Old topics, old approaches?   'Reception' in television studies and music studies

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Abstract:
The question of reception is closely linked to the history and the roots of audience studies. But what is 'reception' and what exactly does it mean? As audience studies have developed from a contested novelty to a now established academic field, what do we do with a concept that defined our interests in the past and may now be too wide or even obsolete? This article deals with this issue by mapping how the concept of reception was conceptualized and researched in audience studies of the past ten years, with a focus on studies of music and studies of television. We find that in music, strong focus remains on music reception in the context of performances and events, and this lies in contrast to a small number of studies which instead focus on a framework of music in ordinary life and the audiences' contextual localities. Concerning reception of television, much of the scholarship starts from the cultural studies tradition and looks at television viewing as a means to construct identities. Discussing these findings, we inquire whether the hybridization of media also implies a hybridization of research traditions and methodologies, and what consequences it has for the balance between textual, production and audience approaches.

Key words: reception, television studies, popular music studies, audience

Introduction[1]
The question of reception is closely linked to the history and roots of audience studies. Framing reception as the ways media have been *received* suggests a one-dimensional

approach to production and consumption, nearing the hypodermic needle model of media influence. However, neither early audience studies, stemming from communication research in the US nor the later approaches, stemming from British cultural and literary tradition, were ever that simplistic. Even though the role of the audiences and the power invested in them varied across decades of research, reception, from the very beginning, meant more than just *receiving*.

Through an investigation of audience reception, media scholars have gained a more nuanced understanding of power and modes of interpretation. We have seen that there is not a single audience but audiences, plural and heterogeneous, and that meanings are not bound to a text, but rather emerge through the contextual interaction of audiences with texts. Livingstone (1998) sees the evolution of scholarly interest in reception as stemming from as much as six research trajectories. Five of them (Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, uses and gratifications theory, resistance/active audience, poststructuralism/reader-response theory, feminist approaches) converged and incorporated into the audience research canon in the 1980s, while the 'ethnographic turn', Livingstone's sixth trajectory, shifted some of the attention towards the contextual, marking a move to the everyday experience of the media. In recent research, the concept of reception appears in various contexts and seems to adapt itself to all those different trajectories and roots of modern audience studies.

But what, then, is 'reception' and what exactly does it mean? One of the challenges in answering such questions is the interdisciplinarity of media and audience studies. The issue of 'reception' encompasses a rich variety of areas and fields, including audience studies, sociology, cultural or area studies, often defined in medium- or platform-specific terms: television studies, internet studies, radio studies and so on. As a result, many reception studies, despite sharing an audience studies element, vary significantly in aims, approaches and frameworks. More often than not, those studies do not explicitly define their conceptualisations of reception, but rather treat the concept as a given. Still, as audience studies have developed from a contested novelty to a now established academic field, what do we do with a concept that defined our interests in the past, and may now be, perhaps, too wide, or even obsolete? To make the first step in answering this question, we map how the concept of reception has been used, conceptualized (or not) and researched in audience studies of television and music of the past ten years.

To achieve this, we collected and reviewed text-centric approaches to audiences in the academic literature of the past ten years. Apart from the time frame, the selection was the result of assembling audience studies that met the following conditions. First, the work had to be situated within the field of critical media and social sciences and cultural studies, as we were interested in approaches that considered audiences as complex, diverse and active. Second, the work had to be substantially about the relation between texts and audiences. To identify our corpus we worked with relevant key words to guide our search for articles in the databases of Web of Science, EBSCO, Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis and Sage. After collecting the articles, we identified, for each article, its key theoretical

framework and concepts, its research goals and methods as well as its main findings. Re-reading the data, we were noting and dynamically discussing emerging themes and (mostly inductively, but also informed by earlier audience research literature), we became gradually drawn to the patterns presented in this article. In the last stage, having decided to focus our article on reception of television and music, we trimmed our database to include only those media (although our definitions for that were broad).

