial mindset, a strong and coherent identity and continuous learning, as well as a shared belief in the future.

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## Appendix

Semi-structured interview guide:

### **How is resilience constructed internally in practice within AMDK through organizational processes, strategies, and ways of working?**

1. In your opinion, what is resilience? Have you previously considered the resilience of AMDK?
2. Could you describe your role, the environment and way of working in an organization and how would you position yourself in it?
3. What internal factors and elements within the organization enable you to carry out your work tasks and goals in the best possible way? What inhibits?

### **How is AMDK's resilience shaped and adapted by influences of the surrounding environment, including cultural policy, networks and cross-sector collaboration?**

4. How would you describe AMDK as an actor in the field of art music (role, mission, aim)? / How does AMDK operate to achieve its goals?
5. What factors or characteristics do you see enabling AMDK's operations as described?
6. How would you describe AMDK in facing new or unexpected situations?

### **How does resilience manifest in and through collaboration, and to what extent does it enable broader learning and systemic change within the art music field?**

7. How do you see AMDK reacting to changes in the operating environment and society? Example?
8. Could you describe the impacts of collaboration among various actors and sector on AMDK's ability to achieve its goals?
9. What impacts do you see AMDK having on its operating environment to achieve its goals / in terms of fulfilling its purpose in the better way? How does this manifest / come into practice? Example?