



The online and offline joys of concert-going practices and negotiation of concert etiquette by popular music fan communities on TikTok

'The excitement of participation, the feeling of connection with the artist, the interaction of fans and audience members, (...), the communal feeling, the evaluation and discussion: together they enact the meaning of fandom. They shape and anchor fans' sense of who they are and where they belong.' (Cavicchi 1998, p. 37).

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Kelly Burnet

SNB: 2053526

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Supervisor: Mingyi Hou

Second Reader: Eleonora Sciubba

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1. Introduction

Popular music fandom communities come together both online and offline. Fans of the same pop artist are from different parts of the world. They communicate on social media platforms, giving each other the latest updates and posting content to celebrate the artist. On TikTok, many concert videos are posted for fans to share their experiences and affection for their idol. They vlog going to the live concert showing their excitement of being in the same room as their favourite pop artist. Others film how good the artist sounds or how enthusiastic the crowd is, and, occasionally, someone captures how a lucky fan has a moment of interaction with the artist. Moreover, it is not only the concert itself; the preparation before attending the concert and reflection afterwards are also shared with the TikTok community. For example, Harry Styles fans started a TikTok trend to post their transition video from regular clothes to the expressive outfits they are wearing to his tour “Love On Tour”. Fans exchange experiences of offline fan practices to help and inform other fans who could not attend the show, for instance, about which songs were performed, fun moments on stage, or fan projects that were acted out. Fans promote the artist and their music in the process.

Fans are engaged and active participants and take pleasure in this. Participation in online communities often leads to positive fan experiences that “bring value through enhancing an individual’s sense of social identity” (Choi & Burnes, 2013, p. 47). Social media provides an opportunity for value co-creation for audiences (Edlom & Karlsson, 2021, p. 125). Due to remediation processes through which newer media forms interact with earlier ones, fans can enjoy their idol perform live without needing to be there physically. The boundaries of the live concert and its notions of “liveness” are extended. By the exchange of emotional outbursts of offline attendants with online “attendants”, this behaviour becomes a collective experience, even though the participants remain geographically dispersed (Bennett, 2012). Booth calls this exchange of experiences through fan texts a gift economy that creates social bonds (Booth, 2016). Fans sharing concert content contribute to the fandom culture and they do this for free and for each other. They are engaged in a “labour of love” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 180). Providing content for other fans can make someone gain status within the community as well.

Much of the content being shared and discussed with other fans on TikTok is positive. However, fans also post videos critiquing other fans’ behaviour before, during or after the concert, which causes discussions on what is right or wrong fan behaviour in the comment sections. Does someone who does not seem enthusiastic deserve to stand barricade? Are American fans entitled to buy tickets to the European Harry Styles’ Love on Tour shows while these shows sell out quickly? Is

someone a bad Billie fan for throwing gifts to the artist Billie Eilish on stage? Is it inappropriate to treat a cinema viewing of Billie's concert movie as an actual concert? Should there be rules bound to the volume and timing of screaming and singing along? What text on a fan-made sign to try to get the artist's attention surpasses the boundary of fun and becomes rude? Can fans call out behaviour directly? Such questions spark conversations and even conflicts online. The otherwise loving and supportive community can become full of judgement, rivalry and jealousy.

Fandom is both personal, which connects to individual's fascination and obsession, as well as social, which connects to contagion. Fandom is as much felt as it is performed (Duffett, 2013). The social and performed side of fandom cannot be separated from the negotiation of behavioural norms. Fans often use shared norms and standards to help define precisely where their personal, ethical lines might be drawn (Duffett, 2013, p. 280). During live performances, fans engage in various adapted forms of counter-performances that are visibly or audibly expressed, like singing along and screaming (Duffett, 2013, p. 296). It can attract the artist's attention, and it demonstrates the emotional commitment of the fan for other fans to see (Duffett, 2017). Fans, while acknowledging they are part of a chaotic crowd, can also act out a more personal, private, emotional connection to the Figure on stage as part of that experience (Duffett, 2013, p. 236).

Digital fandom provides places and tools for fandom activities, like the sharing of content or discussing right or wrong fan behaviour. Digital fandom is a well-researched phenomenon. One key characteristic of digital fandom is how fans' technology use brings a sense of playfulness. Fans' effort to create fan works like concert-related videos reveals the ludic nature of digital technology and communication (Booth, 2017, p. 20). Yet, the digital space never stands on its own. Hine (2015) reminds us that the contemporary internet is embodied. Likewise, Varis (2016) argues that the online activities have a physical dimension. The fan-filmed live concert videos are embodied, meaning that their physical behaviours are represented through the videos. Here, fans' offline activities also have an online dimension once captured through media and further disseminated.

This interplay of online and offline activities will be the focus of this thesis. Fan antagonism or fantagonism is a concept that captures this dynamic. Johnson (2007) describes fan antagonism as ongoing competitive struggles between internal factions and external institutions to discursively codify the fan-text-producer relationship according to their respective interests. This definition is more based on television fandom where fan and institutional interests compete. So, there is a lack of studies done on antagonisms and the internal struggles within music fan communities, in particular

tensions of online negotiating the “correct” or “unacceptable” type of fandom behaviours and embodying them offline at concerts. The current study thus will investigate

how are pleasures experienced and controversies negotiated by popular music fandom communities through sharing offline pop-concert-going practices online via TikTok videos?

The study is designed with two qualitative research methods to explore fan behaviour's offline and online components, their interconnectedness and their implications on popular music fan communities. The first method is discourse analysis on TikTok videos and comment section discussions where norms are negotiated. Then, I will conduct interviews with participants who consider themselves a fan of Billie Eilish, Harry Styles, or Taylor Swift, watch concert-going videos on TikTok and have experience with concert-going practices. I will ask them about the pleasures of being in a fan community and going to concerts and what they consider inappropriate fan practices to discover their perception of the norms and conventions within the community.

In the following chapters, the theoretical framework will be my background for the analysis. Then, in analysing videos and comments, I will expand on my theoretical framework and observe discussions or conflicts arising when fans on TikTok negotiate behavioural norms around concert-going practices. Next, having observed naturally happening fan behaviour on TikTok, the interviews with fans aim to confirm and enrich the findings. I will reflect on the interview data to see if they share the fan norms and experiences identified through the discourse analysis and if more insights can be gained from the personal accounts. Finally, I will conclude the findings and answer the research question, and will provide suggestions for further research within music fandom studies.

2. Literary review

2.1 The entanglement of personal and communal popular music fandom

Collective drives and pleasures characterise popular music fandom communities. However, being in a fan community also manifests and expresses itself on an individual level. Fan networks are communities of common interest and offer people a sense of belonging (Jenkins, 1992, p. 23). A fan community is a way to perpetuate and support personal fandom, which originates in emotional investment (Duffett, 2013, p. 395). Popular music fandom is a means of entry into a space of affect and emotional conviction, where one's experience of something solid and positive seems highly personal. Nevertheless, it is also profoundly social since it has a direction and intensity shared by many others. Fandom partially reacts to hidden and unhidden ontological assumptions, social dynamics and cultural resonances (Duffett, 2013, p. 274). Duffett (2014) speaks of a threshold of passion, and once a fan exceeds one, they realise that one has come to know and love the artist, which makes them want to be actively engaged (p. 154). The process of emotional change involves the feeling of experiencing an affective shift. Fandom thus becomes a shared but internal territory of effect across which individuals can traverse or settle, self-identifying as fans (Duffett, 2013, p. 274). According to Anderson (2012), memory, nostalgia, and fantasy contribute to the development and sustainability of lifelong attachments for fans.

Music lovers seek to understand stars as authentic people with whom they have an intimate bond (Cavicchi, 2007). They are motivated to engage in fan activities by the pleasures of connection, appropriation and performance (Duffett, 2013, p. 73). Jenkins (1992) argues that fandom is mainly inclusive and accepting. He argues that for most fans, meaning-production is not a solitary and private process but rather a social and public one (p. 75).

Social interactions can sometimes liberate when there are issues within the fandom (Jenkins, 2006, p. 135). Jenkins (2006) further argues that fans are acting in a concerted way to forward their concerns. Duffett (2013) pleads that combining open, communal, public discussion and instantaneous responses to cultural events has created an environment. More than ever before, fans can be involved in collective action (Duffett, 2013, p. 393).

Previous studies on the manifestations of personal and collective fandom and how they are entangled show different inner motives for being a fan and behaving a certain way at concerts. It forms a relevant background for analysing fan-made concert videos on TikTok that demonstrate fan behaviour and explains how fans experience and unlock pleasures.

2.2 The *felt* experience of seeing the artist perform “in the flesh”

Beyond fandom’s social and communal dimension, Duffett stresses pop music fandom's particular “felt” experience. He proclaims that popular music performance is often about charisma, style, sex appeal, emotional vulnerability, virtuosity, affinity and intimacy (Duffett, 2013). Fans possess such assumptions about their idol that shapes their “felt” relationship with them (Duffett, 2014). Black et al. (2007) similarly state that experiencing a live performance gives fans a different type of satisfaction than simply listening to a recording by the same artist, creating a unique bond between fan and artist (p. 155). Fans’ displays of high emotion in being part of a live audience and the high prices they pay for concert tickets are visible manifestations of this symbolic economy (Duffett, 2014). Brown & Knox (2016) also argue that music fans are willing to pay increasing sums for live pop concerts and less for recorded music. They investigated the primary motivators for music fans attending live pop concerts. The biggest motivator is the desire and thrill to physically see their favourite artists “in the flesh” and engage with live music (Brown & Knox, 2016). Duffett (2014) argues that the sense of an artist being in proximity intensifies fans’ feelings of pleasure. Moreover, the second motivator links to a concert’s mystery element, where fans enjoy being part of a unique experience (Brown & Knox, 2016).

Live concert experiences, even though they involve secular activities, have similarities with religion, as people are engaged similarly and derive meaning and value from indirect communication (Cavicchi, 1998, p. 186). Fandom can be understood as totemic, a term introduced by Durkheim. The totem gives each emotionally heightened crowd member attention. The fan experiences a life-changing jolt of electricity as they subconsciously recognise a one-to-one connection with such a valued individual. This energy boosts their strength and confidence (Duffett, 2014, p. 152). These totemic feelings motivate shared beliefs, values, and behaviour that maintain the social system. They also help see fan bases as “moral economies” that reproduce themselves and uphold broader shared values (Duffett, 2017).

The studies on how a concert experience is closely connected to emotion and totemic feelings and how individual motives of seeing the idol in real life (proximity) intensify feelings of pleasure explain why fans love to attend concerts. It is relevant background for the analysis of videos where fans express the pleasures of being a fan.

2.3 Performative fan practices at concerts to unlock joys

As the artist performs, they engage with the audience in what can be considered performative templates, like letting the audience sing the lyrics or scream. Fans react to the gestures of the artist performing actively and intensely. They try to access the pleasures of being a fan and directly supporting their idol. They behave in specific patterned ways as well to respond to their hero, which can be understood as a performance or counter-performance. Fans seek intimacy with the artist and to be given attention, so they use their agency to maximise the rewards of their structural position (Duffett, 2014). Within the boundaries of a concert, Duffett (2014) discusses applauding and screaming as the main audibly expressed counter-performances. Screaming is an act of normality in the context of live shows. Screaming reflects an intensity of audience engagement and public transcendence. On a personal level, screaming is cathartic for the fan and reflects a state of worship. It also manifests in which collectively fan-envisaged structures are maintained (Duffett, 2017).

Fans also try to get their idol's attention and show support visually or in a performance. According to Derbaix and Korchia (2019), fans use creative strategies to maintain their relationships with their beloved music icon: they try to attract celebrities' attention by attending concerts and sitting in the front row, sending gifts and creating or customising objects, attempting to individualise their relationships with such objects of fandom. They further argue, citing Hebdige (1979), that fans often desire to involve themselves in creating material to help imagine themselves as being with the celebrity (Derbaix & Korchia, 2019).

The performances and motives behind these practices mentioned in previous studies explain how and why ways fans express their excitement and support and ask for the artist's attention. The theory proves helpful as I analyse particular fan performances at concerts observed in videos, how fans enjoy concerts, but that not every fan views such performances the same way.

2.4 Concert videos as high-valued media products

As concert audience members, fans have creative ways to show their support and ask for the artist's attention, and thanks to Smartphones, their emotional connection to the artist is not bound to the offline event. Fans can make videos of the performance and audience, becoming co-creators of the concert experience when these "filmmers" eventually become curators, keeping an important audio-visual record of musical activity (Duffett, 2014).

Concert-related videos are media products collectively valued by fans as they are shared online (Duffett, 2013, p. 395). The personal reason is so that the curators of the concert videos can look back on their experiences. As explained by Bennett (2012), the collective reason is that many fans who were not physically present can watch video footage of concerts to know about what happened at the live event, contribute their opinions, and share their excitement with concert attendants. Consequently, they feel part of the “live” music experience and create their own. On the other hand, physically non-present fans are socially co-present due to online communication. Nevertheless, she argues that they go through different communal experiences (Bennett, 2012).

Previous videos thus explain how concert videos help to co-create the concert experience and facilitate a different experience for non-represent fans. Fans curating videos are essential actors that allow a fandom as a collective to stay actively involved in live events. It is valuable background information in the analysis where I observe such concert videos.

2.5 Fans as consumers and producers of information and fan exchange as a gift economy

The fandom as a collective does not only value videos of the concerts but any information about how the concert proceeded. According to Bennett (2012), many activities happen before and after the live performance where fans are interested in the intricate details of the event. Beforehand, there is collective anticipation among audience members and fans online around what will happen and be experienced during the show, like what the setlist might be that night (Bennett, 2012). After the concert, fans inquire about the outfits worn on stage by the artist, whether they have worn something similar before, the number of people queuing outside the venue, which songs the artists performed, et cetera (Bennett, 2012, p. 549).

Price and Robinson (2017) argue that fandom has always been rooted in information practices and that an element of play to unlock pleasure is central to much of what has been already observed in fan behaviour, particularly in sharing information. Fans can be highly productive and involved online. Jenkins (2008) argues that keeping up in a fandom community requires skills. Fans need to have the ability to connect information, pool resources, express interpretations, circulate creative expressions and compare value systems (Jenkins, 2008, p. 185).

Duffett (2015) argues that fans actively searching and sharing information with the community engage in free labour. Fans who engage in free labour regularly contribute significant amounts of their time, effort, and money. Terranova suggests that the music industry welcomes this voluntarily given and unwaged labour (Terranova, 2000). However, Galuszka (2015) argues that

employing fans' labour can be another element of exchange between artist and audience, taking place within the gift economy. He describes that fans reciprocate these free labour practices by maintaining direct communication (Galuszka, 2015), and Booth (2017) also argues that free labour creates social bonds. On social media, this takes the form of liking the video, commenting or following the fan.