An immediate result coming out of our exercise is the sheer volume of sources gathered. Our collection of references after our first stage had 960 entries pertaining to textual approaches in audience studies. Out of the 960, we further identified (in two stages) 149 articles that were deemed explicitly relevant to the theme of reception. This is a considerable amount, and one that suggests that the text-centric approach is still present and influential in media studies of audiences. At the same time, this is a result that feels counterintuitive to the recent developments in the field in which scholars have been focusing on media environments rather than texts, be it through the 'practice turn' (Couldry, 2010) or the non-media-centric approach (Morley, 2009). We return to this discussion later in the article.

We will present and discuss our findings by dividing this article in two parts. First, we look at recent studies of television audiences to see whether and, if so, how the field has changed from the time when critical audience research tradition was being established and developed in the 1970s. We are interested in theoretical and methodological approaches in television studies of the last decade as well as in the range of topics considered. Second, we analyse recent research on music and sound audiences to investigate theoretical and methodological links and disconnections between music audience research and the more 'traditional' television audience research. Finally, we compare the two, looking at the various intersections of television and music audience studies as illuminating about a number of challenges for the field.

Reception in studies of television

Situating the field
The emergence of the field of television studies in the 1970s is intrinsically bound up with the establishment of British cultural studies and its engagement in rethinking communication processes. In using television as medium to illustrate his encoding/decoding model, Hall (1973/1980) started an academic tradition of studies that, first, took television seriously and, second, took audiences into account. Other work that tested and modified his model – such as Morley's (1980) empirical audience study into the audiences of *The Nationwide* – also qualified audience studies in general. By bringing in qualitative, ethnographic research methods such as focus group conversations, participatory observation and in-depth interviews, audience studies welcomed a new approach dubbed as new audience research (Gray, 1999).

This investment in actual television audiences has often been regarded as a significant difference from the adjacent field of film studies. Until the 1980s, most key authors within the field of film studies – informed by arts and humanities perspectives– tended to focus on the film text and to downplay or reduce the role of audiences (Jancovich & Faire, 2003; Meers, 2004). This contrasts with television scholars who predominantly had a background in social sciences and rather focused on the audiences in front of the television than on the television text itself. They, on the one hand, critiqued the textual deterministic approach of certain strands within film studies and, on the other, challenged the media effect paradigm that dominated mass communication research (Hermes & Reesink, 2011; Jancovich & Faire, 2003).

Yet, a unified approach to studying television audiences has not emerged. Its interdisciplinary character invites a wide range of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, resulting in studies that either look at how people use television in their everyday life contexts without taking the television content into account or, conversely, studies that solely deal with issues of reception of television texts (Livingstone, 2003). However, because of convergence and digitalization, the field of television studies itself has come under scrutiny, or, at least, is forced to rethink what its medium entails and how it can be studied. As stressed in the introduction, can reception still be studied if the concept of reception itself comes under pressure? Our research into contemporary reception studies however revealed that a substantial amount of studies deal with reception of television(-related) content. Watching and interpreting television remains a dominant trope within the field of television studies. Even more, the canonical theoretical frameworks dominate the way television reception is studied and interpreted. Nonetheless, this study also reveals that some new trends and alternative approaches do emerge. As such, we will discuss the state of the art in the study of television reception since 2005.

Theoretical assumptions

From its inception onwards, television studies has stressed the importance of studying actual audiences. Even though a few articles in our sample discuss audiences as hypothetical entities, most consider actual audiences as crucial in the investigation of reception. The scholars motivate their actual engagement with audiences by often quoting now evident arguments such as stressing that audiences are active in the process of making meaning (e.g., Collier et al., 2009) and that reception and participation cannot be understood by solely analyzing texts (e.g., Click et al., 2015).

