

ABSTRACT

Oliver Ibert and Suntje Schmidt, IRS Erkner/Berlin and Freie Universität Berlin

Experiencing uncertainty in the experience economy: How musical actors perceive their labour market vulnerability and resilience

The proposed paper takes a social-constructive approach to the terms vulnerability and resilience in order to shed more light on one “dark side” of the experience economy - the volatile labour markets for those who are expected to produce experiences. In the paper, vulnerability and resilience are understood as notions with which practitioners analyse origins of insecurity and identify resources that provide security under uncertain circumstances. The paper builds on qualitative interview data with musical actors and traces how they position themselves on the labour markets. Musical actors find themselves on a shrinking, segmented, highly competitive and mobile labour market. The institutional safeguards provided by the German welfare state do not apply to them as they rest on assumptions about labour relations that are far away from their daily reality. Thus, musical actors feel themselves exposed to institutional as well as territorial mismatches. While the market and the institutional context hardly offer any chance for strategies to increase resilience, musical actors concentrate their efforts on those dimensions which they regard as being more accessible. They spread risks by constructing multiple identities from their bodies, experiences and talents with which they address distinct segments of the labour market. Moreover, they employ their personal networks to further attenuate some of the competitive mechanisms. From a spatial viewpoint, these practices of increasing resilience in the labour market constitute volatile, multi-local activity spaces that are most effectively used in combination with a comparably stable home base.

The main contributions to the workshop themes are:

- 1.) The musical industry occupies the intersection of creative economy and experience economy as it produces creative outcomes and at the same time has developed effective formats to enact experiences. It might thus act as a good example to illuminate the relationship between the concepts of creative/culture economy and experience economy.
- 2.) The labour market practices of musical actors reflect the fact that the production/consumption of experiences usually takes place in *uno acto* situations that seem to emphasize the local character of the experience economy. At the same time these practices also reveal that the underlying work relations and strategies to improve labour market resilience are highly mobile and encompass a multitude of localities.