Previous studies thus point out that the concept of exchanging fan cultural capital is part of a gift economy and that concert videos can be seen as gifts by fans engaging in free labour. This phenomenon will prove valuable background information when analysing concert-going TikTok videos. It helps understand the pleasures and relationship dynamics of the popular music fandom as a collective in exchanging information through concert videos and their comments.

2.6. Fan status and hierarchy

Concert videos curated by fans can be viewed as fan cultural capital, with the functions to be exchanged and displayed to other fans (Bennett, 2012, p. 551). Being in a fandom means being in a collaborative knowledge space where fans act as gatekeepers and knowledge experts to each other (Price & Robinson, 2016). As fans can display their fan knowledge, this makes it a nominator of fan status. Kingsepp (2006) views fan knowledge as a tool of social distinction, as it helps distinguish those who possess it from those who do not, so those who belong to the community and those outside (p. 227). Likewise, Jenkins (2006) concludes that knowledge equals prestige, reputation, and power (p. 125). Being in a fandom thus means being part of a social hierarchy based on the fans' knowledge level and access to the object of fandom (Hills, 2002).

Live concerts allow for a first-hand experience; therefore, sharing videos on TikTok as a concert attendance shows knowledge, access, and economic and symbolic capital. Edlom & Karlsson (2021) explain that by rising in the hierarchy, the fans gain status, develop relationships with other fans, gain more profound knowledge, reach a higher fan quality level, and come to be seen as leaders in the community. They also come closer to and gain access to the artist/brand, possibly influencing the brand. These are the incentives for deep fan engagement and the drivers for changes in the hierarchy (Edlom & Karlsson, 2021). Westgate (2020) points out that those who have accumulated the most knowledge gain prestige within the group and act as opinion leaders. He quotes Fiske (1992, p. 42): "Knowledge, like money, is always a source of power" and gives the example that some fans function as experts on how to get concert tickets (Westgate, 2020). Anderson (2012) uses Thornton (1995) to argue that a fandom community can be considered a complex and highly

structured social world with its conventions, rules of interaction and forms of expertise, its own hierarchies of power and prestige, and its assigned social statuses with divisions between the expert and the amateur, the fan and the non-fan.

Building on these theories on fandom as a hierarchical environment where fans battle for status can help analyse how conflicts can arise within a community as part of negotiating acceptable behaviour and restoring normality.

2.7. Conflict and fan antagonism

A popular music fan community consists of people from all over the globe with different sets of value systems, yet they strive to have one shared by the whole community. Values and social norms are negotiated via interpretative and evaluative debates (Johnson, 2017).

Fans use their agency to maximise the joys and rewards of their structural position by participating in various hegemonic activities and moments (Duffett, 2014). Fandom communities can become antagonistic if opinions, individual interests or values clash. Fans create, exercise and preserve hegemonies of cultural power through online and offline fan practices to define and delimit relationships among audience, production and text (Johnson, 2017). MacDonald observes fandom as a series of struggles between various subgroups of fans, including generations (such as ‘newbies’ versus established community members) and genders (Jenkins, 2006, p. 143). Anderson (2012) proposes that popular music fandom as a hierarchical environment fosters fierce competition and exclusion. Fans assign one another social attributes that are ascriptive and hierarchically ordered (Blommaert, 2005, p. 75).

Schau et al. (2009, p. 38), cited by Derbaix and Korchia (2019), give examples of fans competing based on knowledge and concerts attended. Again, this links to the fan’s possession of cultural and economic capital, which is not equally distributed. As Westgate (2020) argues, income inequality is a significant socioeconomic issue that compounds the problem of consumers who cannot afford certain concert ticket tiers. So, a fan high on the hierarchy can engage in active fan practices and get tickets to their idol’s concert(s), potentially making less fortunate fans jealous. Besides, fans at live events have an extra opportunity to document and share parts of the performance online, displaying their status as active, involved fans.

Jenkins also argues that disagreements occur over any number of issues, and these conflicts are attributed to ‘unequal experiences, levels of expertise, access to performers and community resources, control over community institutions, and degrees of investment in fan traditions and

norms' (Jenkins, 2006, p. 7-8). Online, fans make discursive attempts to reason what accounts for being a genuine fan and what is unacceptable or too excessive fan behaviour when attending a live event (Johnson, 2007). Johnson (2007) further argues that when fans differ in opinion on something, they do not easily agree to disagree. The differing opinions become co-present and competing interests struggle to define interpretative and evaluative consensus (Johnson, 2007). Nevertheless, he adds, even if fans hate the current status quo, they will still experience strong feelings and continue contributing to fan discourse that stems from pleasurable engagement with past events. Negative discourse compartmentalises the reason for dissatisfaction so fans may continue enjoying other elements (Johnson, 2017). This suggests that sometimes fans' satisfactions resolve just by talking about it.

The majority of popular music fandom online are young people. Bennett (2012) points out that some may have no experience with concerts except through the widespread use of mobile Internet and social media and that this has considerable implications on (future) expectations of what is considered concert etiquette and correct participation as an audience member (Bennett, 2012). Likewise, Rich King (accessed through Bennett's article) states that fans now being able to be 'co-present' at a live performance may result in a 'reliance on co-present understandings' with sometimes a 'development-but sometimes erosion-of social cohesion' (2010, xi). Not every fan is able to attend their idol's concert, which can have numerous reasons, but every fan can access content through social media and be co-present in discussions online. Yet, it can be difficult for a fan community to agree on what is good concert etiquette if not everyone is able to experience a live event.

Previous studies primarily have explored antagonism in television fandom. So there is a gap in this area of research. Nevertheless, the insights mentioned above from previous studies will be a valuable background for the analysis that will investigate discussions on TikTok about concert etiquette and antagonisms within popular music fan communities.

2.8. The implications of interconnected online and offline fan behaviour

Fans navigate the online-offline nexus where fan activities online and offline influence each other. Various studies discussing offline and online dynamics agree that fans' actions seem part of a continuum (Price & Robinson, 2017). Price and Robinson (2017) argue that fan activities cannot and should not be classified online or offline and that there appears to be a significant degree of interdependence between the two. They give the example of fan works in physical and digital form,

including fan-taken concert videos, that take a central place in the information environment (Price and Robinson, 2017). Likewise, Varis (2016) argues that activities online, like the sharing of videos, called ‘finished communicative products’, are linked to and influenced by offline environments, situations and practices and that online activities even shape offline events. Fans go to concerts, share information on the live show on TikTok and reflect on fan behaviour and creative fan practices seen through the videos. Hine (2015) also discusses a continuity between online and offline experiences and calls the Internet embodied. What is experienced in the offline contexts, fans online co-experience through the videos. The Internet is embodied because fans on the Internet see offline fan behaviour, norms and their deviances being embodied, thus acted out, at concerts.

Concerts are offline happenings with basic rules stated and managed by the venue, creating concert etiquettes for attendants to oblige. The fans try to get close to the artist and stand out to get their attention. Audience behaviour and emotion are often unpredictable (Kolesch & Knoblauch, 2019). Due to online-offline interconnectedness, fans inspire and evaluate one another to experience joys. Audiences and fans have more power than ever to influence the representation of live concerts and the cultural meanings generated from these events (Jones & Bennett, 2015). When big fans see creative fan practices online, they copy them or can come up with new ideas to maximise the fun of seeing their idol “in the flesh” and strengthen their “relationship”. People who do not consider themselves big fans can view this behaviour as excessive. Moreover, online fans and fans often attending concerts can have different outlooks on concert etiquette. Bennett (2012) argued that the vast majority of the online fan community consists of young people and many of whom cannot attend a live event, so they experience a mediated version of a concert and fan behaviour and might feel jealous of other fans. This shapes their attitudes to “correct” behaviour.

So, following the logic of fandom as a hierarchical structure and the reasons for conflict mentioned earlier by Jenkins (2006), like different degrees of investment, it explains why fans striving for a fixed concert etiquette is unattainable. Fans act on their agency to maximise their joys online and offline, but fans’ value systems remain different, as do their behaviour and attitude to what is “appropriate”. The studies examining online-offline dynamics further outline the problem that is the focus of this thesis. The literary framework will prove helpful when further observing the implications of fans on TikTok attempting to match offline and online contexts and striving to govern fan behaviour to maintain concert etiquette.

3. Methodology

3.1 Justification methods

Cultural analysis of fandom practices often requires researchers to be experienced close to the phenomenon. I have combined discourse analysis of videos and comments of naturally happening fandom activities with conducting interviews. Dym and Fiesler (2020) as resorting to Jones (2016), identifies this combination as one of the primary traditions of approaching fan studies research, besides literary analysis. I have taken an insider perspective to gain situated, contextualised fan knowledge on the three popular music fan communities. Being a fan on TikTok myself enabled me to use my insider knowledge to contextualise the understandings from fans as observed on TikTok. Furthermore, conducting qualitative interviews gave me valuable evidence that confirmed the insights from the discourse analysis. However, the individual perspectives also provided me with new insights into how joys and controversies in the fandom are experienced and dealt with, how fans reflect on specific examples of fan practices at concerts and how TikTok plays a role in negotiating norms. The combination of discourse analysis and interviews as my research design of two sets of insights together aimed to lay bare how fan behaviour in online and offline contexts are interconnected but contradict each other simultaneously.

3.2 Method 1 discourse analysis

I applied the first method, discourse analysis, to TikTok videos and comments. TikTok videos are the products of meaning-making and semiotic works. I consider TikTok as a contextual place where fans use the platform's resources to interact with the community and share knowledge and opinions on concert etiquettes and objects of passion. The videos formed lenses through which I could encounter the fandoms. Since discourse is always dialogical, these were important to analyse too. I analysed how each fandom community shares their pleasures stemming from concert-going activities and raises concerns related to concert etiquette. The focus was on how fans produce meanings and how different forms of joys at concerts and behavioural patterns are received by other fans and further discussed on TikTok. Doing discourse analysis laid bare how fan norms are difficult to establish and maintain and that it is not a straightforward list of rules.

3.2.1 Data collection

Each set of sampling choices stems from and is related to the design choices (Vogt, Gardner & Haeffele, 2012). I have collected TikTok videos and comments from fans of three different pop artists: Harry Styles, Billie Eilish and Taylor Swift. They have a distinctive and loyal fan base and their fans are very active on TikTok. Fans produce a lot of content every day, especially when the artist is on tour.

I have taken on a purposive sampling technique where I searched for specific videos out of the large pools of concert videos. I looked for videos with certain characteristics, namely concert-going videos from fans from either one of the popular music fandoms that shared their good and bad experiences, as well as videos starting or continuing the discussion on concert etiquette. Purposeful sampling allowed me to look for specific data and having pre-knowledge about the fandom communities helped to direct my search. When collecting these videos, I aimed for a heterogeneity of the video content and the types of discussions in the comment section.

I used the platform's affordances, including the search bar, hashtags and TikTok sounds. In the search bar, I put the artist's names, the concert tour names or other specific key words like "Taylor Swift concert screaming", "Harry Styles leave America" or "Billie Eilish concert cinema", picking the most popular videos that were within the first top ten results. I then read through the comments and picked the top ten comments plus relevant discussions or disagreements. A video is popular when it was interacted with many times, including likes, comments, shares and people saving that video. The quality of the video, the amount of followers the user has and the affordances used to boost a post influences the popularity and the position of the video. TikTok's algorithm partly structured my sampling. The search results are influenced by geolocation and algorithms built in the app, but also the publishing date of the video. Doing purposeful sampling, however, enabled me to bypass the algorithm's suggestions and my geolocation to a great extent. Moreover, the algorithm began working in my favour as concert videos started to appear more on the For You Page (FYP).

I manually collected the specific data consisting of TikTok videos and comments. The videos are public that can be accessed with an URL, where one does not need to have an account to watch them. All the videos and comments were posted and interacted with by users without a verified badge (blue tick symbol), indicating fans post and interact for fun and not for monetary purposes.

I compiled a data pool and collected a total of 15 videos and around 10 comments per video to analyse. I sent the links of the videos to myself to access and download them later and screenshotted the comments. I grouped the videos and comments to not lose track of which comment goes with which video. I also grouped the videos according to the type of video and the fandom to give structure to the data so that the analysis process would go smoothly.

I paid attention to any affordance used by the poster to express a joy, a frustration or an opinion. If there was no text used in the video, usually the caption further explained a reason or explanation for posting. The top comments were important as it further discusses what the fan tried to communicate and shows what the fandom (dis)agrees on and what the majority seems to think. The hashtags used indicate which type of content it is.

3.2.2 Analysing the discourse

I ordered the videos into categories that would illustrate different features of norm negotiation on debated fan behaviour.

Categories	Description features	The number of videos collected
1. The passionate crowd: dancing vs. filming	This category summarises ways fans behave depending on their physical place in the crowd, demonstrating dancing is a much more valued fan practice than filming.	2 videos
2. Negotiating etiquette around screaming and singing	This category summarises debatable “excessive” behaviours related to screaming and singing, witnessed in all three fandoms.	4 videos
3. Debates on getting the artist’s attention	This category summarises negotiation practices around two debatable fan practices, fan signs and throwing objects to the artist, acted out get the artist’s attention and break the invisible barrier.	4 videos
4. Two fandom-specific controversies and their underlying antagonisms	This last category highlights features of two controversies: Harry Styles’s “Leave America” crowd chant that polarises American fans from the rest of the fandom, and Billie Eilish’s concert shown in cinemas where Billie fans mixed cinema and concert norms.	5 videos

As discussed by Hanks (1996), cited by Blommaert (2005), exploring such discourse requires attention to language-in-action and to look at language in its context, focussing on its intention or goals and genre. Moreover, norm production and order of indexicality, as Blommaert (2005)

described, are essential aspects of discourse analysis. When a fan challenges the unwritten rules at a concert, and someone else opens the discussion on TikTok, the conventionalised patterns of indexicality and how they feed into the orders of indexicality become apparent (Blommaert, 2005). TikTok is a multimodal platform and so discourse analysis means paying attention to the different modes used in the videos, which include image, speech, writing, layout and gesture. The caption, the discussion in comments (the uptake), the numbers of engagement, the hashtags used, and, if applicable, the TikTok sound used are all elements that are empirically observable modes used in fan interaction to communicate and convey indexical meanings related to rules of conduct. Analysing the indexical and multimodal fan-produced concert content and discourse on TikTok gave good insights into how fans generate indexicalities concerning concert-going practices and how antagonisms can arise.

3.3 Method 2 Qualitative interview

I conducted semi-structured interviews with fans from three different fandom communities who have both attended concerts and watched concert videos on TikTok to gain insights into their specific and situated perspectives on correct and unsavoury fan behaviour, how they view the norms set by the community and how they experience and access the pleasures of being a popular music fan active on TikTok. The questions were partly based on what I have observed on TikTok doing the discourse analysis, and so asking their opinion on different fan practices and ways fans unlock joys allowed me to confirm the insights. However, it enriched my data as well since the subjective accounts provided by the interviewees gave new insights. Their line of reasoning on, in particular, ‘excessive’ fan practices and behaviour contained relevant ideas not yet witnessed during the discourse analysis.