Similarly, scholars rely on well-established frameworks to assess audiences. Notably, many (e.g., Ronsini, 2014; Van Damme & Biltereyst, 2013) are informed by Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model (1980) and du Gay and Hall's circuit of culture (1997). For instance, Acosta-Alzuru (2010) cites the latter framework as a means to study both the production and consumption of a Venezuelan telenovela *Cosita Rica*. She demonstrates how, for example, intended critiques that were represented in the storylines were not decoded as such by the interviewed audience members and revealed how they perceived

the telenovela as foremost a form of entertainment. Her work stressed that if one wanted to encode social critiques, one had to do it in a careful and thoughtful manner.

Yet, our sample also revealed the engagement of scholars to criticize and modify the audience research canon that emerged (cf. Livingstone, 1998). For instance, Müller and Hermes (2010) are cautious in implying that audience readings of popular culture text will always result in some form of cultural resistance. They stress that the implicit assumption that audiences' readings harbor the potential for ideological resistance blurs the distinction between common audience readings – which may consist of some form of detached societal critiques – and 'more politically relevant engagements such as the performance of cultural citizenship' (p. 194). The limitations of the canon also instigated Michelle (2009) to propose a new model – coined as the 'Composite Multi-dimensional Model' – to deal with the way audiences negotiate television. Drawing on past frameworks within audience studies, she places 'the audience – in all its diversity, with varying capacities and discursive competencies, and with the potential to draw on intra as well as extra textual knowledges – more firmly at the centre of analysis' (p. 163).

Another aspect that resurfaces is the tendency to look beyond the field of television studies. Even though already interdisciplinary, many authors within the field remain loyal to certain concepts and approaches. Hills (2008), for instance, proposes to look at film studies. He used the concept of 'dispersible texts' as a fruitful means to understand the particular television moments within shows that are considered affective for fans and audiences. Some other scholars go even further and stress the necessity to look for common ground with other paradigmatic approaches. Fernández Villanueva et al. (2011), for instance, tackle the sensitive topic of violence on television and stress the necessity to complement the research that demonstrates physiological differences and short-term effects with studies that deal with how these emotions are interpreted and dealt with, thus acknowledging cultural differences regarding the way emotions are constructed and interpreted.

Mapping topics and aims
Our inquiry further revealed a familiarity when enlisting the topics and aims of the articles in our sample. Because of the abundance of new television formats, genres and programs, scholars seize the opportunity to deal with audiences of new content in fairly downtrodden but reliable manners. For instance, De Bruin's (2010) analysis of how Dutch audience members interpret the crime drama is motivated as a research gap due to the little attention the genre has been given. Similarly, a popular complex and ambiguous television show such as the period drama series *Mad Men* has generated a significant amount of scholarly attention, dealing with the reception of its content (e.g., Agirre, 2014; Bourdage, 2014). Also, programs that generate significant fan practices have resulted in multiple studies focusing on different aspects related to fan reception and fan practices, as the studies on the fantasy show *Supernatural* illustrate (e.g., Felschow, 2010; Schmidt, 2010). We do underscore the trend of taking an interest in anti-fandom as well. Gray (2005), for instance, investigates practices of antifandom on an internet platform (i.e. Television

Without Pity) by reading discussions and postings in which users express their dislike or disappointment for particular shows or episodes. His work is intended to encourage other fan scholars to not only address the expressions of fandom but as well its counterparts as the latter are increasingly using the Internet to organize its expressions of resentment.

Besides dealing with reading practices, many television scholars throughout the history of the field (e.g., Jenkins, 1992; Morley, 1980) have focused on how audiences negotiate television texts in relation to their everyday lives. The current sample demonstrates this tendency in plenty of articles, which range from inquiries into the role of television in the formation of identity (e.g., Aasebø, 2005) to studies that deal with television as sites to reflect on hegemonic discourses on, for instance, sexuality (e.g., Dhaenens, 2012), religion (e.g., Petersen, 2010) or national identities (e.g., Porto, 2005). Yet, because of increased and diversified processes of globalization and internationalization, different studies have been conducted that aim to understand how transnational content is received or how audiences with different geo-political identities negotiate the same content. An example of a study that deals with reading television is Yanardağoğlua and Karam's study (2013) on how Arab audiences in Palestine and Egypt perceive Turkish programs. The cross-cultural perspective is crucial to underscore its investment in societal differences and how audiences negotiate content. The study demonstrated that audiences did not found the practice of watching transnational television shows as problematic for their own identity. On the other hand, a study by Popovic (2012) revealed how different geo-political contexts may create significant differences in reading practices. By means of interviews, she found how British and Croatian fans of the television program *Da Ali G Show* interpret the ambiguous moments of parody differently.

Another trend noted in our sample was the inquiry into how audiences remember television viewing in past times. The introduction of the historical perspective has resulted in a diverse set of studies. A first type of historical reception study is interested in the way audiences remember television. For instance, Dhoest's (2007) ethnographic study is concerned with how viewers received the Flemish broadcaster channel between its start in 1953 and the advent of commercial television in 1989. Drawing on the tradition of oral history, his research ensured that the interviewee's memories assumed a central position. Bourdon and Kligler-Vilenchik (2011), however, are more interested in the way television constructs individual and collective memory. Based on a study with life stories of Jewish-Israeli television viewers, they argue that despite the increase of fragmentation and commercialization, Jewish-Israeli audiences reveal to belong to a society that harbors a shared culture. Another approach to historical reception research was noted in the work of Bodroghkozy (2013). She reconstructs how viewers dealt with the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 by analyzing the mail that was sent to NBC news anchors.

A last new trend is the result of the changed modalities in which television is distributed. This, first, refers to the many platforms that are being used to show television content. As some of these contents enable interaction and participation, more and more studies study how reception relates to participation of a television text. An exemplary study

is conducted by Williams (2008) who enquires how the notion of audiences has changed because of digital technological developments that allow audiences to 'respond to and adapt popular culture texts to their own ends, such as the construction of identities on web pages' (p. 24). Second, television texts are being broken down in many different forms (e.g., commercials, posters, trailers) or enlarged in other media (e.g., webisodes, comics). Gray (2008) discusses these paratexts and highlights how these paratexts already give meaning to a text not yet consumed by its audience. He challenges the notion that paratexts are merely economic gestures by pointing out their role in the meaning-making process.

Methodological approaches

Last, we want to reflect on the methodological approaches. As most of the reception research within television studies aligns itself with a cultural studies approach, qualitative ethnographic methods dominate the methodological frameworks. In our sample, in-depth interviews were the most used method (e.g., Dhoest, 2007), followed by the method of focus group conversations (e.g., Lacalle, 2012) and integrated ethnographic approaches (e.g., Tager, 2010).

Out of the box methods remain rare, but some do stress to depart from the fixed traditions to find new ways to understand audiences who are less easy to 'understand' by the dominant theoretical and methodological approaches. Text-in-action methods, for instance, might help to accurately grasp the 'dialogical nature' between audiences and the popular programs they are watching as well as how they relate their own experiences to the ones screened on television (Wood, 2006). Another innovative approach is the use of visual ethnographic methods. Adriaens (2014), for instance, relies on the approach by letting girls with a diaspora background produce their own television program. In her work, the production process is considered a reflexive practice that gives insight into how the girls regard and perform their own identities. Last, Briggs (2006; 2007) points out the value of using an auto-ethnography. He makes a case to move away from ethnographic audiences studies that intent to generalize across different cases to generalizing 'within individual, extensive and intensively described micro-examples' (p. 433). He argues that this approach considers audiences as members who negotiate media texts throughout and in relation to their everyday life practices. In his 2007 article, he illustrates how this approach allows us to qualify the knowledge about the way young audiences make sense of television. Even though research within various fields demonstrated the ability of young children to differentiate between 'television fantasy' and 'everyday reality', he points out how parasocial interaction – stimulated by for instance programs such as *Teletubbies* – blurs the two spheres. Yet, without claiming a child is unable to differentiate between the two, he stresses that the child is able to negotiate the program through his/her ability to make sense of the program through play and experience instead of relying on rationality and conceptualization – modalities typically used by adults.