3.3.1 Data collection

I have done convenience sampling to choose the participants. I picked out fans that possessed the required qualities and were easily reachable and accessible to me (Etikan et al, 2015). I decided to interview two fans from each of the three popular music fan communities, so two perspectives per community, to equal the amount of insights I would gain. Moreover, since each fanbase consists of fans speaking different languages, I made sure to select interviewee candidates that speak the languages I also speak, so either Dutch or English. As a fan myself and having friends and acquaintances who are Harry Styles and Taylor Swift, I approached them directly. I reached out to my wider network on Instagram and Facebook to get two Billie Eilish fans to participate in the study. I ended up with participants aged 20 until 25.

Gaining insights through convenient sampling on only two fans from each fandom implies that it allows me only to make statements about the sample (participant) since the insights are not representative of the whole fandom. Still, the interviews gave new insights into personal experiences and confirmed perspectives and experiences of pleasures and tensions already observed through the discourse analysis.

I prepared a set of questions for the participants (see Appendix A) that were structured in such a way as to probe detailed answers that would confirm insights gained from the discourse analysis and enrich them when participants provided new revelations. I asked the same questions for each of the two community members for me to compare the two perspectives.

During the conversations, I paid particular attention to any insights given about concert joys, annoyances or “controversial” opinions by the participants. I considered if they were unique to the person or if it was suggested by other participants or fans online.

I interviewed two participants face-to-face; the other four I conducted via a video conference where I recorded our conversation to transcribe it afterwards. The interview was done in their preferred language (English or Dutch). The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.

3.3.2 Analysing the interviews

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying and analysing patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I used this method to summarise and extract underlying ideas, assumptions and ideologies from the interviewee’s individual account. There were two types of themes to identify: bottom-up themes emerged from the interviewee’s answers and top-down that were informed by the theoretical concepts.

The thematic analysis revealed the joys the six fans experience as a member of the fandom community, how their position within the community is hierarchically structured, but also how their experiences as first-hand concert attendees and consumers of concert videos on TikTok have shaped their view on concert etiquette and opinions on different fan performances. A risk of doing qualitative interviews was that I could misinterpret the interviewee and make mistakes in the thematic analysis. However, as I had pre-knowledge as a fan on TikTok and knowing some interviewees personally, I could make sense of their answers without issue.

3.4. Ethics concerns and solutions

Ethical considerations about data collection had to be taken into account. I followed the suggestions from Arifin (2018). All the data collected from fans used for this study are to be completely anonymised. This means that all names, faces visible in the profile pictures or videos and sensitive information shared in comments are to be blurred out or anonymised so that their identity cannot be directed to them. The same applies to information shared with me in confidence while conducting the interviews. As Varis (2016) points out, while it is possible that fans do not use their “real names”, such online means of self-representation should rather be seen as very real and thus anonymised.

Besides, there is a chance the video or comment was from minors. It was sometimes difficult to decide someone’s age online, which was another reason to make sure everything was anonymised and obscure any traceable personal data. Even though I observed naturally happening fan behaviour online, the fans I observed were not aware of me observing.

For the second method of conducting qualitative interviews, informed consent was sent to the participants and signed by them before the interview was conducted. This is to protect and guarantee the individual’s safety and autonomy. Interview fragments could only be used in this study if they were anonymised. Therefore, the interviewees will be referred to as (artist) “Fan 1” or “Fan 2”. The data were transcribed and analysed independently, and shared with my Thesis supervisor.

All data conducted on TikTok, whether or not they made the study, will be stored until the study is complete and a final assessment is given. As for the interview recordings, these will be disposed of when they are no longer needed. This was explained in the informed consent form to the participants as well. Data were stored on an encrypted device that is password protected and only held by me.

4. Results

The discourse analysis shows features of norm negotiation practices and the debatable topics of behaviour within fandoms. Fans in concert videos and comment sections make discursive attempts to account for when screaming is acceptable or not, depending on the collective, the type of song and the timing. The “appropriate” behaviour also depends on which position one takes in the crowd. Filming is a less accepted fan practice than dancing and jumping and is often acted out by fans standing at the barricades with the best view of the artist. Dancing at Harry Styles shows is a much-valued activity, even more so than filming. Bringing fan signs is a creative fan practice, yet the concrete etiquette depends on the artist’s format of performance, level of interaction with fans, the timing of holding it up, the size of the cardboard and the text on the sign. Furthermore, two fandom-specific controversies shed light on how concert etiquette is being negotiated. Harry Styles fans on TikTok discuss the meaning of the lyric and fan chant “Leave America”, demonstrating geolocation-based tension and antagonism. Billie fans struggle to agree on whether cinema and concert etiquette can be blurred as competing interests are at play.

The analysis of the interviews shows similar features that enable me to confirm the discourse analysis insights, like that fans express their passion and excitement in different ways, and the artist’s performance template influences fans’ behaviour. The interviewees also provide new features that enriched the insights gained from the analysis. Not everything is caught on film, and concert experiences are different for everyone. Fans love different songs and take different positions in the crowd. The interviewees shared their favourite live performance moments and their annoyances about other fans. Irritations arise when fans act selfishly or over the top to attract attention from the artist, for example, by sneaking to the front. Also, excessive filming and holding fan signs are mainly found annoying as it obstructs a fan’s view. Screaming is only condemned when it is at random moments and when it is during slow and emotional songs. Dancing, jumping and dressing up are all highly valued activities to experience as much joy as possible during the concert. Sitting down is not the norm during a concert, and being excited is shown through making noise, moving, applauding, crying and laughing. These practices also contribute to a particular atmosphere that fans find memorable.

4.1. The passionate crowd: dancing versus filming

During concerts, fans express their enthusiasm in different ways. For all three fandoms, fan behaviour during concerts depends largely on their physical place in the crowd: in the front or back

of the standing area, the sitting area or the balcony. Especially people in the back of the standing area have room to dance and jump. Dancing is a particular feature of Styles' fandom. During "Treat People With Kindness", which is Styles's motto (TPWK) one of his happiest songs, no one stands still and people in the standing area can be seen dancing with quite some room, as shown in the video in Figure 1.¹

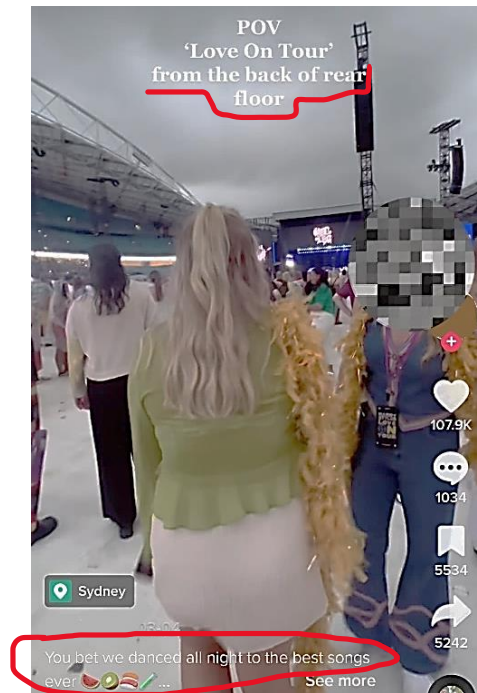


Figure 1. Video of fans dancing in the back of the standing area

In the video, fans embody negotiated fan activities to unlock joys and dancing is the main activity. The Australian fan combined different small videos of her, her friends and the crowd dancing and having fun at Styles's concert in Sydney. The caption confirms that they danced a lot and "you bet" seems to mean that it is expected at his concert. The wordplay "to the best songs ever" is a reference to One Direction's "Best Song Ever" and she uses emojis referring to Harry's songs, all signs she is a long-term active fan. Looking at their appearance highlights another specific feature of the fandom, namely an unofficial dress code at Harry's shows to match Styles's fun fashion style. Fans can be seen in fun outfits with feather boas, cowboy hats, sunglasses. Their outfit adds to the sense of joy and freedom embodied by the dancing fans in the video.

In the comments section shown in Figure 2, fans agree that the best place to dance is in the back.

¹ https://www.tiktok.com/@lilrose_art/video/7206584914748214530?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 15th 2023.

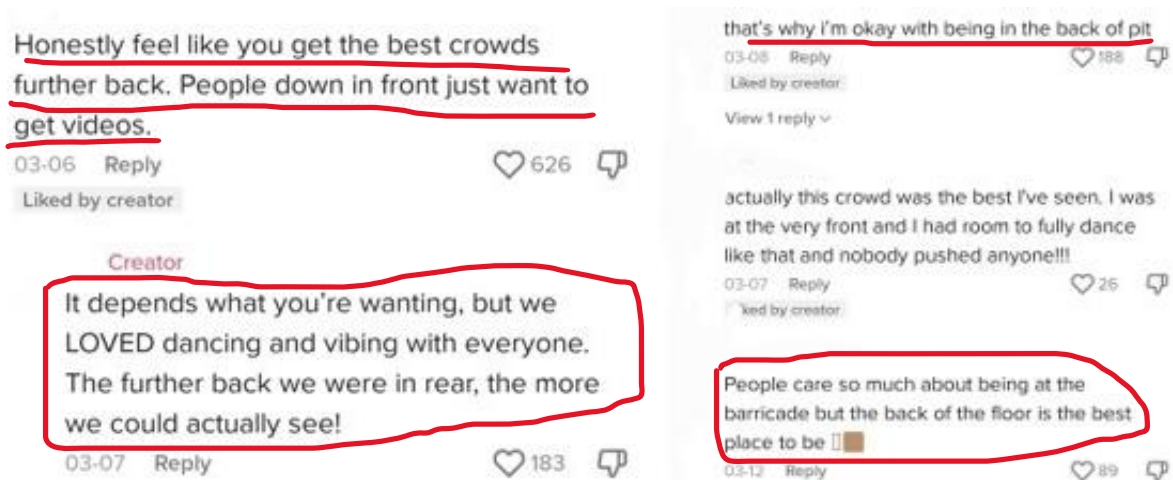


Figure 2. The comment section of fans negotiating benefits of the back standing area

Harry fans agree that it is not necessary to stand barricade. The video is used as “proof” by fans to reason that standing further back does not mean having a bad view or having less fun. Commenters confirm this argument with one another, using language like “that’s why” and “Honestly feel like”. The creator responds to the upper-left comment, confirming using their own experience.

Fans with floor tickets decide what is the best position to see the artist. Dancing is a much accepted counter-performance. It is a specific patterned way for a fan to respond to their hero as they seek intimacy with the artist to be given attention (Duffett, 2014). As the fans have a lot of space in the back of the standing pit, they use their agency to maximise the rewards of this structural position (Duffett, 2014). The dancing, as well as the outfits are examples of creative strategies to maintain their relationships with the music icon and to imagine themselves of being with him, as a way to be connected (Derbaix & Korchia, 2019).

In the front of the barricade, fans often have less room to dance, but have a better view of the artist and can make videos. Most popular and high-quality videos on TikTok are filmed by fans standing near the barricade. Fans who film the performance become co-creators of the concert experience. Moreover, they become curators, keeping an important audio-visual record of musical activity (Duffett, 2014). It is, however, a much less accepted fan practice than dancing and jumping, as these are directly associated with having fun. The following video as shown in Figure 3 caused much discussion as fans at the barricade do not look as enthusiastic as the fans dancing in the back.²

² https://www.tiktok.com/@harry_styles_444/video/7123561000577568006?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 15th, 2023



Figure 3. A fan-made video asking others to pay attention to the crowd

In this thirteen-second video, the poster has filmed Styles performing but calls attention to the crowd, using the text-to-speech option to invite other fans to “look at” how many of the front-row fans are holding their phones up and standing still, as opposed to the back standing area and sitting area. The poster most likely expects a discussion in their comment section about what has been captured on film and exchange views on the “appropriate” ways to unlock the joys of being at a Harry Styles concert.



Figure 4. Comment section where fans disagree about the filming fans front-row

The fans in the comment section (Figure 4) have different logic on the “appropriate” behaviour of fans in close proximity to the artist. The comments show that fans are taking two sides. Most commenters believe standing still in the front is a violation. Two popular comments judged the fans in the front, making assumptions that they “look bored” or simply are not having fun, with fans

responding in agreement that they are “in their phones” instead. However, some fans are arguing against this, like the response to the top-right comment, arguing that “the music is just as good” if a fan stands still and that they can still like being there. Another fan concludes that the front rows are “business” and the back a “party” meant for having fun, using matter-of-fact language to validate the filming fans, like it is a well-known phenomenon. Someone else responded a day after the post was published, calling out negative commenters to take the side of the filming fans, validating that filming is helpful when wanting to rewatch concert moments afterwards.

The discussions thus negotiate “appropriate” etiquettes of how fans should behave in the standing area. The location in the crowd is taken seriously by fans. “Filming” while standing barricade does not fit the norm of being an enthusiastic fan but is a popular fan activity. It shows how being enthusiastic and embodying this through dancing or jumping is valued by other fans. Yet, some fans acknowledge that there might be reasonable explanations as to why a fan seems unenthusiastic and that it is difficult to deduce why.

4.2. Negotiating etiquette around singing and screaming

Fans love to sing along to the songs the artist performs and TikTok is filled with videos of the crowd singing along. It is a counter-performance to act on one’s passion and enthusiasm when seeing one’s idol perform “in the flesh” and singing one’s favourite song. At concerts, screaming and singing go often hand in hand. The videos I have analysed illustrate that disagreements about criteria of singing and screaming can arise, which lead to discussion and conflict in the comment sections.

The following video in Figure 5, illustrates how loud fans can be during songs, like Billie Eilish’s hit song “Happier Than Ever”.³ There are many popular videos of Billie performing this song and fans sing it at the top of their lungs every time.

³ https://www.tiktok.com/@yasloux/video/7108045705670954246?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 27th, 2023

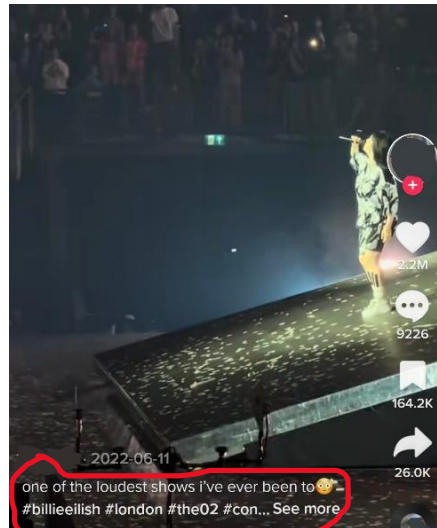


Figure 5. Fan filming Billie perform “Happier Than Ever”, capturing a loud crowd screaming along

The fan posting this expresses in the caption of this video that from all the concerts she has been to, that the crowd in London was the loudest and captures this during “Happier Than Ever”. The fan calls attention to the crowd’s loudness and how extraordinary it is to experience it. The song contains a lot of emotion, mainly resentment and anger, that fans strongly respond to, also by fans hearing the recorded live version. This video was liked more than two million times, suggesting that non-fans also enjoy hearing this song live.