Reception in studies of sound and music

In comparison to television studies, studies of sound and music reception in the analysed sample were much fewer. This is consistent with the state of the field and with numerous scholarly voices from both music and audience studies noting the relative absence of empirical studies of music audiences and listening (Barker, 2012; Baym, 2010; Hesmondhalgh, 2002). Still, a number of researched articles since 2005 did engage with sound and music from an audience tradition. In our review, we divide these studies into two groups: first, articles that look at music together with other media, and second, articles that analyse music 'on its own', i.e. without a spectrum of other media experiences.

Music and other media

In the first category of articles, music is analysed together with a range of other media and its significance is not emphasised among mediated engagements. The relation between music and those media varies across the sample: sound and music can be a part of a multisensory experience analysed on par with other experiences, or it can an additional, 'peripheral' layer to the visual. In both cases, reception of music is conceptualized as something different to reception of visual media. Sound, organised or not, emerges here as a 'separate' experience and seems to be conceptually excluded from following the same analytical rules as the visuals in film or television media.

At the same time, while most of the articles clearly regard sound as a text, they do not discuss this textuality in an explicit way. When Briggs (2006) relates his ethnographic data on young children's reception of *Teletubbies* to the concept of parasocial interaction, music is part of the analytical frame. Methodological challenges raised by Briggs, however, involve the epistemology of autoethnography and the academic relevance of children's talk, rather than the differences between the verbal and the visual. In another example, when Kääpä and Wenbo (2011) discuss cinema reception in Finland and China, they talk about audiences interpreting narratives, commercial aspects or cultural markers in the films, whereas sound (and music) is presented as an afterthought. In the study, sound clearly emerges as a part of the audience experience, as the authors discuss while presenting the data, but it rarely problematized on its own, giving way to characters and plot lines.

Articles that specifically focus on the audible experience of visual content are similarly scarce. To a reader, an emerging impression is that asking audiences about music scores and soundtracks appears to be a methodologically risky maneuver, or at least one laden with uncertainties. In one such article, Anderson (2012), after presenting a series of fascinating findings pertaining to movie soundtracks admits to 'initial concerns about the potential difficulties in generating talk around music.' There is no indication of why generating talk around music is potentially more challenging than asking about the visual content; music simply appears as 'naturally' more abstract and difficult to translate into words.

Such concerns are, of course, not limited to the decade in question. On the whole, media and audience scholars have rarely approached listening, sound or music. Kate Lacey, discussing the lack of past research on audiences as 'listeners', suggests that this scarcity is linked to the fact that the act of listening feels more passive than acts of writing or reading (Lacey, 2013, pp.3-4). Or it might be because, as Allan Moore suggests in his monograph on analysing recorded music, 'listening to songs is as easy as driving a car' but '[u]nderstanding how they work is as hard as being a mechanic' (2012, p.1); in other words, the claim is that meaning-making through music comes naturally for the audiences to the extent that a third person, a researcher, finds it difficult to describe the process.

Music is similarly missing from articles that look at several different media and platforms. For instance, Westlund and Bjur (2014, p.25) aim to acquire 'a nuanced understanding of media life of the young' by analysing the use of television, internet, mobile devices and gaming. Presumably, organised sound is part of some or all of those media experiences, but it is never acknowledged as such or problematized within the article. Vainikka and Herkman (2013), while arguing through their data that music listening and music creation is a significant part of young adults' lives, are not interested in such practices per se, because the practices are 'quite traditional individual endeavours in which online communities merely provided the forum for publishing and getting feedback, rather than a site for genuine collective co-production.' It seems, then, that for a (new) media and audience scholar, music is less interesting than online practices, because it does not fit the more attractive frames of convergence or peer production analysis.

Lastly, in this group there are articles written from the perspective of fan studies, which focus on fan production and interpretations, but rarely explicitly engage with issues of text and reception. For instance, Chow and de Kloet (2008) analyse fan websites and interview audiences to trace online and offline practices of fandom in different cultural contexts. The attention is, again, on practice and on the performer's persona, and not on the musical text and thus the focus shifts from textual reception towards mediation of textually-related or unrelated activities surrounding musical artists.

Music without other media – concerts and events
The second group of articles of the period concerns reception of music 'on its own', i.e. not in the context of cinema or television. We could here, of course, contest the validity of such divisions. What does it mean if we set ourselves to analyse a single-medium experience (if there is such a thing), and what consequences might it have for reception? As we have learned from modal analysis in audience research, musicology or semiotics, the conceptual and methodological lines between modes may be difficult to draw – and sound, for the most part, is multimodal. The concept of a 'mode', described by Gunther Kress as 'a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for meaning-making' (2010, p.79), implies that different modality has a potential for different meanings to emerge, and because music, and sound in general, is accompanied by image, gesture, gaze and other modes (especially with the development of recording technology), it forces us to inquire how the

particular modes are part of the social and the cultural in particular everyday situations (Jewitt, 2009, p.4). Still, considering music as a sole medium requires our separate attention. There are significant differences between articles that regarded sound or music as parts of many sensory experiences, as discussed in the previous sections, and sound and music on their own, with their own texts that can be read and interpreted by the audiences.

In the latter group, the articles mostly focused on musical events. Those included both classical concerts (for instance, Dobson, 2010; Pitts et al., 2013), jazz festivals (Burland and Pitts 2010) or popular music (Bennett, 2012; Lamont, 2011), and in all these cases the articles suggested reception as a finite event of audience interacting with a text within a particular timeframe. The experience, according to authors, is contextual and relates to listeners' social and economic localities, but at the same time emerges as linear: the analytical steps taken go back to the Birmingham School and Stuart Hall's model of encoding/decoding (1973/1980). In the articles, authors clearly distinguish the moments of encoding by the producers and decoding by the audiences, and the job of an audience researcher is implicitly considered to be following the interpretations stemming from that interaction. For instance, writing about youth attending musical performances in Madrid, Rusinek and Rincón (2010) aim to understand 'the meanings attributed by children and adolescents to all the aspects of the performances' and 'what influenced that meaning construction.' Van der Hoeven (2014), approaches music through identities and cultural memories of dance parties in the 1990s, but, widely speaking, it is reception which is implicitly embedded throughout the article. Lamont (2011), using interviews to look at university students' experiences of music, finds that to fully understand the meanings evoked by music, a researcher needs to take into account 'the music, the listener, and the situation' or, as a more classic audience account could have stated, the text, the context, and the audience. In a way then, this may be seen as an emerging story of new topics but old methods and frameworks. Despite a trend linking most of the above studies through their struggle to fit to the mainstream analytical model of reception, a new paradigm which could include space for more dynamic interactions between du Gay et al.'s moments on the Circuit of Culture (1997) is yet to be found, it seems.

Another common feature of all these articles is a focus on events, as opposed to seeing music within people's daily routines. This, certainly, mirrors a more long-term trend in audience studies of music and listening, where much of the debate has concerned only particular types of audiencing, especially interactions during music events. In the preface to their recently edited collection on live music audiences, *Coughing and Clapping* (2014), Burland and Pitts define their interest as the 'pleasures and purposes' of listening, and introduce the contributions as showing that 'live listening is made distinctive by its listeners, as each person's connection with the event is shaped by expectations, prior experiences, mood and concentration' (2014, p.1). Burland and Pitts' book and other similar publications (see, for example, Benzecry, 2011; Cohen, 1991) are in this matter the cultural continuations of ethnomusicology and Christopher Small's 'musicking', and as such, an important and careful investigation of audience practice in a specific cultural setting. However, audiences'

reception of music in everyday life, encompassing a range of music-related practices, has traditionally not been a similarly popular subject in the scholarship and judging from our analysis of the period in question, perhaps, this is not to change anytime soon.