Figure 6. Comments on hearing the loud crowd scream along to “Happier Than Ever”

As can be seen in Figure 6, this comment section fans unite and show conviviality by responding that they either would have screamed just as loud or reported that they were part of it confirming how loud and incredible this experience was. Fans agree that the louder the crowd, the better the concert experience, and take pride in the fandom showing their passion towards the song and Billie. This suggests that through singing and screaming, meaning-production at a concert is not a solitary and private process but rather a social and public one’ (Jenkins, 1992, p.75). The

engagement with such videos and the positive comments confirms screaming is an act of normality in the context of live shows (Duffett, 2017).

Likewise, during Taylor Swift's current "Eras tour" in the US, fans scream along to the songs during the three hour shows. The video shown in Figure 7 was recorded by a fan standing front row where Taylor performs the powerful song "Would've, Could've, Should've", in which fans can be heard singing along to the lyrics passionately.⁴

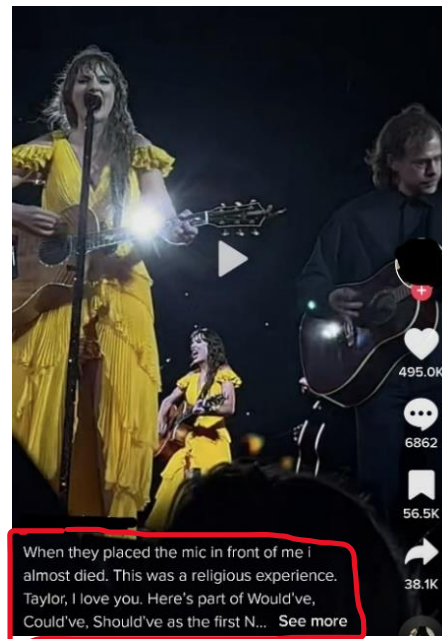


Figure 7. Fan recording Taylor where fans sing along passionately

The poster called it a "religious experience" standing so close to her. The crowd's singing is a counter-performance as a response to hearing this song being performed. This fan experience illustrates that live performances are deeply "felt" by fans as they have a physical response to it, like the poster expressed in the caption that they "almost died". The performance is "felt" as fans possess assumptions of the performance being intimate and Taylor's virtuosity and emotional vulnerability singing this song (Duffett, 2014).

This video is a product of the fan's free labour. As many fans did not get tickets because it was sold out, expensive or too far away for them, the comments in Figure 8 illustrate how valuable these videos are to Taylor fans and how they take part in the gift economy.

⁴ https://www.tiktok.com/@hihelloitsdes/video/7230713570936409390?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc (deleted video)
Retrieved at May 1st, 2023



Figure 8. Comments either showing jealousy or gratitude

Two types of comments shown in Figure 8 stood out. Many fans expressed gratitude for sharing, such as the commenter that thanked the poster for “not gatekeeping” such a quality video. Fans thus reciprocate these free labour practices by maintaining direct communication (Galuszka, 2015). The poster responded, referring to the artist as “goddess”. Just as the poster calling the experience “religious”, the live concert experience involves secular activities but have similarities with religion. Using Durkheim’s term “totemic” to describe fandom, fans and religious people both derive meaning and value from indirect communication (Cavicchi, 1998, p. 186). The experience feels religious for this fan, because the artist, being the totem, gives fans totemic feelings and an energy boost. The fan experiences a life-changing jolt of electricity as they subconsciously recognise a one-to-one connection with Taylor who they value so much (Duffett, 2014, p. 152). Likewise, the top comment imagined themselves being there, saying it “has got to be a magical feeling.” There were also reactions that indicated jealousy of not being able to be there physically, using creative language and wordplay to not sound bitter or ungrateful. A characteristic of fans on TikTok is that they use humour and exaggeration, which “villain origin story” is an example of. Hence, the fans who could not be there can imagine and picture how the experience should feel like through a video of the performance. So, while these physically non-present fans are socially co-present through this video, they go through different communal experiences (Bennett, 2012).

Thus far, the videos did not criticise the singing fans' volume but rather that it is a magical addition to such powerful songs. However, no consensus exists on how loud fans should be during a

concert or when appropriate. The following TikTok video and discussions illustrate how fans have different opinions on an acceptable level and time to scream.⁵

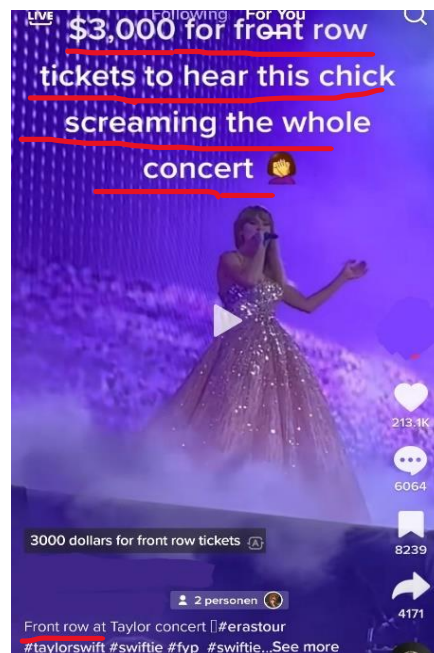


Figure 9. Screenshot of video by a fan complaining about excessive screaming

In the video, a fan can be heard screaming along to an older Taylor's song "Enchanted". The fan posting the video shown in Figure 9, uses a large text font and TikTok's affordance of having the text spoken aloud to highlight her complaint that they paid a lot of money to see Taylor up-close to hear another fan screaming along to the lyrics next to them. The fan is mad at the screaming fan and posts this video to get support from the fandom, using the money argument to argue that they deserve to not have someone scream in their ear while they stand front-row.

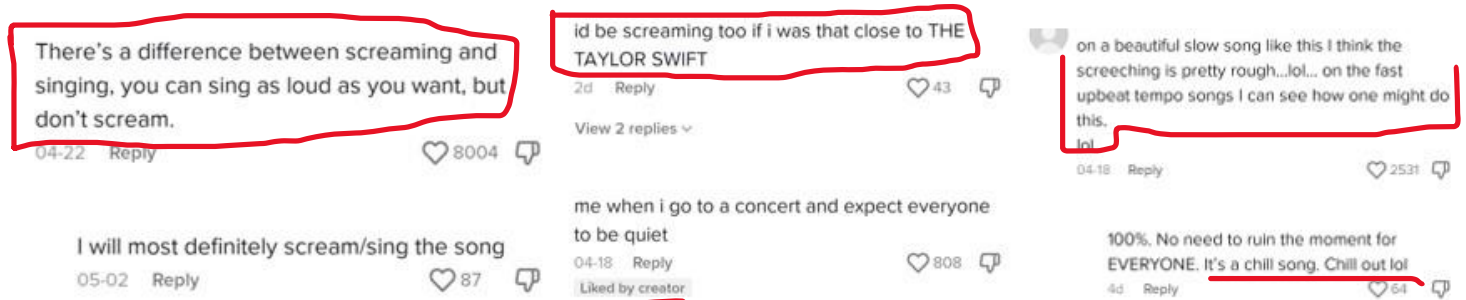


Figure 10. Comments negotiating rules around screaming and singing

Yet, in the comment section as shown in Figure 10, fans contradicted each other and took sides, negotiating the "right" conditions of screaming. On the one hand, fans express that it is inappropriate to scream this loud during a slower song as it ruins the experience for everyone, but

⁵ https://www.tiktok.com/@realworldwithjilly/video/7223379843491204398?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 12th, 2023

that singing is allowed. On the other hand, there are commenters saying it is appropriate to sing/scream along to experience joys, and express they would do the same thing, especially being that close to their idol. The sense of an artist being in close proximity intensifies fans' feelings of pleasure and therefore, does not mind the screaming (Duffett, 2014). One comment was one passive-aggressive accusation, blaming the complaining fan that they expected the screaming fan to be quiet, using Internet-specific language, "me when", that is usually applied in memes. Interestingly, the poster liked this comment, suggesting the poster is not annoyed anymore or understands the opposite perspective that screaming/singing is part of the fan experience.

So, the poster is not thanked for sharing a concert-video as part of the gift economy, as the complaint generated a discussion of concert etiquette. As Duffett (2017) argues, the different types of comments suggest that the etiquette around screaming is subjective and that it depends on someone's fan status and preference of expressing passion. On a personal level, this screaming fan in the video could reflect a state of worship.

The video in Figure 11 was not shared on TikTok as a complaint explicitly.⁶ It features Swift performing "All Too Well", a fan-favourite with angry but powerful lyrics directed towards a famous ex, allegedly actor Jake Gyllenhaal.

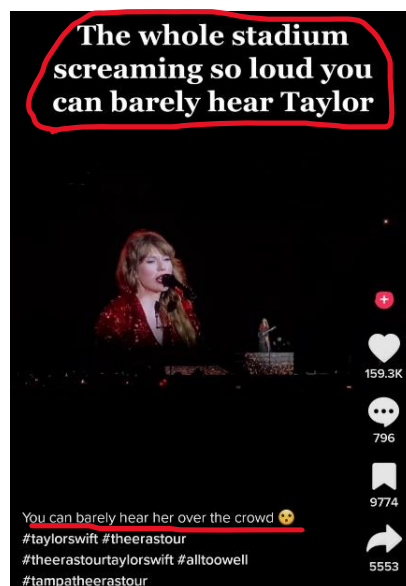


Figure 11. Screenshot of video of the loud crowd during "All Too Well"

⁶ https://www.tiktok.com/@kyndalcandelario/video/7224335799603531050?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 12th, 2023

This fan who was at the show in Tampa claims, using the text affordance, to have barely heard Taylor sing over the crowd's screaming. The poster did not intent to share the video to complain, but rather to share a special moment with the fandom that the crowd was passionately screaming along. Still, this video sparked discussion about the appropriate volume and timing.

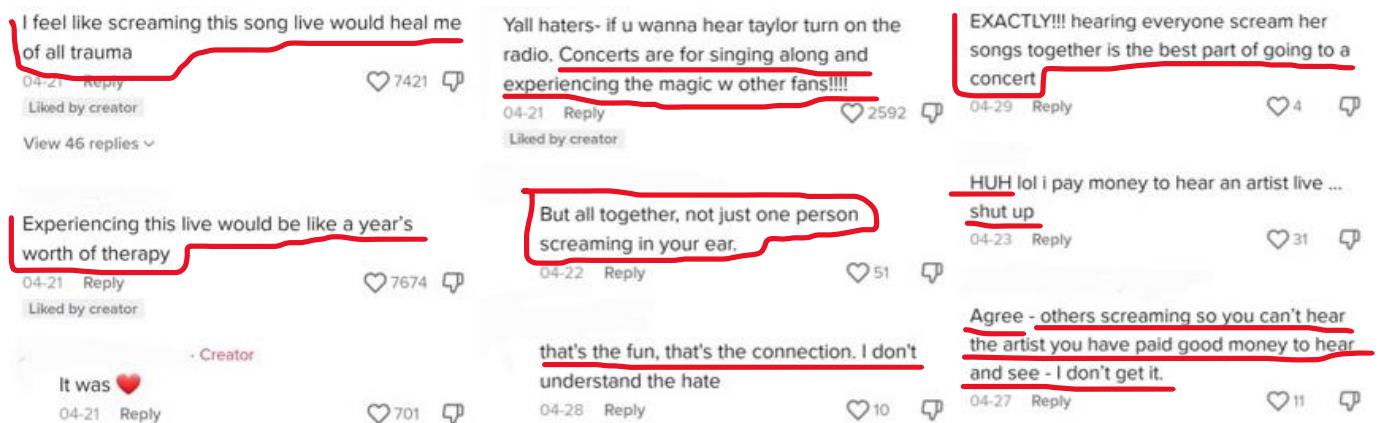


Figure 12. Comments reacting to the loud crowd singing to “All Too Well”

Fans’ comments on the left illustrate how screaming functions as an outlet for emotions for fans, calling it “better than therapy”, suggesting screaming is a cathartic counter-performance (Duffett, 2017). The other five comments are part of a discussion about whether it was a good thing that the crowd was so loud. The top-right comment believes screaming along “is the best part of a concert” and that people who disagree are “haters”, while the middle comment emphasises that it should be a collective thing, not “one person screaming in your ear”. The bottom-right comment also argues that the fans should be quieter as they paid “good money to hear and see”, believing the poster’s statement without being physically present.

So, these videos and discussions suggest that mainly singing and screaming along to powerful songs that are fan favourites as a collective is a highly valued normality. It reflects an intensity of audience engagement and public transcendence (Duffett, 2017). However, some fans think excessive individual screaming exists and that it can get too loud.

4.3 Negotiating “correct” fan practices to get the artist’s attention

Fans want to be as close to the artist as they can while seeing them perform “in the flesh”. While there is an invisible barrier between the fan and artist on stage maintained by security, fans have found ways to break it. In the standing area near the barricade, fans stand physically the nearest to the artist and have the best chance at getting their attention. I have observed two examples of how fans

get noticed by the artist. It illustrates the format of the particular artist's performance plays a role in how much fan-artist interaction is possible.

4.3.1 Fan-made signs at Harry Styles shows

A popular fan practice at Harry Styles's concerts is to bring self-made signs on paper or cardboard with a message for him to read. It allows fans to express something creative for others to enjoy. Regularly, Styles reads someone's sign and engages with them, often having a small conversation with the fan in front of everyone. These videos where fans talk with Styles are popular videos on TikTok. Interaction with fans is a specific feature of his shows; thus, signs are a means to communicate something to him visibly. However, the many fan-made signs in the crowd can negatively influence the concert experience for fans and cause debates on TikTok.



Figure 13. Video by Australian fans who brought a controversial sign

In the video shown in Figure 13, the first frame is a photo of three Australian fans who had standing tickets who brought a fan-made sign to Styles's concert and were able to stand in the front. Then, it transitions to a video of how the artist responded to it.⁷ The poster used a large font of text to gain attention of video-watching fans to continue watching for Styles's reaction to the text. In the caption, the fan refers back to the video and Styles' reaction to confirm that sign was successful and their intention was to make him laugh. Styles can indeed be seen smiling and shaking his head. Yet, people in the comments, shown in Figure 14, had mixed feelings about the text on the sign.

⁷ https://www.tiktok.com/@frankieefisher/video/7205214493738110210?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 1st, 2023



Figure 14. The mix reactions to the fan sign

The fans were divided and took sides. About half of the fans engaging with the comments found it funny and could see the humour of the sign and congratulated them. However, quite some fans found the sign disrespectful or shameful or just did not understand the point of putting such sensitive information on a sign. The comment “side eye”, describes a facial expression that one is looking at others with side eyes, implying judging someone silently, and is specific TikTok language that is shaped by trends and reapplied to new situations. Another comment (bottom-left) is by a fan of Taylor Swift, to which a Harry fan replied that feeling shame is not a characteristic of most Harry fans. The middle comment uses the word “Real” which is TikTok-language to express one personally understand this type of behaviour and confirm it as true. The direct responds negotiated if such text is funny and “real” like they claimed, or disrespectful. This negotiation of whether to laugh or disapprove of the sign shows that when the artist actually laughs, fans are more likely to be on the side of the sign-holder appreciate such banter between artist and fan. Yet, it also comes to show that sense of humour differs per person and, since such fan-sign videos are popular, the online fandom experience forms one’s perspective.

This video lays bare how fans navigate the social hierarchy and how fans assign one another status. Yet, also that there is no consensus or one established hierarchy so fan status and the social hierarchy is thus deeply subjective. One can rise on the hierarchy based on the fans’ knowledge level and access to the object of fandom (Hills, 2002). By posting this video, the girls shared their moment of interaction, which shows multiple things. Firstly, the fans display their access and economic and symbolic capital (Edlom & Karlsson, 2021). It shows how close they could get to Harry and create a fun interaction for the fandom to enjoy. They also display their knowledge that bringing a sign results in attention. As a response, commenters assign status based on evaluating their behaviour. Some comments raise the girls’ status for being funny and creative and having a fun interaction with

the star, but other fans place the fans lower for acting disrespectfully without shame in front of the music icon with that fan sign.

As fans gets inspired through such videos, they will also try to get Styles' attention. As a result, fans in the front standing pit compete with one another during the concert. Yet, this can block the view from others so that they cannot see the artist perform. The following video, shown in Figure 15, illustrates how etiquette around fan signs are negotiated.⁸

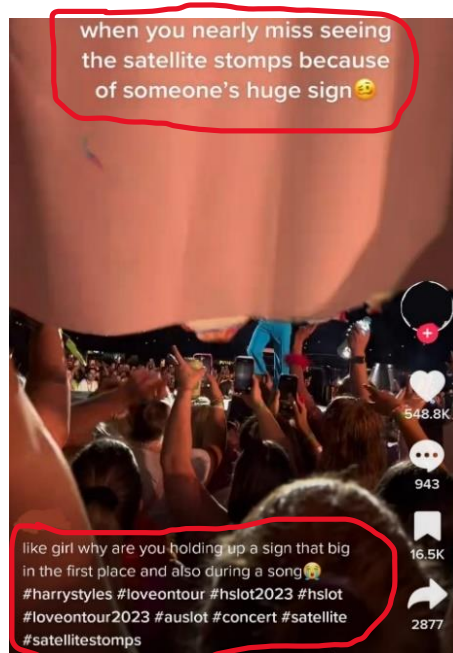


Figure 15. Screenshot of video where a fan held up a large sign during a special moment

The video is an extreme example of signs during a concert. The poster wanted to show how such a fan-made sign can be obstructive for other crowd members. The caption seems directed to the sign-holder, but the intention was to get support from other fans. “Satellite stomps” refers to the instrumental part during “Satellite”, in which Harry dances on the catwalk stage. This is a highly valued moment by fans, so the poster most likely knew that the fandom would take her side. In the video, fans can be heard calling on the sign-holder, and, in response, they took the sign down. Even though it was a short block of view, the video caused the action to be further criticised and ridiculed by fans on TikTok, most likely non-crowd members, as they imagined how they would react if they were in the fan's position. The video was interacted with many times, and its comments, as shown in Figure 16, were all in support of the poster.

⁸ https://www.tiktok.com/@adoreyoualice/video/7211994653426535686?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 1st, 2023

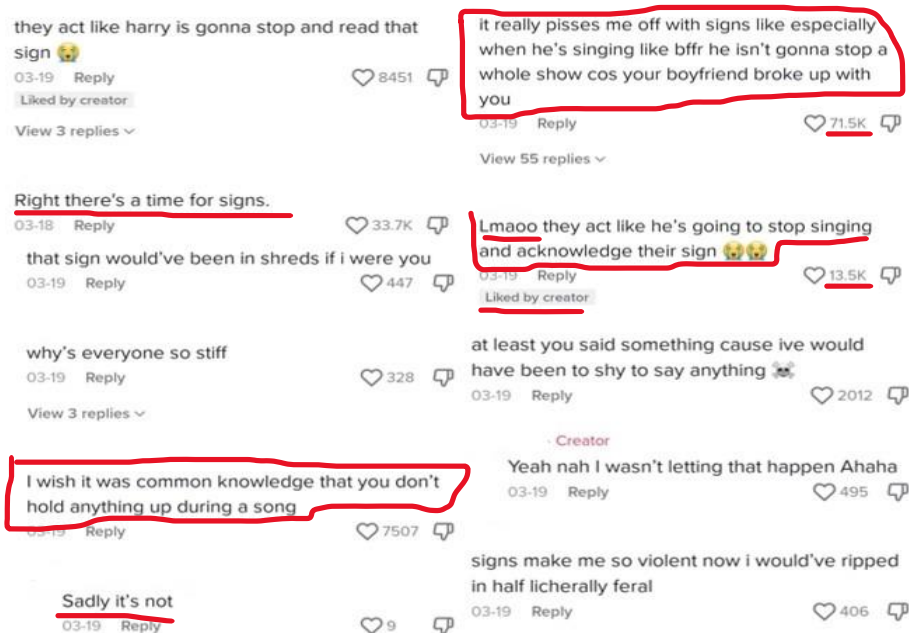


Figure 16. Comments responding to the behaviour of the sign-holder

In this comment section, the sign-holder was both ridiculed and taken as an example to negotiate conditions to fan signs. Commenters were angry for the fans directly bothered by the sign and found it incomprehensible why the sign-holder would hold it up as the Styles performed. The use of crying and skull emojis and the internet “lmao”, meaning “laughing my ass off”, all indicate that the fans almost find it funny that the sign-holder would think it was a good idea. The two top comments suggest that the majority of fans believe in right and wrong circumstances. They formulate ascriptive conditions to signs as “common sense” rules, being disappointed that not all fans have the same fan knowledge, that for instance, signs should not be held up during the songs as Harry only engages with signs in-between songs.

During Taylor Swift’s eras tour, signs are often not permitted by security. Moreover, during the three-hour performances, Taylor rarely interacts with individual crowd members. The video, shown in Figure 17, illustrates that the artist’s level of engagement with the audience and size of the venue play a role in fans’ attitude towards holding up signs.⁹

⁹ https://www.tiktok.com/@loisyylnrz/video/7216769221290757381?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 1st, 2023

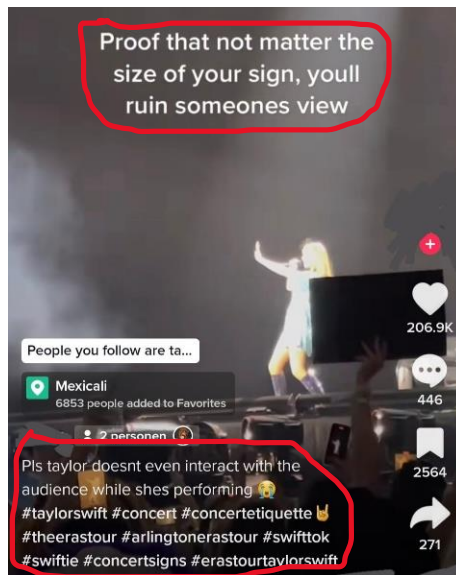


Figure 17. Screenshot of a Taylor fan video “proving” signs are obstructive

The video is the fan’s argument that any sign is obstructive for other fans and is not appreciated, especially at Taylor’s shows. The fan uses a large text font to bring attention to their statement, arguing that any sign size ruins other fans’ views. In the caption, she ridicules the sign-holder using an Internet-specific abbreviation “Pls”. The poster used an audio snippet of a Taylor song instead of the concert video’s original sound. Furthermore, she used many hashtags, like #concertetiquette, #theerastour, #swiftie and #concertsigns, to target other fans (“Swifties”) and people who care about concert etiquette and want to stay updated on what is happening on tour. The fan’s intention was most likely to get support from the community, in which she succeeded.

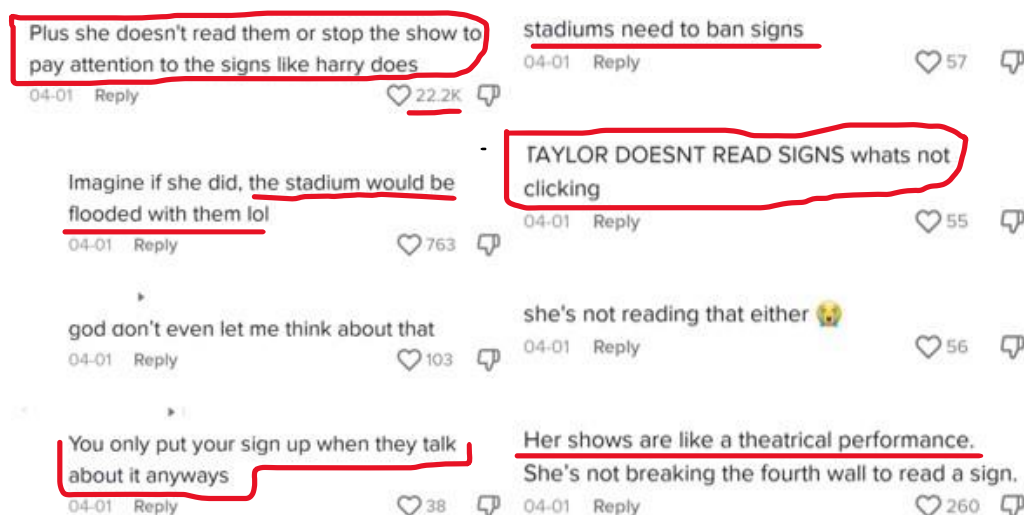


Figure 18. Comments of fans happy Taylor does not read fan signs

The comments in Figure 18 suggest that Swifties are happy with the general absence of fan signs in the crowd but react astonished and frustrated that the sign-holder tried to get Taylor’s

attention. For example, a commenter uses an internet-specific phrase, “What is not clicking”, meaning “What do you not understand?” directed to the sign-holder that signs are useless as Swift does not read them and frames it as common sense. As in the previous video, commenters use discursive strategies to argue the conditions of holding signs. By pointing out what they perceive as “common knowledge”, they discuss what norms they subscribe to try to maintain the no-signs standard. The top-left comment reminds others that Taylor’s performance style is different than Harry’s, to which the respondents argue that Swifties do not bring signs because “otherwise it would be flooded with them”.

Hence, the format of performance plays a big role in how much fans can interact with the artist. Taylor’s concerts have a no-signs norm as she does not read them and Harry’s concerts, many have brought signs as he regularly acknowledges them to have a moment of interaction. In both cases, fans agree that signs should be limited to when the artist is not singing and is only valid when the artist seems to engage with the crowd. The two communities negotiate the fan practice similarly, despite the artist’s performance format differences.

4.3.2 Throwing objects at the artist

A more direct way to get the artist’s attention is to give the artist a gift. Yet, throwing it on stage as the artist performs, like in the video shown in Figure 19, is not perceived as good fan behaviour by fans.¹⁰

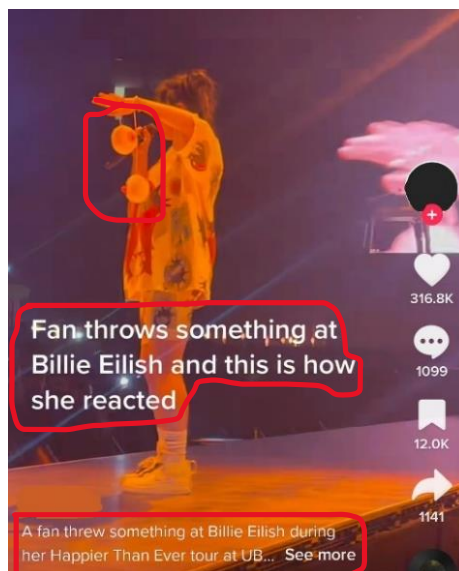


Figure 19. Fan standing front-row sharing Billie’s reaction to getting something thrown at her

¹⁰ https://www.tiktok.com/@amazze_thegreat/video/7065198459367836974?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 1st, 2023

During the “Happier Than Ever” tour, Billie Eilish had a catwalk stage so could be close to the audience and interact with them. The video captures a fan throwing an inappropriate object and Billie’s reaction to it. Billie shakes her head and swings it back into the crowd. The poster’s intention was to show the fandom how Billie reacted to this strange act by a fan midperformance. The video received a lot of discussion online.

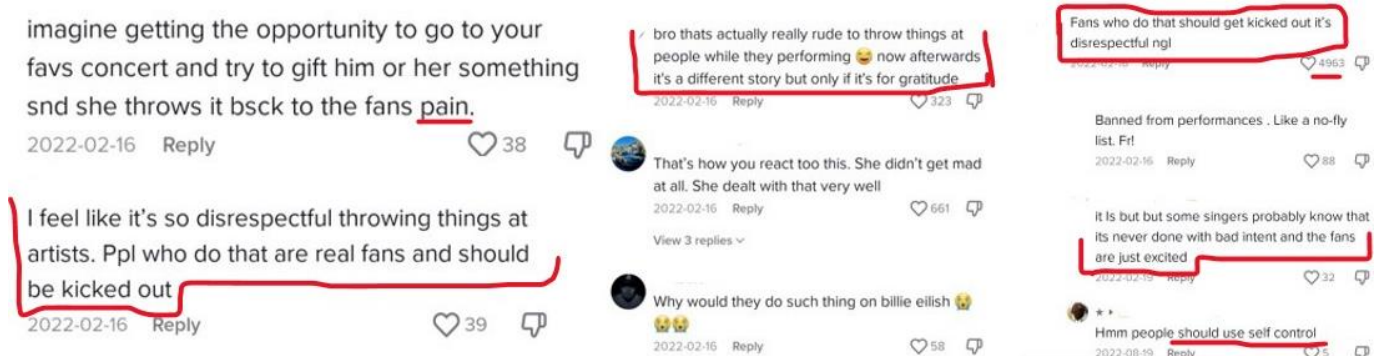


Figure 20. Comments discussing the video of Billie getting something thrown at her

In the comments (Figure 20), fans make discursive attempts to reason whether the thrower is a genuine fan or not and what is unacceptable or too excessive fan behaviour and what the consequences should be (Johnson, 2007). They mostly agreed that throwing any object at the artist while performing is unsavoury behaviour, mainly when it is not a thoughtful gift. Billie did not seem to appreciate the action but did not seem mad as it was one of her fans. Most fans took a defensive stance on Billie’s behalf, calling the action rude and disrespectful and saying that the fan lacks self-control. The comment on the bottom left is most likely meant to say, “are not real fans”, arguing that a “real” fan would be respectful to Billie. Some go so far as calling on the venue’s security to kick such misbehaving people out in the future. It suggests that potentially harming or overstepping the boundaries of the music icon means being lowered significantly on the fan hierarchy, as they get assigned the status of a non-fan or a bad fan. A few commenters tried to imagine how it must be for the thrower and assumed they had good intentions because, as a fan, they must have meant it as a gift and have been too excited to think it through. As seen with the fan signs, fans defend the artist if they do not like the fan gesture. If fans’ actions negatively affect the artist, the fandom takes it seriously online as a breach of fandom etiquette.

4.4 controversies and antagonism within the fandoms

4.4.1. “Leave America”

“Leave America” is more than just a lyric in Styles’ hit song “As It Was” to fans. Fans scream that line from the top of their lungs to express their wish the pop icon leaves the US to come back to give

live performances in their area, and fans film and share the fan chant online. On TikTok, videos are so popular that even non-fans are recommended such videos on their For You Pages. Most Harry fans love the trend as it has become an inside joke and a collective fan practice during Styles' concerts. Styles is aware and even prepares himself for the screaming.

However, the trend lays bare tension and antagonism between American and non-American fans, creating an “Us versus Them” division in the fandom and pointing towards a hierarchy where even accusations are made of discriminatory behaviour against American fans. The lyric “Leave America” and its connotational meaning require some context. The American market for pop music has been huge for decades, and as the United States is such a big influential country, artists often do a separate North America tour. Styles has acknowledged his love for touring, and his fans want him to perform near them. Nevertheless, one European country often gets one or two shows, while Styles does multiple shows in cities like Los Angeles and New York City, plus touring most states. Hence, some non-American fans do not find it fair of the artist as it seems he favours American fans. The following video, as shown in Figure 21, illustrates how American fans stay quiet during shows in American cities during the lyric and negotiate their reasons behind it.¹¹



Figure 21. Screenshot of a video capturing a silent crowd during “Leave America”

In the video, the crowd at the New York City show stays silent during the lyric to the delight of Styles who laughs about the sudden silence. The fan's intention for posting this video was to show the fan community that it was on purpose and that it turned into a funny moment. The caption

¹¹ https://www.tiktok.com/@danielle_nicoleb/video/7134191866706283819?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 21st, 2023

indicates that fans collectively decided not to sing along to the line. The poster used the TikTok feature that read the text out loud. Not “hitting the same” is an expression used often on the Internet that means in this context that the lyric does not convey the same feelings for American fans and that it feels wrong to sing it. Seeing Styles happy is a reason on its own for fans to like this video, but American crowd’s behaviour causes a different kind of engagement in the comment section (Figure 22).



Figure 22. Comment section discussing why Americans do not sing the lyric

The comments reveal more about the indexical meaning of the lyric and the American point of view. Firstly, the poster responds to a comment asking for an explanation of the silence, speaking for the American fans that “we don’t want him to leave America”. The silence thus serves as a message to Harry, asking him to stay in America. Another comment brings attention to a possible reason for Styles’s laughter after the silence, namely that Styles “knows we are fighting over who gets to have him”, suggesting that the two sides are possessive over their idol and that not singing the lyric is a way to fight for him. It suggests another element of tension that “Leave America” highlights. However, other comments, most likely not American fans, seem not to know the reason why “Leave America” “doesn’t hit the same” and blame the “quietness” on the American crowd’s lack of energy. Someone, most likely European, gives the reason that concerts are not special anymore for Americans as Styles performs there often. In another comment thread (bottom-left), fans compare other countries where Styles performed to argue for America’s inferiority, thus pointing to a hierarchy in the fandom based on their judgement of how loud the crowd in the video was during “As It Was”.

The following video (Figure 23) and its comment section illustrate the opinions of the other side who are in favour of screaming along to “Leave America”.¹²

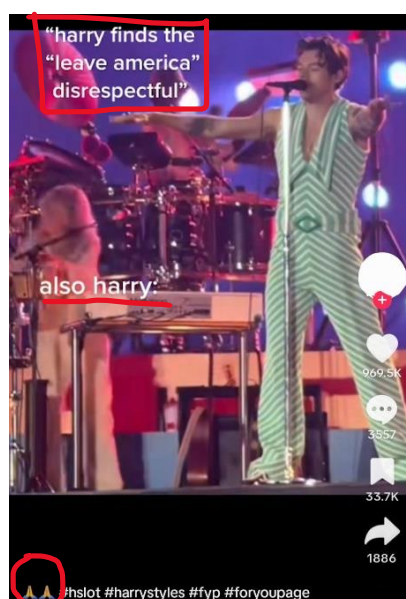


Figure 23 Screenshot of a video “proving” Harry likes “Leave America”

The creator of this video is most likely not American as they use a quote, most likely heard online by American fans, to let the video function as proof that Styles likes the screaming to “Leave America”. They use the accompanying text “also Harry”, often used as a meme-template to show contradicting behaviours in a comedic way. Without calling specific fans out, the praying emojis as the caption indicate that they hope to put an end to the discussion with this video and that viewers, especially American fans, understand the fun of the concert practice as Styles seems to enjoy it.



Figure 24. Comments discussing “Leave America” and upset American fans

The comment section in Figure 25 is mostly dominated by non-American fans, who reacted to each other based on comments by American fans. From the top-middle comment in can be

¹² https://www.tiktok.com/@hisonlyshe/video/7112440266300116229?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 23th, 2023

concluded that American commenters were upset about the video, to which a poster gives the reason that they believe “Leave America” upsets Styles. The poster responds to comments seemingly proud that it made American fans upset, using “xxx”, an abbreviation for digital communication, meaning kisses, that tries to hide their somewhat demeaning tone. One American fan saw the humour in the trend, to which the poster expressed relief and assigned them respect.

This comment section shows signs that American fans and UK fans compete with each other and that Styles’s country of origin is used as an argument to “claim” him. Non-American commenters perform practices of assigning status, and look down upon American fans who are disapproving and upset about the popular fandom activity, assigning them a lower spot on the fan hierarchy. The bottom-left comment brings up that Styles is British, accusing American fans that they are “claiming Styles”, while the bottom-right comment “he belongs to us” demonstrate a feeling of possessiveness and resentment towards American fans. However, the most popular comment (top-right corner) speaks out against fans who are against screaming the lyric and offers a moderate non-American point of view, namely that it is a request for more shows in the UK, as he is from there, but that it is not meant as an antagonistic act towards American fans. The language used suggests the person is frustrated that it has to be specified. “Smh” is an abbreviation for “shaking my head” used online to express disapproval.

There was one discussion that originated from one comment (top-left) that stood out, pointing to hateful behaviour towards American fans as a result of the discussions about the lyric.



Figure 25. Comments discussing unfair treatment towards American fans

The discussion as shown in Figure 25 demonstrates that antagonism goes beyond exchanging hateful words and being mad at each other online and that it can go so far as physical assault and bullying at shows. Commenters offer different accounts to whether there is actual evidence for such antagonism and if to believe stories from second-hand witnesses. The top-right comment claims to have seen “plenty” of “disrespectful” behaviour first-hand towards Americans at UK shows.

So, the discussions on TikTok lay bare the non-American fans' attitude towards American fans and their view on the lyric. The demeaning and grudging tone by some indicates they are jealous of American fans as they have a higher chance of attending his concert. "Leave America" thus has significance in multiple ways. Screaming or not screaming a lyric is not only a fun concert practice and a way to interact with Styles. It also embodies the underlying competition, grudges and antagonism towards the other side, particularly American fans. In this case, antagonism is geolocation bound in which fans try to claim ownership of the artist wanting him to perform in their country and begrudging the other side.

4.4.2. Billie Eilish's concert shown in the cinema

At the beginning of 2023, Billie Eilish's recorded concert "Billie Eilish Live at the O2" was released to be shown in cinemas worldwide. The following videos and comments illustrate how concert and cinema etiquette do not match, and the attempt at blurring them causes conflict. The video shown in Figure 26, offers a perspective by Billie fans turning their cinema in a concert pit.¹³

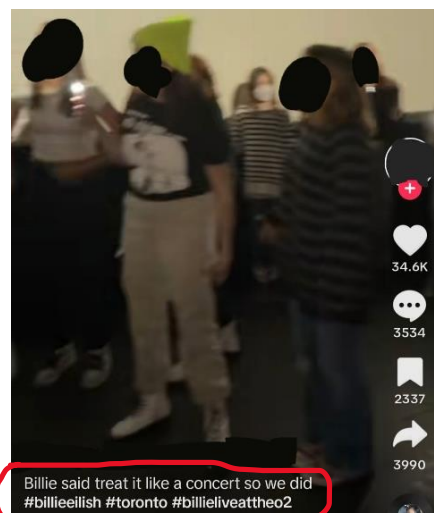


Figure 26. Screenshot of video filmed by Billie fans jumping in front of cinema screen

In the video, fans can be seen filming with flash on, jumping and screaming standing in a circle, behaviour usually acted out in actual concert pits. These fans thus have taken concert rules, set up by the fandom, the artist and the venue, and applied them to a cinema setting. The caption is important as it suggests they follow the instructions of their idol and interpreted it their own way. Billie would have given them permission to show enthusiasm like they would at her concerts, but did not explicitly say to jump and scream this excessively.

¹³ https://www.tiktok.com/@tandon_rebecca/video/7193556981674724613?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 24th, 2023

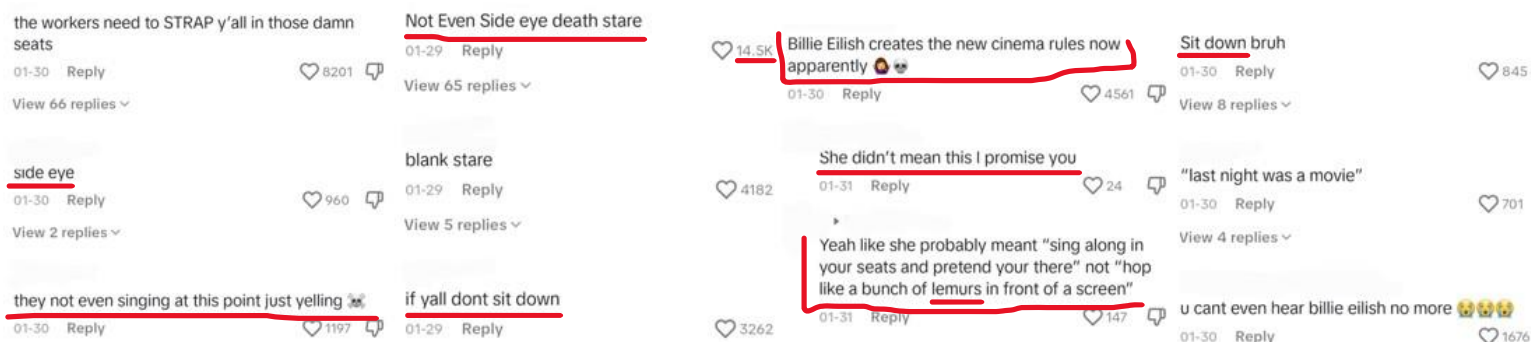


Figure 27. Comments discussing the video, criticising the Billie fans

It is possible that most commenters in Figure 27 responded negatively on the video as they are not fans, as they ridicule the fans who were having fun. Many of these comments used TikTok or Internet-specific language like “Side eye”, the top comment surpassing that with “death stare”, an exaggeration saying that they severely dislike the behaviour. There were fans who defended Billie, like the person saying “She didn’t mean this I promise you”, indicating that the jumping fans took her request out of context. The person replying agreed and called the fans “lemurs”, referring to them as animals, or at least that they are acting non-humanlike. Other called out their screaming or the fact that they were out of their seats, pointing out the cinema rules in a somewhat demeaning way as if directly addressing the people visible in the video, like with the comment “if y’all don’t sit down”.

The following video, shown in Figure 28, is from a cinema in the UK, where fans record other fans and judge their behaviour.¹⁴

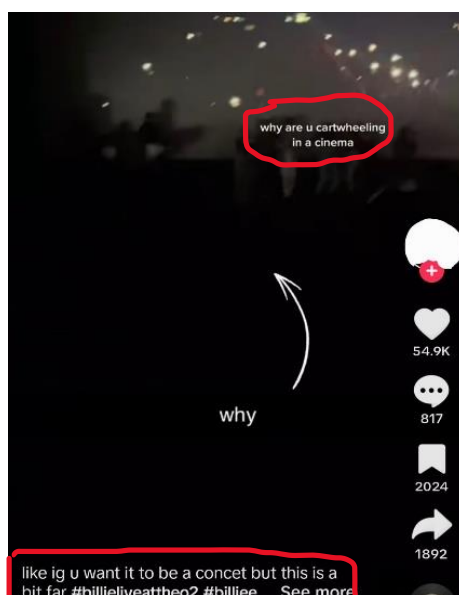


Figure 28. Video by UK fans judging the fans turning it into a concert pit

¹⁴ https://www.tiktok.com/@444rosewillow/video/7193471432989379846?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 25th, 2023

The video consists of a couple on snapchat-recorded videos by fans in their seats filming the fans in the front pretending the cinema is a concert pit. Both Snapchat's text affordance and TikTok's text option is used to describe what is happening. The fans behind the camera, capturing their behaviour, judge how excessively these fans act and record themselves laughing when the cinema staff warns and stops them. The film is paused twice, so these fans interrupt the experience of fans respecting the rules. The poster likely planned to share only on Snapchat with friends, but the moment in hindsight, felt worth sharing with the fan community on TikTok. The caption suggests that the poster understands their enthusiasm, but that it went too far, using informal text-style like "Ig" (I guess), "u" (you), and does not use punctuation marks.



Figure 29. Comments of fans discussing the cinema and concert rules

In the comment section, shown in Figure 29, fans took sides and some directly replied to one another. Most comments criticised the jumping fans using “common sense” to argue the difference between concert and cinema etiquette. The top comment defines a concert-movie experience as “cinematic” and that having etiquette means respecting this boundary. The top-left comment argues that other norms apply in an arena that creates a different experience. One comment also disapproves the jumping fans, using Internet expression that they are being “extra”, so too much, but not for them standing in front of the screen, arguing that sitting down “takes away the experience”. One fan (<3), not the poster, commented on the critique towards the overstepping fans, paraphrasing Billie to defend them, implying that they think the artist has more power to decide the rules than the specific cinema. They thus believe that Eilish is on top of the hierarchy that can give orders to fans. Yet, other fans objected to this, saying that Billie only got to decide if fans could scream and dance if she got permission directly from the cinema.

The last video, shown in Figure 30, illustrates that not every cinema was turned into a concert and where fans respected the cinema etiquettes, to the disappointment of some fans.¹⁵

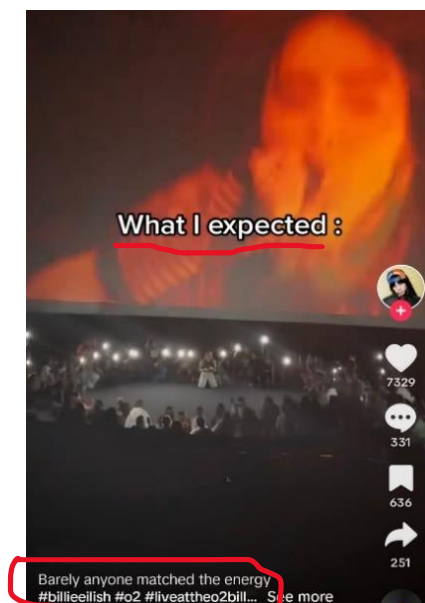


Figure 30. Video of disappointed fan expecting a different concert experience

In the video, the fan uses someone else's video of a cinema turned into a concert pit to compare it to their own experience. They do this with a video they filmed of the same movie fragment but instead showing a silent and dark cinema. The caption suggests that there were some fans showing some enthusiasm, but "barely", as they sat in their seat in the dark. They used a popular TikTok sound of an out-of-tune flute blasting over Earth, Wind & Fire's "September", chosen on purpose to call the event represented in the video failed or a disappointment. The hashtags they used suggest they wanted the video to reach other Billie fans sharing similar views on how the concert film should be experienced or supported. Yet, the fan got mixed comments, as seen in Figure 31.

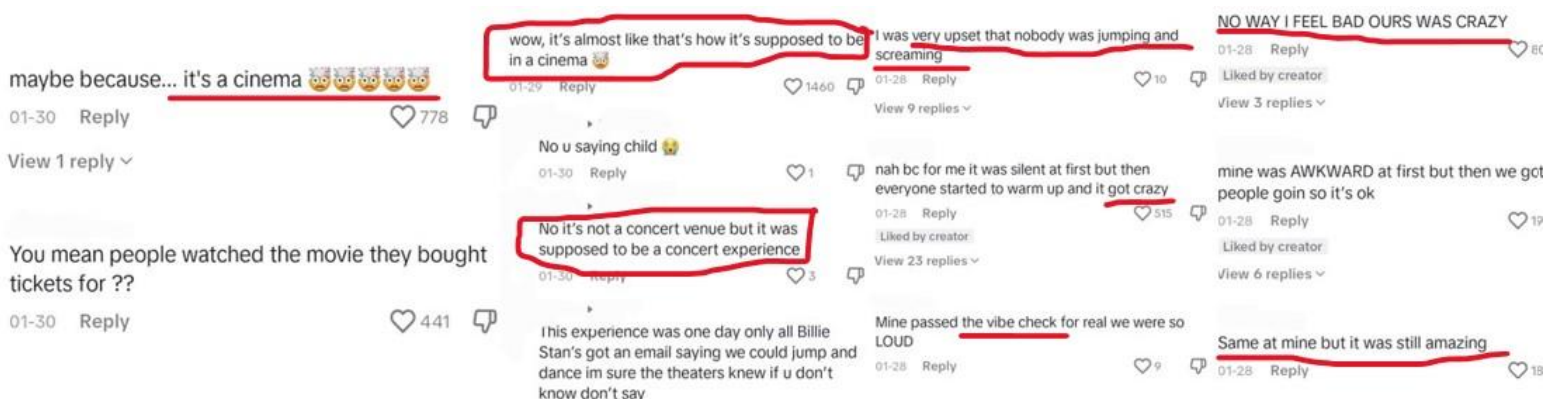


Figure 31. Comments responding to the disappointed Billie fan

¹⁵ https://www.tiktok.com/@missbarbieelish/video/7193482200757685509?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc
Retrieved at May 25th, 2023

The comment section is a mix of opinions where fans demonstrate different discursive practices, some building on Billie's request to "treat it like a concert" and others building on cinema etiquette, using their shared sense of normality. The top comments did not support the fan and used the emoji to describe being stunned by something, to say silence is customary in a cinema sarcastically. The bottom-left comment is also cynical, implying that watching in silence is the standard at the cinema, using "you mean" and two question marks to express some annoyance at the poster's view. However, some fans expressed sympathy, saying, "I feel bad", or were upset. Other comments stated that their experience started the same, framing the silence as "awkward" and "not passing the vibe check", but that their audience "warmed up" and became "crazy", meaning that the audience started to behave like in the first video fragment. The poster liked these comments suggesting they were happy for the fans who got to experience a concert experience. The bottom-right, however, did not seem to mind the silence, as it was still an "amazing" experience.

Hence, Billie's concert movie caused controversy in which Billie fans and non-fans discussed concert and cinema etiquette. It is an example of fan antagonism, described by Johnson (2007) as ongoing competitive struggles between internal factions and external institutions to codify the fan-text-producer relationship according to their separate interests discursively. The competing interests are the cinema (staff) enforcing cinema etiquette and two types of Billie fans that maintained different etiquettes and were annoyed by one another. Fans who were supportive or participants in turning a cinema into a concert pit to gain the concert experience were heavily criticised on TikTok for recontextualising the cinema experience and making it a fan event. While the concert film allowed the whole fandom to experience Billie's concert at the O2 in London, cinema norms still apply and cannot be changed as they are systematically maintained. When the artist encourages the fans to treat it like a concert, however, it causes division in the fandom as to which concert norms can be applied to a cinema to make Billie proud. However, there are thus also fans who want to watch the concert film like any other film. As witnessed in the three videos and comment sections, these competing struggles fail to define interpretative and evaluative consensus (Johnson, 2007).

4.5 Accounts of a personal and collective concert experience

All interviewees reported how wonderful their concert experience was and found that, while the ticket prices are ridiculous nowadays, the means necessary to attend are more than worth it. Their music is the main motive for attending their idol's concerts. As Taylor Swift fan 1 says: "I attend concerts because I love the music, so I'm always going to have a good time".

The atmosphere was the main feature that made their concert experience so memorable that a concert video could not do justice. According to Harry Styles fan 1: “Online, it’s quite abstract of someone performing, and you often do not see the atmosphere and the crowd. The atmosphere makes his concerts special.” Insights from the interviews can confirm that a concert’s communal feeling makes for a magical experience. According to Harry Styles fan 2: “It is a very accepting space, and everyone is so happy, Harry as well. It is a party really, kind of like an energy-exchange: he gives the crowd his energy, and we give it back and express gratitude.” All interviewees confirm that not showing passion is looked down upon by fans, as enthusiastic crowds make for a good atmosphere. All interviewees reported the crowd was loud and passionate and that they preferred this over silence, as some admitted to feeling shame or judged if they were alone in their enthusiasm.

Interviewees confirm that the feeling of seeing their idol perform in front of them and “in the flesh” made a lot of impressions. Harry Styles fan 1 says: “At my first concert with him, I was so amazed that he was a real person that is not only on my screen. When I saw him with my own eyes, it was such a different experience. You feel his presence and realise how many fans there actually are. Everyone is there for him and loves him just as much or more than me.” Likewise, Billie Eilish fan 1 said something similar: “I couldn’t process in my head that she was in the same room as me”.

4.6 The evaluation of counter-performances and embodied concert etiquette

The interview findings confirm that most counter-performances mentioned in the discourse analysis are common practices for fans to unlock the most joys. They are embodied both as an individual and as a collective fan practice. All interviewees reported that singing and screaming along to songs makes the room’s atmosphere special. It is a way for fans to express enthusiasm and passion for their idol, and everyone participates in singing along, having memorised every lyric. Screaming is part of it. Billie Eilish fan 1 says: “You are also there for the show elements and to hype each other up, so do not go to such a concert if you want to enjoy the sound. You can always look up a live acoustic version on YouTube.” This fan shows the participatory aspect of attending a concert where performing counter-practices is important. Likewise, Taylor Swift fan 1 argues: “I’m not going to limit my own fun, make the concert less fun, because you can’t deal with me dancing or singing. I’m not screaming for three hours straight, but if you cannot deal with enthusiasm, well...”. It supports the idea that screaming along is part of having fun and that fans are often unwilling to limit that.

Furthermore, the interviews confirm that the type of song, happy or sad, makes fans collectively act in a way that fits the context. Dancing and jumping happen throughout all upbeat and happy songs. According to Harry Styles fan 2, who had seating tickets: “Everyone went crazy, everyone danced. I did not see anyone sitting down. You get so much energy from the crowd.” Additionally, crying is an important counter-performance not yet encountered during the discourse analysis. Interviewees reported it mostly happened to them or others during emotional songs that meant a lot to them, but also at the end when the artist said goodbye. Crying confirms that fans’ emotions are heightened during a concert.

All interviewees had negative opinions about excessive behaviour, and it confirms that screaming too loud or for no reason, taking up too much space, holding up a fan sign too long and filming too long is considered annoying and inappropriate. Also, talking during an emotional song is considered inappropriate, so this suggests that fans condemn anything that seems unnecessary or rude. Moreover, the interviews confirm that filming is a much less accepted fan activity than dancing, particularly in the standing pit. Interviewees shared irritations about the filming duration and how the many phones up affected their view. Harry Styles fan 1 reports: “I find it so annoying that people film the entire concert. If you really want to re-experience everything someone else has filmed it, you can find it online. Sometimes, when everyone had their phones up, you couldn’t see anything. I’m very tall and even I could not see.” Moreover, interviewees report that fans ruin each other’s videos due to the many phones. Their concerns are thus not about the etiquette of posting concert videos on the internet but about the physical aspects of filming that disrupt fans’ view of the artist. A new insight the interviewees gave is that filming is an activity that everyone participates in, including them. Most fans film small parts of the live performance to relive their experience afterwards. A Harry fan also reports that fans show their enthusiasm through filming: “Because everyone is so enthusiastic, everyone is filming and thus have their phone up. Everyone is so happy to be there. You just notice that.” A new insight is thus that filming can also be a way to express excitement.

The interviews also provided new insights into what fans find a breach of etiquette or simply irritating. Interviewees report that people jumping the queue or sneaking in front of you is their main annoyance. They share it is a typical incident at concerts. Also, not following the orders from venue staff, like the not running rule, is also viewed as annoying. Interviewees conclude that annoyances at concerts are inevitable. Billie Eilish fan 2: “At every concert I have been to, fans want to stand in front so they push and pull as they feel like they deserved it more than others. I do it too.” Hence, it

can be argued that annoyances stem from fan behaviour that is at the expense of other crowd members' experience and that there is a group pressure to compete for the best experience.

4.7. Formats of performance and fans' desire for interaction

The interviews also confirm a fan's position in the venue, whether the front or back of the standing pit or the layered seating area, is a serious decision as it creates opportunities and sacrifices. Interviewees reported that fans consider the potential benefits and sacrifices of the venue's size and the kinds of tickets before buying the ticket. In the standing area, fans try to maximise the rewards of their structural position at the concert, considering how early they have to get in line (Duffett, 2014). Harry Styles fan 1 says: "We could have moved closer to the front to see him better, but we wanted the room to dance and not be pushed together."

The overall concert experience and fan behaviour are not only shaped by their position in the crowd. The interviews confirm that the format of performance chosen by the artist sets the tone for what level of interaction is possible. Consequently, fans estimate what they want out of the experience and behave accordingly. Harry Styles incorporates moments of interaction with individual fans during his concert. In contrast, Billie Eilish and Taylor Swift give encouraging speeches and focus more on putting on a show for the collective. However, Taylor and Billie's fans reported that the artist tried other ways to connect with their fans. Billie fan 1 said: "I noticed that Billie goes to great lengths to look her fans in the face, especially the people at the barricade. While she sings, she seeks eye contact, and they completely lose it." Taylor Swift also makes eye contact with fans standing barricade and, at her Reputation Tour, flew around in a basket to look at her crowd more closely.

All interviewees agreed that many fans want to be noticed and given attention, but that it is still a consideration if the efforts are worth it. This suggests different degrees of investment (Jenkins, 2006). The interviewees had mixed opinions on fans putting effort into getting noticed, as it can become extreme or not for the right reasons. As mentioned, fan signs and throwing objects effectively gain the artist's attention. The interviews confirm that throwing objects is not a valuable activity but is also viewed as a violation of public safety. Billie fan 1 argues: "It happens quite often, people throwing their bra to her, or flowers or something. I would not throw anything at all. I think it's a thing of public safety. People want to come close to her, but you never know what people have brought into the venue." Public safety is thus something both the venue and the fans want to ensure to ensure a pleasant experience. Harry Styles fan 1 says something similar: "What would go too far

for me is doing too much for Harry's attention, like throwing something solid. That man also has boundaries."

In the case of fan signs, it captures a duality of attitudes. The interviewees argue that they do not mind fan signs as long as it does not obstruct their view and that the caused fan-artist interaction can be entertaining. Yet, Taylor Swift fans say to be relieved it is not a thing and mainly Harry fans are confronted with many in the standing pits. Fans are aware of his performance style and interviewees confirm that fan signs are creative ways for the fan to realise a moment of interaction, as Styles interacts with signs every show.

Interviewees argue that some fans behave excessively to do it for media attention and sacrifice living in the moment. Taylor Swift fan 2 comments: "I feel like fans want to brag online that they are front-row and want to go viral." Harry Styles fan 1 advises: "I would just enjoy the moment instead of seeking attention constantly and film that to post it." It confirms that trying for barricades means wanting to be noticed by the artist, but might also want to get good footage to post and be noticed online, thus taking the online environment in consideration.

4.8. Fans' accounts of fan antagonisms

The interviewees all shared to have felt some jealousy or an urge to compete, especially when watching videos or when another fan seems to deserve special treatment less than them. According to Billie Eilish fan 1: "I get a certain urge of like, Billie should give me attention and not people that are not as big of a fan as me." Yet, during the concert, the interviewees did not experience hateful behaviour at all.

However, they report that mainly online, fans are more likely to be hateful and start discussions over small things. Harry Styles fan 2 says: "Fans online begrudge the other's luck and happiness so quickly, thinking: 'You have been to his concerts so often, let me go instead.' It is easier online because they do not know each other; everything feels two-dimensional. You know a person is behind the comment, but you do not realise it properly. It is all a bit of jealousy, but I think during the show that is forgotten, and before and after it returns online." As mentioned, jealous fans use jokes to cover antagonistic feelings. However, this perspective shows that fans openly begrudge one another's happiness and find it easy to express it online to strangers because fans feel detached due to the mediated quality of online environments.

No interviewee shared to participate in heavy discussions online, as they believe it is mostly about trivial matters that younger fans engage in and that online discussions tend to escalate or turn hostile quickly. Interviewees mention a relation between TikTok's rise in popularity in recent years and the pandemic with a new generation of fans that are finally of age to attend concerts. They found younger and newer fans to behave annoyingly online in the name of being passionate. All interviewees are in their early twenties and thus relatively older than the fans they refer to. Harry Styles fan 2 says: "I think young fans are less conscious yet about consequences. They just think, I will say what I want. Harry is their whole world". Interviewees thus make assumptions about the identity of younger fans. They confirm an existing but understandable stereotype that young and new fans are instigators online.

The interviews with Harry fans provided insights confirming the tension and antagonism towards American fans. Harry Styles fans think positively about "Leave America" and believe American fans are overreacting in how they handle the trend. Harry Styles fan 1 argues: "American fans are so privileged sometimes, and yet play the victim. They get so many concerts, and I feel like the European crowd is much more enthusiastic. And then, what is funny is when Harry returns to the US, the crowd is quiet during Leave America. The Americans are offended by the trend, get pissed and do not sing along."

Taylor Swift fan 1 also went to a Harry Styles concert in the US and confirmed that Americans are quiet during the lyric, whereas she, as a Dutch person, was the only one that sang along. Moreover, Taylor Swift fan 2 mentions a new insight that it is not only Harry Styles fans that feel like the American fan base is being favoured. The current Era in the US causes some jealousy among European fans as they have yet to get any tour dates. "I feel a healthy sense of envy when I think about American fans. I would not say American fans are favoured as I know the US is Taylor's country of origin, but it is many shows. I'm happy for them but want to be there too."

Regarding the concert film, both Billie Eilish fans decided not to see the film in the cinema after seeing videos and discussions online. Billie Eilish fan 2 says: "Due to the lack of clarity online, fans interpreted it differently. I am happy that young fans got the opportunity to experience a concert, but causing disturbances in a cinema is not appropriate." Billie Eilish fan 1 says: "I was not feeling the idea of jumping, as that would be cringeworthy. However, I wouldn't have minded people singing along, as silence would be weird. It is quite a weird concept, a concert film." Their considerations exemplify how online videos impact concert-going practices.

These perspectives confirm different interpretations of appropriate behaviour when watching Billie's concert film caused controversy online. It clarifies that fans were confused by the mixed concert and cinema etiquette concept. It suggests that the fans who maintained concert norms might have been too young to go to Billie's concert and thus took this opportunity to pretend it is a concert, but at the expense of the collective cinema audience.

4.9 The role of TikTok on fan behaviour at concerts

Most interviewees report feeling a weak bond with the fan community on TikTok as they primarily consume (concert) videos and acquire new knowledge rather than post themselves or engage with other fans online. Harry Styles fan 1 elaborates: The fandom on TikTok is very individualistic. Fans share a lot, but it is for their own gain, big fan accounts as well." Hence, while all fans watching concert videos engage within the gift economy, fans have more than one motive to share and participate in free labour (Booth, 2016). Billie Eilish fan 1, however, feels a sense of community due to a shared passion, and occasional inside jokes among fan members on TikTok.

Interviewees reported to watch concert videos also to build anticipation and excitement during the short period before the concert. Afterwards, they argue it is enjoyable to watch videos of the concert from different points of view as it enriches their ultimate concert experience. Additionally, they report that even when they did not attend, seeing concert videos brings happiness and keeps their passion alive. As Bennett (2012) also argues, fans stay up-to-date on the highlights of the performances, which songs the artist plays and which outfits they wear. Harry Styles 1 says: I immediately look up which outfit Harry wore that night." Likewise, Taylor Swift fans look up which surprise songs Taylor sang at each performance, thus curious about changes in the setlist.

However, there is a not yet observed downside to the abundance of concert videos fans available on TikTok. Interviewees find the concert's element of surprise has gone to a certain extent. Harry Styles fan 1 admits: "There is so much known and to be seen about his concerts. When you go to his concert, it is exactly how you would expect it, how you see it online. It is still exciting but not all that surprising."

The interviewees confirm that fans today can influence live concerts and the cultural meanings generated from these events (Jones & Bennett, 2015). Concert videos play a substantial role in inspiring (new) fans to embody fan practices or interactions for themselves, as they have seen online. They show it is possible, and fans thus want to compete with what they see. Taylor Swift 2: "TikTok has been influential because of its trends. It has changed concert culture."

Finally, discussing and negotiating concert etiquette in the comments is not found helpful by the majority of interviewees because self-serving behaviour is impossible to eradicate. Harry Styles fan 1 says: “I do not think telling other fans what to do is valuable. Fans are only at the concert for the artist and their own fun.” Likewise, Taylor Swift fan 1 adds: “I think there will always be people that do not maintain the norm and believes that their will goes.” However, some interviewees agree it can help to discuss etiquette beforehand to help new concert-goers. Billie Eilish fan 2 says: “Most GenZ fans are on TikTok, so it could be useful to discuss etiquette with each other to prepare and educate young fans on how to behave.”

So, the interviewees confirm that due to fans’ online-offline interconnectedness, fans inspire and evaluate one another to experience joy and try to improve fan behaviour based on past incidents and stories. However, evaluating bad behaviour afterwards is not considered beneficial to fandoms, as there are always those that prioritise their pleasures at the expense of others.

5. Conclusion and discussion

In this study, I have done discourse analysis and conducted interviews to understand how pleasures are experienced by fans and how controversies are negotiated among music fans on TikTok.

Fans experience concert joys in their unique way. It can be concluded that fans cannot be generalised by any means, as age, geo-location, level of passion and value systems steer fans' preferences and influences concert behaviour. However, there are shared concert norms and practices. Seeing the artist perform the songs they know by heart in the flesh drives fans to perform counter-performances. Practices such as singing, dancing, screaming and crying will always exist at a pop concert as most fans find the collective aspect of these performances to make for an indispensable "energy-exchanging" atmosphere. This atmosphere and fans' heightened emotions of seeing the artist perform in real life cannot match the mediated version concert videos facilitate. However, fans who cannot attend can still be co-present and discuss the happenings with others online. Moreover, for concert attendees, concert videos help build anticipation for the concert and to nurture one's passion for the artist afterwards. Making videos of the artist is a valued fan practice, but too much is considered inappropriate.

The analysis shows that individual passions can lead to self-regarding behaviour, overstepping concert norms. Primarily "excessive" activities at the expense of other fans or the collective, such as obstructing others' view of the stage with a fan sign or a mobile phone, pushing others, throwing something on stage or screaming in someone's ear, are seen as unsavoury behaviour. Selfishness and choosing one's pleasures over the collective is a theme often witnessed during the analysis. A new development, fans behaving for media attention and to go viral, also creates irritations.

Fans' position in the crowd creates benefits and sacrifices that the fan considers beforehand, like whether they prioritise the artist's proximity over comfort. Also, concert videos show the artist's performance style so that fans can estimate and create expectations for what pleasures are possible to experience. Especially in the standing pit, prepared fan practices are acted out to gain the attention of the pop icon and maximise one's joy. TikTok plays a significant role in this as it gives fans the cultural power to influence the concert happenings. Many fans get concert videos and fan ideas on their FYP, setting a tone for how pop concerts can be, even though it is a mediated representation. Fans take inspiration from creative practices like texts on fan signs and expressive outfits embodied by fans to embody themselves. Some fans see these as tools to interact with the artist. This desire for

the artist's attention to maximise one's rewards can turn into jealousy and an urge to compete with what is seen primarily online. While, during the concert, the collective crowd is enthusiastic and passionate and continues online, frustration and other negative emotions are also expressed online. It can escalate quickly, making fans antagonistic. "Leave America" has turned into a global trend to the discontent of American fans. It demonstrates a geo-location bound tension where fans sing or stay silent as a strategy get Styles to come back to their country and "leave America" as Styles already performs in the US enough.

Additionally, those who do not attend concerts can immediately respond to fan behaviour and criticise it. While discussing concert etiquette beforehand might benefit first-time concert-goers, it seems the fragmented, mediated and anonymous qualities of the online environment facilitate more hate towards fans, where fans with different preferences and experiences try to negotiate etiquette and overcome controversies. The discourse analysis and the accounts of the six interviewees show that fans fail to reach a consensus about some concert etiquette. Concert videos embody descriptive norms linked to a fixed, yet never the same, environment. Videos show fans the possibilities and successfully challenge the limits to a certain extent. In contrast, discussions in the comment sections are often about ascriptive norms that are inherently subjective. The controversy of blurring concert and cinema norms during Billie's concert film demonstrates that disagreements and antagonisms, big or small, will always come and go, as there are always competing interests. Moreover, behavioural patterns and fan practices are constantly changing. Fans get older and adapt to a continuously changing online-offline environment.

This study provides new knowledge to the field of music fandom studies. It has broadened the understanding of the always-changing phenomenon of pop concerts and its ambiguous norms through the lens of fans on TikTok. Having built upon previous studies, I contributed to the field and covered new grounds using two qualitative research methods investigating fans' different meaning-making practices and considerations, laying bare the positive and negative sides of fan communities. A broader scope to explain antagonism within music fandoms was provided. Johnson (2007) explained fan antagonism as a result of competing interests between fans and external institutions to define evaluative and interpretative consensus. However, my research shows that internal struggles within music fandom communities and the efforts to negotiate concert etiquettes through concert videos and the ensuing comment section discussions contribute to fan antagonism. As fans make discursive attempts to argue what is appropriate concert behaviour and practices, they evaluate and

criticise the mediated behaviour witnessed. Their different interests and value systems clash in the process, and consequently, they fail to reach a consensus.

My research has found that despite fans' online-offline connectedness, the online norm to negotiate concert etiquette does not have much impact on the actual event, as fans still behave how they find fit and differ in age and level of passion and value systems. For example, while filming is a popular activity during live performances, it is still debatable due to its physicality. Offline, excessive filming of the artist or oneself is labelled as obstructive or attention-seeking. However, online, it aims to achieve a moment of fame for doing something creative or crazy on video, frequently successful. Fan signs caused a similar debate.

A limitation of my study is that I did not do offline ethnography to directly witness what fans are doing at concerts which might have more implications for their online communication. Offline ethnography could have improved this study, but it might be a valuable method to apply in future research.

More research needs to be done on the role of platforms on music fandom and behaviour at concerts concerning the online-offline nexus. Social media plays a significant role in changing fandom and the representation of pop concerts and it is worth exploring this more. Considering developments like increasing ticket prices and fandoms consisting of different generations, there is still much ground to cover. Fandoms continuously adjust and grow within online-offline environments to keep experiencing concerts and all the pleasures that come with them.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Basic questions to ask all fans:

You've seen ... in concert.

1. When and where was this? Have you seen that artist before?
2. Can you share the best moments of the concert? What will stay with you?
3. Which position in the crowd did you have and what do you prefer. Why?
 - Where can you have the most fun, or doesn't it matter?
4. How did you show excitement? Did you scream and sing along, when? Did you dance?
5. What makes their concerts so special? Can you describe the atmosphere at their show, how it makes you feel?
 - Does the crowd play a role in this/ the experience?

Tickets are very expensive nowadays and ... plays in large venues due to their popularity.

6. Does this play a role in your overall experience? Do you feel a pressure to behave differently in order to maximise your joys during the concert?
7. Do you take videos of the concert a lot? Do you film yourself (if yes, why). What is the value of filming parts of the performance?
8. Have you during any point felt annoyance or second-hand embarrassment towards certain fans. How did they behave? Why do you find that annoying?
9. Can a fan scream too loud or move too much?
10. Would you rather have a fan be too excited or show no enthusiasm at all during the whole concert? Why?
11. You watch concert videos on TikTok. Can you explain what you like about watching someone else's videos of concerts you didn't attend?
12. Do you consider yourself an active engaging fan online, or more of an observer of others' content?
13. Does the fandom feel like a community to you? Do you feel connected to fans on TikTok? Why (not)?
14. Do you experience jealousy when watching videos and when does that happen?
15. Do you think fans behave differently online as they do at concerts? Or do you think fans who only participate actively online think differently than concert-going fans? Can you explain?
16. Do you often read the comments under videos? Do you participate in them?

17. Do you think it is useful to discuss concert etiquette on there? To which extent can concert etiquette be negotiated and what rules are fixed?
18. Do you think social media has changed the way fans behave at concerts? In what way? Has it made them more passionate, competitive more selfish, hateful?
19. Is this because they are so passionate? Is being passionate a must when you are a fan?
20. How passionate do you consider yourself to be, as compared to fans online?
21. Are proud to be a fan of ...? Do you think you will be a lifelong fan? Why (not)?
22. Finally, to close this interview, are you going to see ... again in concert or do you want to?

Specific questions per artist:

Harry Styles:

- There seems to be a certain dress code as Harry's concerts? Do you participate in this and why is this a thing?
- What is your favourite song to dance to? Do you know the dance they do during "Treat People With Kindness"?
- Have you ever brought a fan sign? Have you seen it during the concert and did you like it? Why?
- What makes fan signs fun in your opinion? And do Styles reacting to them play a role?
- Do you think they should ever be banned? Under which circumstances?
- I want to ask your opinion on "Leave America". What does it mean to you? Have you screamed along to that lyric? How does that feel?
- Why do you think it has become such a thing online?
- There seems to be a certain division between European fans and American fans? Do you agree and why do you think that is?
- Have you ever held negative feelings towards American fans?
- Are there any other examples that you know off where fans have been mean to one another online?

Taylor Swift

- What are the songs you want to scream along the loudest to? Why that song?
- During the current eras tour, Taylor performs for three whole hours. Does the duration of the concert play a role in the concert experience?
- How does Taylor interact with the crowd?
- Do you find it disappointing Taylor doesn't interact with individual fans like Harry does?

- Have you ever felt negative feelings towards fans you came across during the concert or online?

Billie Eilish

- How does Billie engage with her audience during a concert?
- Do you think fans idolise Billie? Or see her as a leader?
- have you ever felt negative feelings towards fans you came across during the concert or online? Where does that come from?
- There have been incidents in which a fan throws gifts on stage. What is your opinion on this? Should this be allowed? Should it be a thoughtful gift?
- Have you seen her Movie “Billie Eilish at the O2” in the cinema? Can you tell me about that experience/what you have seen about it online?
- What do you think the difference is between experiencing the concert in the area and watching the film in a cinema?
- Did everyone stay in their seat? Did people sing along, film it?
- What behaviour goes too far in your opinion? What cinema etiquette should be respected?