Methodologically, most of the articles use open-ended, in-depth interviews with audiences, sometimes replaced by or accompanied by focus group interviews. In a few articles surveys are employed instead (for instance, Avdeff, 2012; Burland & Pitts, 2010) and some studies go beyond interviewing towards a more ethnographically comprehensive approach (Novak, 2008, Pitts et al., 2013). This, again, cannot be surprising in itself. It was precisely through the methods of the interview and the focus group that audience studies were able to challenge the textual determinism, complicate media effects, reconceptualise the flows of political economy and give audiences a voice they hadn't had before (among many studies: Hobson, 1982; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Morley, 1992; Radway, 1984; also cf. Livingstone, 2010). However, with the celebration of audiences and their meaningful engagements came a diminishing focus on the text. Such is the state of music in the analysed period: despite occasional references to the texts, explicitly and implicitly, there has been very little textual analysis done among the studies. If is therefore relevant to mention, that while this is consistent with the 'audience turn' in cultural studies and social sciences, the trend diverges from the ways popular music was studied in the past, where content analysis has always been an important approach (cf. Zaborowski, 2012).

Discussion and conclusions

In this article we looked at articles from the last ten years which were written in the audience research tradition and considered reception of television or organised sound as their topic. We did this to, first, assess the state of the field of reception studies by analysing a collection of scholarly writing on both an established topic for the field (television) and a relatively under-researched topic for the field, which has been slowly gaining prominence in academic writing (music and sound). Second, by reviewing the themes and identified challenges in music and television audience studies, we aimed to see the range of patterns and emerging issues for the field of audience studies in general.

Through our literature review, we found that audience studies of music and television include a wide range of topics and an increasingly stronger interdisciplinary links. As we could see through specific examples presented above, audience studies are no longer exclusively confided to specific disciplines – although the 'discipline mentality' is still a significant approach. This is also evident in the uneven conceptualisation of 'reception' itself. Whereas articles most strongly rooted in cultural studies and the audience tradition employ the concept to express the ways people engage with texts, on the whole, 'reception' remains unproblematised beyond that. This is enhanced by the fact that methodologically, most of the analysed articles use a combination of ethnographic tools (individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations), and, as audience studies, are primarily interested in the interactions and emotions of the audiences, and not in the texts.

Therefore, we could observe that despite a renewed interest in television and music, and a variety of new research direction within those fields, the old media and traditional, linear approaches are still the most relevant. In particular, we found that Stuart Hall's model of encoding/decoding continues to influence generations of audience researchers, which suggests that the conceptual attractiveness of the model extends to a new body of topics. However, this raises some questions. On the one hand, if audience research of television and music addresses the textual sphere only implicitly, but not methodologically, can Hall's model be accurately applied to trace the emerging meanings, emotions and interpretations? On the other hand, looking at the analysed sample of articles through the lens of the history of audience research, we can feel the tensions between a field defined by the triad of audience-text-context, and a field trying to reinvigorate itself by moving beyond the text and towards practice and convergence.

This, certainly, plays out differently in studies of television and studies of music. Reception of television has had a rich history in audience research and has been very generative in the important stages of establishing the field. Even with the advent of new media, however, television audience studies have remained a significant area. As discussed earlier in this article, television scholars interested in reception have an unprecedented array of genres and platforms to analyse and a diverse spectrum of audience engagements to look at. Along with the considerable empirical data accumulated comes more room for considering modifications to the theoretical models on offer. Moreover, a documented history of television studies allows researchers to inquire into audiences' past habits vis-à-vis the social, political and technological conditions of the past decades. Music, on the other hand, is a relative stranger on the audience research scene. Despite numerous connections between reception and sound, the audible sphere has not fascinated audience scholars to the extent the visual sphere has, and people's engagements with music remain unexplored in detail. This state of affairs continues into the analysed period. Music audience research lacks direction, or rather, is being pulled into too many directions at once: from musicology though ethnography, performance studies or media effects.

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Note: