

## Creative Networks and the City: Towards a Cultural Political Economy of Aesthetic Production

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Bas van Heur

# CREATIVE NETWORKS AND THE CITY

Towards a Cultural Political Economy  
of Aesthetic Production

**[transcript]**

Cityscapes –  
Texts in Cultural Urban Studies

Bas van Heur  
Creative Networks and the City

The series is edited by Laura Frahm and Susanne Stemmler.

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BAS VAN HEUR  
**Creative Networks and the City.  
Towards a Cultural Political Economy  
of Aesthetic Production**

**[transcript]**



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# CONTENTS

## Acknowledgments

9

## 1. Introduction

11

### 1.1 Theme and Relevance

11

### 1.2 Research Questions and Focus

15

### 1.3 Thesis Statement and Research Strategy

17

### 1.4 Case Selection

19

### 1.5 Chapter Organization

23

## 2. Cultural Political Economy and Empirical Research

27

### 2.1 Introduction

27

### 2.2 Cultural Studies and Critique

27

### 2.3 Critical Realism and Empirical Research

43

### 2.4 From Disciplinary Deconstruction to Transdisciplinarity

52

### 2.5 Methods and Data Collection

54

### 2.6 Conclusion

62

## 3. Accumulation, Regulation, Networks

65

### 3.1 Introduction

65

### 3.2 Accumulation and Regulation

65

3.3 Networks	77
3.4 Towards a Cultural Political Economy of Emergence	85
3.5 Cities and Networks	88
3.6 Conclusion	96

#### **4. Location**

	99
4.1 Introduction	99
4.2 Creative Cluster Policies	99
4.3 Music Clusters	102
4.4 Cluster Exclusions	106
4.5 Conclusion	121

#### **5. Communication**

	123
5.1 Introduction	123
5.2 Urban Textures	124
5.3 Strategic Selectivity	126
5.4 Creative Industries Policies	129
5.5 Variety and the Problem of Retention	144
5.6 Conclusion	168

#### **6. Labor**

	169
6.1 Introduction	169
6.2 Policy Discourses	170



6.3 The Institutional Logic of Entrepreneurialism	172
6.4 Free Labor	177
6.5 Questioning the Real Subsumption Thesis	179
6.6 Conclusion	188

## **7. Concluding Comments**

	191
7.1 Research Questions Revisited	191
7.2 Further Research Directions	194

## **References**

	201
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Research is a process of inquiry and investigation that involves a continuous questioning and rethinking of previous assumptions, arguments and beliefs. As such, it involves learning that has to and can only remain unfinished. Although external and internalized pressures often obscure these important moments of questioning and doubt by presenting a strong narrative of scientific and intellectual progress, in the main body of this text I try to do justice to the tentative nature of research practice by explicitly acknowledging not only the strengths but also the limits of my argument and by regularly posing questions that I — at least at this stage — cannot answer. In doing so, I aim to adopt a ‘question and answer’ approach that understands knowledge production as an ongoing process dependent on discussions with many other people as well as the creative appropriation of a wide variety of previous publications. The publications, not surprisingly, will be referenced in and listed at the end of the text. Here, I want to acknowledge the contributions of various friends and colleagues whose names do not always appear in the list of referenced literature, but without whom this book would have remained a mere collection of fragments. Although not everyone commented directly on the contents, they have helped me think through empirical and theoretical problems during the period in which I worked on the dissertation that forms the basis for this publication.

The project started with the idea to analyze music in relation to contemporary urban transformations and was very much influenced by a number of publications by Adam Krims on music and urban geography. Through his work and in his role as a second supervisor he provided much inspiration for my own efforts to analyze music in relation to political economic processes, even though I increasingly moved away from popular music studies and cultural studies towards a cultural political economy that keeps to a minimum the reflection on ‘the music itself’. First thoughts for this project were developed during a teaching stint at the Institute of Media and Representation, Utrecht University. After one year in Utrecht, I moved to the Department of Media and Communications of Goldsmiths

College at the University of London. Thanks are due to the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds in Amsterdam for partly funding this opportunity. I also thank Angela McRobbie for her supervision and her thoughts on the role of creative but precarious labor in contemporary cities and many other colleagues for enthusiastic discussions. It was the move to Berlin that enabled me to work full-time on research and writing: for this I am grateful to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and the Center for Metropolitan Studies (CMS). At the CMS, I found a transdisciplinary home that enabled me to improve many of the arguments I had developed so far. Not only could I discuss my work with critical colleagues, I was also given the freedom to co-organize a number of conference sessions and workshops closely related to my research topic. I am also very much indebted to my first supervisor Gerhard O. Braun at the Department of Earth Sciences, Freie Universität Berlin, who has been so kind and tolerant to accept a nongeographer as a doctoral candidate in the first place.

Many parts of this publication have been presented at conferences, seminars or workshops and without the various deadlines for and discussions at these events, this text would have certainly taken much longer to write. For this, I would like to thank the organizers of and audiences at these occasions. Previous versions of chapter four have been published in the journal *Urban Studies* (van Heur 2009a) and in the edited volume *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity*, edited by Tim Edensor, Deborah Leslie, Steve Millington and Norma Rantisi (van Heur 2009b). Parts of chapter five have been published in the edited volume *Culture and the City*, edited by Frank Eckardt and Louise Nyström (van Heur 2009c).

Naturally, I thank my interviewees in London and Berlin for sharing their valuable expertise and without whom this book would have certainly become much more theoretical than it already is. In Berlin, I further benefited from two reading groups – one on critical geography and another on state theory – as well as André Bank, who offered highly useful comments on my writing and also managed to remind me of the world beyond researching and writing. I am looking forward to returning the favor. Sjoerd Yedema deserves thanks for his healthy skepticism of academic labor and for tirelessly organizing pool tournaments in Berlin Neukölln. I am also indebted to my parents Petrie and Ton van Heur for their support and to my brother Bob for reminding me of the experiential aspects of music. Finally, I am grateful to Birgit Bertram for her love and for insisting that it is process and learning that really matters. For this reason, I hope this book will find its ways to a number of readers who consider the loose ends and question marks as provocative and exciting starting points for new research and debates.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Theme and Relevance

This book needs to be understood as a critical contribution to the growing literature on the creative industries<sup>1</sup> and the knowledge-based economy (KBE).<sup>2</sup> Over the last decade in particular, research on creativity and knowledge (as well as related terms, such as innovation and entrepreneurialism) has moved to center stage in academic and policy circles. Building on earlier debates on the growth of the service industries and the emergence of the information society (for a useful and wide-ranging overview, see Bryson and Daniels 2007), the creative industries are now seen as key contributing sectors to the economic development and regeneration of postindustrial and knowledge-based cities, regions and nations. Propagated most vehemently by New Labour in the United Kingdom from 1997 onwards, the discourse has since spread across the world (e.g. Wang 2004). This discourse, however, should not be understood as an isolated phenomenon that will disappear once the first signs of critique appear on the horizon, but instead as a narrative that articulates with a wide variety of compatible discourses. This includes research on post-Fordism and flexible specialization (Piore and Sabel 1984; Scott 1988), the rediscovery of innovation theory (Lundvall 1992) and the interest in governance mechanisms beyond the state (Pierre 2005). These discourses are compatible in the sense that they all constitute attempts to come to grips with the decline of the Fordist industrial and Keynesian welfare-oriented

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1 I use the notion of creative industries as an umbrella term for diverse forms of cultural production that have also been referred to as the culture industry, culture industries or cultural industries. For a useful discussion of the politics behind these terminological shifts, see Garnham (2005).

2 In the remainder of this book, I will use the abbreviation KBE instead of 'knowledge-based economy'. For reasons of readability, however, other abbreviations will be used sparingly and in direct relation to the words written in full.

state and the emergence of new forms of capitalist accumulation and state regulation.<sup>3</sup>

In drawing on these literatures, I concentrate on three aspects in particular. First, the role of urban spaces as key sites of capitalist restructuring. As argued from various perspectives — from work on flexible specialization, research on entrepreneurial cities, urban spectacles and large-scale events (Hall and Hubbard 1996; Hannigan 1998), urban regeneration and gentrification (Smith 2003; Atkinson and Bridge 2005) to the literature on global and world cities (Friedman 1986; Sassen 1991; Taylor 2004) — cities have increasingly become key nodes in the reproduction and promotion of global capitalism. Second, the role of urban creative industries policies as state technologies aimed at the economic exploitation of creativity and knowledge. Following regulationist analyses, but compatible with certain debates on governance and governmentality (as discussed in chapter three), I interpret these policies as strategies that support creative production, while simultaneously reorienting these processes of production in order to make them compatible with the emerging KBE and increase the chances of successful capital accumulation. And third, the role of creative networks — or networks of aesthetic production<sup>4</sup> — in mediating and inflecting capitalist restructuring and urban policies, while simultaneously interpreting these networks as constituting complex and emergent social formations with their own structuring effects.

Each strand of literature has its own limits. Thus, although the literature on capitalist restructuring and entrepreneurial cities has enormously improved our understanding of changes that are currently unfolding in cities, it has hardly paid any attention to more everyday or small-scale forms of aesthetic production that cannot easily be linked back to state imperatives or capitalist accumula-

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3 These research agendas and their respective strengths and weaknesses are discussed in more depth in chapter three.

4 I prefer the notion of 'networks of aesthetic production' over the notion of 'creative networks', since the meaning of the latter is very broad: creativity is a notoriously vague term that can be applied to virtually everything. The notion of aesthetics, of course, suffers from similar problems, but at least enables me to add certain specifications: contra the notion of culture or the anthropological *a priori* of creativity, aesthetics has historically been used to refer to the arts, music and other explicitly symbolic dimensions of social life. It has also been understood to refer to particular 'objects' (such as paintings, music compositions, or sculptures) through which any aesthetic experience is mediated. See Seel (1985) for a brilliant discussion of aesthetic rationality and experience. For stylistic reasons, however, in this book I will alternate between networks of aesthetic production and creative networks.

tion. Similarly, the largely policy-driven debates on the creative industries have been very good at identifying and mapping creative production, but its blanket approach to creativity has made it difficult to understand the complexity of aesthetic production, the differences between creative industries sectors as well as the variations between cities. And finally, much work has been done, above all in media and cultural studies, on the peculiar dynamics of cultural production and its institutions. This literature is central to a sophisticated understanding of creativity and should be incorporated to a much greater extent in debates on capitalist restructuring and urban policies than is currently the case. At the same time, this strand of literature could benefit — as Tony Bennett (1992) already pointed out more than fifteen years ago — from a stronger engagement with policy. Also, its interest in institutional dynamics has a long and important tradition (e.g. Garnham 1990; Curran 2002; Hesmondhalgh 2002), but has taken place at some distance from more recent developments in institutional political economy. This has made it extraordinarily difficult to understand the ways in which aesthetic production is linked to broader processes of regulation and accumulation.

In highlighting the role of networks of aesthetic production in mediating and transforming imperatives of capitalist accumulation and regulation, this book explicitly aims to contribute to a dialogue between the cultural and political economic strands in urban studies. It seems to me that much can be learned from engaging in a transdisciplinary manner with both traditions. The recent debates on the culturalization of the economy and the need for a relational geography that is sensitive to the local specificities, ambivalences and contingencies of cultural economic practices are without doubt of enormous importance (Boggs and Rantisi 2003) and the arguments developed in this book are very much informed by this more cultural approach. At the same time, I consider the often adversarial attitude against (mostly marxist) political economic explanations that appears in at least some of these publications unnecessary and unproductive. Cultural urban studies can clearly benefit from political economic explanations (Sunley 2008), since aesthetic and cultural practices are repeatedly shaped and ordered in quite similar ways by processes such as commodification, local clustering and labor exploitation, which suggests some structuring power of more general, underlying mechanisms. Although these mechanisms obviously do not determine networks of aesthetic production, they do shape its direction and dynamic.

It is in combining — through empirical analysis as well as theoretical development — these three aspects (urban spaces, creative industries policies, and networks of aesthetic production) that I see

the main contribution and relevance of this book. In doing so, I like to believe that my research is part of what Bob Jessop has termed a cultural political economy of the KBE (Jessop and Sum 2001; Jessop 2003; Jessop 2004a; Jessop 2004c; Jessop and Oosterlynck 2008) and which aims to develop a post-disciplinary analysis<sup>5</sup> of contemporary capitalism that takes seriously the cultural turn in social analysis, but simultaneously emphasizes the importance of capital accumulation and state regulation.<sup>6</sup> His research in this field is relatively recent as well as ongoing, but it develops, in an impressively coherent fashion, his older interests in Marxist state theory, the regulation approach and institutional economics. Although these theoretical debates will be discussed in due course, the cultural political economy approach has a number of distinctive features that can be usefully summarized here.<sup>7</sup> First of all, it rejects a transhistorical analysis of capitalism and insists on the evolutionary development of capital accumulation and regulation in and through particular spaces. Second, the approach stresses the co-evolution of semiotic and extra-semiotic processes and their conjoint impact on and transformation of particular social relations. Third, cultural political economy acknowledges the overall complexity of the social world and distinguishes between the economy as the chaotic (and immeasurable) sum of all economic activities and the economy as a narrated, more or less coherent subset of these activities. Jessop refers to this subset as economic imaginaries. It is important to understand that these economic imaginaries tend to exclude elements — and almost necessarily so, since their very coherence is based on a selective representation of the much more complex social world — that are actually of vital importance for the reproduction of the subset identified. Fourth, state regulation is seen to play an important role in developing, promoting and implementing these economic imaginaries. As one important example of such an imaginary, Jessop has analyzed the KBE as a master economic narrative that shapes many state strategies and is oriented towards the development of a new mode of regulation that can potentially stabilize accumulation after the crisis of Fordism. The KBE is a highly heterogeneous notion — drawing on different intellectual

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5 In chapter two, I will adopt the term 'transdisciplinary' for particular reasons, but Jessop's take on postdisciplinarity overlaps with my approach towards transdisciplinarity.

6 Although Jessop and his co-authors have undertaken the main theoretical work in this field, others have also occasionally used the term 'cultural political economy' along similar lines. See, for example, Le Galès (1999), Sayer (2001), Hess and Yeung (2006) and Moulaert *et al.* (2007).

7 The following points summarize Jessop's description of the KBE in the mentioned publications.



and political traditions and often functioning like a Rorschach ink-blot (Jessop 2004c, 154) in that reference to the KBE provides a basis for alliances among disparate interests — but its main rationale is to legitimize and promote a new accumulation strategy that sees knowledge as a major source for economic development. The KBE refers to many industries and economic activities, but cultural production occupies an important role in this economic imaginary, since it resonates with many of the key lines of argument as proposed by the KBE discourse. Not only is cultural production — now refracted through the lens of the creative industries, itself a linguistic invention that connects capital accumulation with cultural production — seen to be highly dependent on the constant input of knowledge, it is also argued that creative workers are flexible, innovative and learning-focused and that its activities are fundamentally oriented towards the sale of commodities within a juridical framework of enforced intellectual property rights. Fifth, however, it is by no means certain that this economic imaginary can be successfully implemented. Indeed, this is highly problematic, since these imaginaries need to be articulated with actually existing economic activities in order to have a lasting effect and this involves a complex mediation through many mechanisms and practices with their own rationales.

## 1.2 Research Questions and Focus

In order to investigate this problematic of accumulation and regulation in the context of the creative industries, I have decided to focus on networks of aesthetic production. I am interested precisely in these moments of mediation in which the KBE imaginary is articulated with actually existing social, cultural and economic practices. This, it seems to me, is a necessary and important further development of the cultural political economy approach, since an analysis of political economy that claims to integrate ‘culture’ into its explanations needs to push the analysis further beyond state regulation than Jessop has so far been willing to go. My reason for focusing on creative networks instead of all forms of cultural production is threefold. First, reference to networks is highly popular within regulatory discourses: even though the creative industries as such are seen as an important field of intervention, networked forms of production are interpreted as highly characteristic of the current and future era due to their assumed flexibility, constant modulation and innovatory capacity. This, it is believed, constitutes an important resource for the economic development of urban and regional spaces. Within this policy mindset, therefore, creative networks are in

need of regulation so that they can unfold their accumulatory potential.<sup>8</sup> Second and related to this first point, the notion of networks has emerged as the central trope to describe new forms of economic interaction beyond as well as in-between hierarchies, states and markets.<sup>9</sup> The network economy is perhaps the most popular buzzword used to refer to those new forms of capital accumulation that heavily rely on information and communication technologies.<sup>10</sup> And third, the notion of networks is increasingly used by cultural and social theorists as well as cultural practitioners to describe contemporary forms of cultural production. Thus, we have now become aware of the important role played by network sociality (Wittel 2001), networked art (Saper 2001), collaborative networks (Uricchio 2004), musical networks (Leyshon 2001) and organized networks (Rossiter 2006). Often, these notions are explicitly conceptualized as beyond or in opposition to a 'mere' economic understanding of networks, which creates a significant tension between this third conceptualization of networks and the first two, even though all strands of analysis have adopted the same core concept.<sup>11</sup>

Building on these largely theoretical debates concerning the relative importance of accumulation, regulation and networks, the following sequence of *main research questions* includes both descriptive and explanatory moments: to what extent, and in what ways, are network dynamics related to processes of capital accumulation and state regulation? If there are significant relationships, what are the forms of these relationships? Why do these relationships between accumulation, regulation and networks exist? And why can these relationships also be non-existent? Whereas the first

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8 For literature that refers to, but also critically analyzes these kinds of policy discourses, see, for example: Turok (2003); Gibson and Robinson (2004); Musterd and Deurloo (2006).

9 The literature on this is vast and I will refrain from referencing here. Instead, I discuss this literature at various points of my argument in the chapters that follow.

10 Again, the literature is vast and many strands will be discussed in the following chapters. Typical of the notion of network economy, however, is also its popularity within the 'speculative' branch of journalism/academia. See, for example, Castells (1996), Kelly (1998), Tapscott (1999) and Dawson (2002). In chapter three, I will describe my own conceptualization of networks that is simultaneously more general and more specific than these management-friendly versions.

11 A tension acknowledged by Rossiter when he writes in the introduction to his book: "At times I adopt the unattractive language typically associated with the rhetoric of neoliberalism. I do so in the interests of a pragmatism that is necessary if network cultures are to undergo a scalar and organizational transformation" (2006, 14).

two questions require descriptive answers, the last two questions are more properly concerned with explanation.<sup>12</sup> Please note that these questions transcend a regulationist analysis by introducing on the theoretical level a third concept — network — next to accumulation and regulation.<sup>13</sup> Admittedly, these are very abstract research questions, but they can be concretized by relating these questions to the theoretical literatures already discussed: accumulation and regulation are understood here as those accumulation regimes and modes of regulation associated with the (re)production of the KBE in urban spaces and networks can be understood as networks of aesthetic production. The major concern of this book, therefore, is to extend our understanding of the dynamics of creative networks in relation to capital accumulation and state regulation in urban environments.

The main research questions are investigated in relation to three heuristic dimensions, which in turn create various *subsidiary questions*:

Location. To what extent, and in what ways, are the locational choices of actors in networks of aesthetic production related to capital accumulation and the spatial imaginaries of state regulation? Why do these relationships exist and how can we explain the simultaneous non-existence of these spatial relations?

Communication. In what ways do the semiotic dimensions of networks match the semiotic dimensions of accumulation and regulation? To what extent can one observe the realignment of discourses in networks of aesthetic production with the emergent meta-narrative of the KBE? How can one explain the limits of this process of realignment?

Labor. To what extent are networked labor dynamics related to the role of labor in capital accumulation and regulation? What is the role played by entrepreneurial logics in networks of aesthetic production? Why is networked labor simultaneously irreducible to these logics and how does this relate to the particularities of aesthetic production?

### 1.3 Thesis Statement and Research Strategy

In strict terms, a hypothesis or thesis statement is a specific statement of prediction that can be tested. As I discuss in more depth in chapter two, such a rigid understanding of hypotheses is largely

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12 In developing these questions, Blaikie's (2000) work on designing social research and the logic of anticipation has been very useful.

13 The ontological status of these concepts will be discussed in chapter three.

limited to deductive research and less relevant to the approach developed in this book, since it adopts a linear view of explanation that moves from theory to hypothesis to empirical data. This might be useful for theory testing, but research interested in theory development needs to adopt a much more spiral understanding of explanation. Although I do start from certain theoretical assumptions from which hypotheses can be drawn, these assumptions need to be confronted with empirical data in the process of research and it is through this confrontation that theory is constantly changed and refined. Strict hypotheses cannot be formulated in advance of the actual research, but are developed in a more tentative fashion during the research process. Nevertheless, with the benefit of hindsight<sup>14</sup>, I would want to propose the following (highly abstract) thesis statement: networks need to be understood as emergent from underlying causal mechanisms of accumulation and regulation. On the one hand, this acknowledges the direction of causality: networks are caused by (and can thus be explained with reference to) accumulation and regulation.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, it also highlights the irreducibility of these networks to these underlying causal mechanisms (and thus explains the non-existence of relations between networks and accumulation and regulation). This irreducibility is the result of the organizational specificities of networks, but more profoundly of the truly emergent dynamics of networks that constantly transforms accumulation and regulation into something else. On a slightly less abstract level, this thesis statement could be formulated as follows: networks of aesthetic production are emergent from those accumulation regimes and modes of regulation associated with the (re)production of the KBE in urban spaces. This acknowledges both the causal grounding *and* the irreducibility of these networks. Once again, this has to do with the organizational specificities of creative networks, but it is also related to the emergent dynamics of these networks that transform the KBE into something else. The identity of this 'something else' cannot be established *a priori*, but only through empirical research. As we will

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14 This is, of course, the rhetorical trick practiced by most (including, I suspect, deductive) researchers. Having rewritten this introduction *after* the other chapters in this book, I am now capable of looking back at what for the reader lies ahead. This clearly gives me a head start and enables me to formulate a thesis statement that is actually the result and not the starting point of research.

15 Even this thesis statement does not, however, fully capture the complexity of the reality that it tries to describe and explain, as will become clear in the following chapters. This illustrates the difficulty or even impossibility of developing unambiguous thesis statements outside of a deductive research strategy.

also see, this peculiar nature of networks of aesthetic production complicates attempts at regulation and their role in processes of accumulation.

## 1.4 Case Selection

In order to avoid an over-abstraction of the central concepts (networks, accumulation, regulation) and the underlying theories, they are tied to the cases of electronic music and the cities of London and Berlin. Before briefly describing these cases, however, it needs to be emphasized that a spiral understanding of explanation also has implications for the status of what a case actually is. As Charles C. Ragin has pointed out, the term ‘case’ is used in many different ways — as empirical unit or theoretical construct and as general or specific (1992a) — but it might be most productive to understand the selection of cases (or what Ragin calls ‘casing’) as a research tactic. From this perspective, “making something into a case or ‘casing’ it can bring operational closure to some problematic relationship between ideas and evidence, between theory and data” (1992b, 218). Since theories are unavoidably general, abstract and imprecise, cases are used at various phases of the research process to “bring a measure of closure to vaguely formulated theoretical concepts or ideas” (220). Indeed, this is what I have done already in the first pages of this text, even without declaring this as part of my case selection. Thus, at the most general level, my research is interested in processes of political economic restructuring and is broadly situated within the literature on accumulation regimes and modes of regulation (casing 1), but it concentrates in particular on the post-Fordist era and the KBE (casing 2). My interest, however, is not on the KBE or post-Fordism in general, but on a subset of the KBE, namely the creative industries (casing 3). To even further narrow down my empirical focus, I have decided to concentrate on cities (casing 4), creative industries policies (casing 5) and networks of aesthetic production (casing 6). Possibly, I could also identify the three heuristic dimensions (location, communication and labor) as further casings. It is important to emphasize that this way of conceptualizing cases is not compatible with a ‘Russian dolls’ model in which each subsequent casing completely fits within the previous case (e.g. casing 5 fits into 4, which fits into 3, etc.). Instead, this approach understands cases as complex and only partially overlapping constellations that link theories and data in particular ways

and from particular perspectives.<sup>16</sup> In the research process, it is always possible to argue that specific cases are actually cases of something else. This fluidity, as many authors have argued, is a special feature of small-N research and explains why this kind of research continues to offer important contributions to theoretical development: by revising cases, the analyst is forced to consider different ideas, concepts and theories and needs to articulate these with the already-established theoretical framework that is shown to be insufficiently explanatory (see Ragin 1992b; also Vaughan 1992; Walton 1992; Steinmetz 2004). This is, of course, precisely what I will try to argue in the case of networks of aesthetic production: although I start from the theoretical assumption that these networks are caused by underlying causal mechanisms of accumulation and regulation, I demonstrate that networks are (also) a case of something else, which, in turn, necessitates further theoretical development. In brief, these networks show the need to develop the regulation approach into a cultural political economy of emergence.

Naturally, it was clear to me from the very beginning that investigating all networks of aesthetic production in some empirical depth would be impossible and that further case selection would be necessary. Thus, as a particular subset of networks of aesthetic production I decided to focus on electronic music networks.<sup>17</sup> One reason for this particular choice was pragmatic: as part of my occasional work as editor of an online magazine on media culture, I regularly reviewed new record releases in the field of electronic music and felt this 'starting knowledge' would be useful in the research process. More importantly, however, these music networks linked up productively with my theoretical framework. Not only did electronic music seem to fit the dominant representations of networks as flexible and constantly in flux even better than most other forms of networked production in the creative industries<sup>18</sup>, the growing

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16 This argument is closely related to my defense of transdisciplinarity. See chapter two.

17 In chapter three I will discuss in some more depth the notion of electronic music and its use in this text as a collective term for a variety of music genres and practices.

18 Thus, the visual arts can also be considered as highly networked, but its dynamics are shaped by large-scale organizations such as museums and festivals. This is much less the case in electronic music. Also, one could argue that music as such (and not just the subset of electronic music) is networked, but this denies the important role played by major record labels in these other music genres and their marginal role in electronic music. All in all, electronic music networks seemed to offer a particularly 'pure' case of networks of aesthetic production. Please note, however, that in chapter three I will specify and partly question this notion of networks.

popularity of electronic music in the late 1980s and early 1990s also partly paralleled the tendential rise of knowledge-based accumulation regimes and their regulation, thus allowing the speculation that the KBE and electronic music might be related. In other words, the selection of electronic music networks enabled me to understand these music networks not only as a case of networks of aesthetic production, but also as a case of the creative industries and as a case of the KBE. In that respect, my selection of cases is not concerned with representative sampling, but instead is oriented towards those cases that can be expected to reveal the most relevant information in the context of the theoretical framework and pursued research objective. Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) identifies four different versions of such an information-oriented selection of cases: extreme/deviant cases, maximum variation cases, critical cases, and paradigmatic cases. It is impossible, however, to be fully certain in the early phases of the research that one has correctly categorized a case as belonging to one of these four types and it is therefore very well possible that the identity of a case changes during the actual research process.<sup>19</sup> In the research for this book, I operated for quite some time — naively perhaps — with the assumption that the case of electronic music networks could be considered as a critical case i.e. as a case that allowed a generalization of the sort, “[i]f it is valid for this case, it is valid for all (or many) cases” (230). If electronic music networks, in other words, could be shown to be emergent from underlying causal mechanisms of accumulation and regulation, then it could be expected that this hypothesis would also be valid for most other networks of aesthetic production. As the research progressed (and as my theoretical framework was further developed and refined), however, I increasingly came to feel that I was actually dealing with an extreme case and that this unusual character of electronic music networks was somehow related to the emergent dimensions of these networks. I will further discuss this problematic in the conclusion to this book.

Similar to this specification of networks of aesthetic production, it was also obvious that I needed to define a subset of cities, since it

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19 According to Walton, the belief that cases can unproblematically be identified relies on the assumption of a known universe. As he argues: [c]ases claim to represent general categories of the social world, and that claim implies that any identified case comes from a knowable universe from which a sample might be drawn” (1992, 121-122). This, according to Walton, is false: “[...] the presumption is faulty. We do not really know these things at all, we simply make guesses about them - hypotheses. There is nothing wrong with that, provided it is clear that the known universe is an illusion and, with it, that the claim to having a case of something is not supported in any substantial way” (125).

was clearly impossible to do research on all cities that could be understood through the lens of post-Fordism and the KBE and in which one could identify creative industries (as well as creative industries policies). Once again, one important reason for selecting London and Berlin was pragmatic: I (had) lived and worked in both cities and for this reason already had a working knowledge of the two cases. Also, both cities could be usefully connected to the broader theoretical framework. Not only are they both located in Western Europe — one of the central regions that has witnessed most dramatically and intensively the breakdown of Fordism — the respective local states in these cities are both engaged in the promotion and regulation of the KBE, with a particular focus on the creative industries, through the development of various policies. As such, these cities seemed to constitute a constellation of accumulation and regulation within a particular space (i.e. not accumulation and regulation in general) that could be empirically investigated. The role of these cities as casings in my analytical framework is therefore more limited than the case of electronic music networks, since the cities are largely seen to ‘reflect’ the (same) underlying causal mechanisms of accumulation and regulation. According to Charles Tilly, this can be called “universalizing comparison”, which “aims to establish that every phenomenon follows essentially the same rule” (1984, 82). To a large extent, this means adopting the familiar strategy of explaining empirical similarities in terms of common, underlying causes. At the same time, one cannot simply explain away substantial empirical differences between the two cases. London is a true global city that has explicitly promoted the transition away from an industrial form of capitalism to one dominated by finance from at least the mid-1980s onwards. It has also been at the forefront of the promotion and implementation of creative industries policies. Berlin, in contrast, has only recently started to acknowledge and promote the creative industries as key sectors for economic development and was until the early 1990s shielded from global economic transformations due to its heavy subsidization (largely with money from the federal state) of industrial production. These are important empirical differences that should not be obscured by the identification of a universal rule. Instead of assuming, therefore, that causation lacks “over-time and over-place variability” (Pickvance 2001, 20), we need to include these variations in our explanations.<sup>20</sup> My own expectation was that in selecting London

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20 This points to a highly complex debate concerning the role of one and/or more causes in producing the same and/or different phenomena. See Ragin (1987) and Pickvance (1995) for a discussion of multiple causation, plural causation and multiple conjunctural causation. Admittedly, my own reliance on universalizing comparison by highlighting underlying causal



and Berlin it would be possible to identify certain relations of variation between the urban environment in which networks of aesthetic production operate and the character of these networks. As the following chapters show, this variation is indeed visible, but the identification of this causal relation is complicated by the organizational specificities and emergent dynamics of electronic music networks (i.e. by the fact that these music networks might be more usefully considered an extreme case).

## 1.5 Chapter Organization

The goal of the following chapters is to develop the methodological and theoretical framework and to answer the research questions raised above. Each chapter is organized as follows:

*Chapter two* presents the critical realist methodology that underlies my theoretical and empirical work on the creative industries and the KBE. Before presenting this methodology, however, the chapter commences with a discussion of the tradition of cultural studies, since it is within this discipline that most research on popular cultures has been conducted. Returning to an important debate between Stuart Hall and Jessop (and his co-authors) in the *New Left Review* in the mid-1980s, I aim to show the limits of cultural studies in those moments when it tries to grasp the intertwinement of cultural practices with broader political and economic processes. The following section aims to overcome the discussed weaknesses of cultural studies by introducing a critical realist methodology. Drawing on Jessop's strategic-relational approach, I try to concretize the often highly abstract critical realist reflections to make these more suitable for social research. I also point to the notion of emergence as one important route to understanding the development of new phenomena, processes and events and to the need for a transdisciplinary approach that can explore the mutual constitution of political, economic and cultural processes at all scales. The final section presents the main methods — understood as techniques of data collection and transformation — that I have used for this project: the conduction of interviews and subsequent discourse analysis; and the mapping of network nodes and spatial data analysis.

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mechanisms reduces cities to cases of accumulation and regulation and downplays the role of other relations, such as state-citizen relations. Although this seems acceptable for a book that focuses on networks of aesthetic production as the main dependent variable, a more sophisticated cultural political economy would have to move beyond this reductionist moment in my analysis.

*Chapter three* introduces the main theoretical debates that guide the later empirical analysis. I first focus on some of the core concepts as theorized by the Parisian regulation approach and subsequent developments in the Anglo-American literatures. Regulationists have argued that the Fordist accumulation regime coupled with a Keynesian/welfare mode of regulation underwent a serious destabilizing structural crisis in the 1970s. I briefly discuss the causes of this crisis, subsequent political and economic developments to escape this crisis and the continuing difficulties to establish a new spatio-temporal fix that can stabilize the capital relation. I also discuss Jessop's distinction between state projects and state strategies and his description of those state strategies oriented towards the promotion of the KBE in order to develop a more conceptual understanding of these regulatory attempts. I then highlight the main weaknesses of the regulation approach and put forward the concept of network as a complement to this regulationist tradition. In the regulation approach, networks are paradoxically understood both as causes — since the proliferation of networks has at least partly provoked the crisis of Fordism — and as solutions — since networks are seen as hybrid entities that connect states and markets, hierarchies and civil society. I accept this analysis, but simultaneously argue that the notion of networks needs to be deepened and broadened in order to come to grips with the organizational specificities and dynamics of actual networks. I continue this analysis by emphasizing the emergent dimensions of social life and by arguing that there is a need to develop a cultural political economy of emergence. The final section ties these debates to the cities of London and Berlin and electronic music networks as particular cases.

After these methodological and theoretical debates, I move on to the theoretically-informed empirical work. *Chapter four* focuses on the role of spatial agglomeration in the case of electronic music networks and its relation to policy attempts that aim to regulate these agglomerations through the promotion of creative clusters. After describing briefly the economic imaginary of creative clusters as it appears in the various policy documents on the creative industries in Berlin and London, I present the data derived from the location mapping exercise of electronic music nodes. The discussed music production networks show clear clustering tendencies (in the sense that we can observe spatial concentrations of music nodes), but it remains impossible on the basis of these data to gain a better understanding of the actual interactions between these nodes. This is investigated in a more qualitative sense in the following section. Structuring my argument around three cluster characteristics as discussed in the literature (vertical and horizontal linkages; knowl-

edge and learning; cluster growth and development), and basing my argument on interview as well other empirical data, I show the extent to which actual clustering is partial at the most.

*Chapter five* also investigates the relations between networks, accumulation and regulation, but zooms in on the role of communication, understood broadly as the forms, modes and techniques that define interaction between actors. The specific focus in this chapter is on: 1) creative industries policies in London and Berlin; 2) the discourses circulating in and partly constituting networks of aesthetic production; and 3) the possible discursive interaction between creative industries policies and creative networks. I introduce the notion of texture in order to capture the communicative density of urban space as the effect of many interacting networks. Policy discourses have to intervene in an urban space that is already overflowing with networked communication. The policy intervention, therefore, cannot make a clean sweep, but will have to negotiate with these already-existent networks. Adapting Jessop's notion of strategic selectivity, I then argue that local states aim to give a particular direction to networks of aesthetic production by selectively in- and excluding elements of these networks. As one example of this discursive dimension of strategic selectivity, I discuss the biases in policy discourses on the creative industries in London and Berlin. I then reconnect this policy debate to the actual electronic music networks and analyze four features that have played an important role in aligning music networks with capitalist production: intellectual property; free choice and commodification; the built environment; and the discourse of flexibility and change.

*Chapter six* is the last of the three theoretically-informed empirical chapters and analyzes the question of labor. Complementing my analysis of creative industries policies in chapter five, I first analyze the policy representation of labor, focusing in particular on the Schumpeterian understanding of the cultural entrepreneur as someone oriented towards risk and innovation. Although I am highly critical of these policy debates that conflate description and prescription, these discourses partly do reflect the realities of workers within electronic music networks. This is discussed in the following section in which I analyze the institutional logic of entrepreneurialism by addressing four dimensions: 1) the naturalization of the market; 2) the belief in market-mediated individual autonomy; 3) the individualization of risk; and 4) activity as the entrepreneurial ideal. Having supported the first part of my hypothesis (networks are caused by the underlying causal mechanisms of accumulation and regulation), I then concentrate on investigating the second part of the hypothesis, namely the important role played by those dimensions of networks that are irreducible to accumula-

tion or regulation. In the case of labor, this tension between accumulation, regulation and networks becomes most visible in relation to free and unremunerated labor. Regulation-inspired theorists have usually described this aspect of labor in the context of a shift from welfare to workfare, involving the individualization of risk and the increased exploitation of the worker, but this ignores the extent to which this high amount of free labor is often willingly invested for a whole host of non-economic reasons. This raises a profound theoretical question: what is the status of free labor in relation to broader accumulation regimes and modes of regulation and how should we understand its normative claims? The concluding section tries to answer this question through a critical review of (post-) operaist debates on labor.

The final *chapter seven* briefly reviews the main argument, points to the main strengths as well as limits of the research project and directs attention to possibilities for further research.

## **2. CULTURAL POLITICAL ECONOMY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodological strategy adopted. The outline of the chapter is as follows. After this introduction, section 2.2 contains a reflection on cultural studies, since it is within this discipline that most research on contemporary networks of aesthetic production tends to be conducted. Building on my comments in section 2.2, section 2.3 develops a critical realist methodology that can do analytical justice to the structural depth of contemporary urban transformations, while remaining sensitive to the specificity of aesthetic practices. In this section, I will also introduce notions such as depth ontology, retroduction and emergence that guide the argument as a whole. Section 2.4 argues for a transdisciplinary approach in order to capture these methodological complexities. Section 2.5 discusses the empirical data collected and the methods used.

### **2.2 Cultural Studies and Critique**

The reason for starting this chapter with a reflection on cultural studies is twofold. First of all, my own disciplinary background is in cultural studies — although mediated through urban studies, geography and sociology — which has directed my analytical concerns towards the political role of culture within larger social formations. As such, I am interested in the role of cultural critique as theorized by cultural studies, but always in relation to the particularities of concrete urban environments in which this critique usually operates. Second, research on electronic music has tended to be con-

ducted within cultural studies, which has created certain methodological biases and directed research in certain directions.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, I am aware of the fact that cultural studies has never been a unified field of research and that the work being done under this banner has become increasingly diverse over the years due to internal differentiation, inter-disciplinary interaction and the global appropriation of cultural studies.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, I think it is safe to say that the one thing everyone can agree on is that cultural studies is defined by political commitment and critique. It is often not quite clear towards which political project this commitment is directed, but the fact *that* cultural studies is politicized is acknowledged by its supporters as well as adversaries. Nick Couldry argues that what defines cultural studies as a “distinctive area of study” (2000, 2) is its focus on the relationship between culture and power, but this is too broad a definition. It is not simply culture and power as such that is the focus of cultural studies, but an understanding of critique as emanating from a particular dimension of culture: not mass culture (as studied by classical communication studies), but ordinary culture (Williams 1958), everyday life (De Certeau 1984) or — particularly since the Birmingham school — popular culture.<sup>3</sup> These terms were never unproblematic and Anna McCarthy (2006) offers an excellent account of the tensions existent within and between these terms, but in general it seems to me that the main

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- 1 A related, but distinct research strand that also analyzes electronic music is popular music studies. I would argue that most of the research in this field and in particular the research on electronic music and club or dance cultures fits within a broader cultural studies perspective, but it is clearly also true that popular music studies simultaneously draws upon other disciplines, in particular musicology. Thanks to Adam Krims for highlighting this point. For useful overviews of the discipline, see: Negus (1996); Hesmondhalgh and Negus (2002); and Bennett *et al.* (2006). Clayton *et al.* (2003) emphasize more strongly the musicological links of the discipline and Connell and Gibson (2003) highlight the geographic dimensions of music. Since, however, the concern of this chapter is with methodology and the notion of critique as developed by cultural studies, I concentrate on this discipline only.
  - 2 Thanks to Johan Fornäs for emphasizing this. In contrast to this globalization of cultural studies, the authors I discuss in the following pages can roughly be placed within the British lineage of cultural studies. A more extensive discussion of the notion of critique of cultural studies would have to investigate the continuity and transformation of this term as parts of its globalization, but this task will have to wait for another occasion.
  - 3 Even in those instances where cultural studies focuses on mass media — as, most notoriously, in the work of Fiske (1987) — the emphasis tends to lie on the resistant (or, at the very least, ambivalent) moments within mass media production, distribution or reception.

reason for highlighting these and not other dimensions of culture has always been both analytical as well as ethical. Analytical, since cultural studies was never interested in studying various forms of popular culture for the sake of data collection, but always to better understand the resilience of and potentials for resistance within these cultures in the face of powerful regimes. So it was never simply about the celebration of cultural practices, but always about the analysis of these cultures *in relation to* wider processes of regulation and control. Ethical, because cultural studies has always tried to avoid the 'intellectualist bias' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) — in which the analyst naturalizes and prioritizes his or her position and theoretical stance in relation to extra-academic cultural practices — by developing more dialogical forms of engagement and analysis. This has led to a different understanding of the location of critique: instead of treating the academy as the ultimate arbiter of truth, cultural studies has emphasized the role of cultural practices in the development of critical potential with academic reflection in a much more modest as well as collaborative role.

In this section I want to take a look at how these concerns have informed the analyses of urban cultures. My focus is pragmatic in the sense that my interest is not in engaging in trench warfare (between disciplines or supposedly incompatible ontological positions), but in highlighting some of the methodological biases of cultural studies in order to develop improved tools for the analysis of urban cultures. My argument is that: 1) the centrality accorded to cultural critique often leads to a depiction of complex social structures as relatively 'flat'; and 2) critique needs to be specified and concretized in order to be able to reflect on societal and institutional differentiation. This argument is driven by an underlying concern to reintroduce questions of political economy into debates on urban culture (also see Maderthaner and Musner 2002). Certainly, this is not the only route towards a more discriminating and exacting form of critique, but it is an important one.

### 2.2.1 CULTURE AS IDEOLOGY AND THE HALL/JESSOP DEBATE

Many of the biases I discuss can be broadly traced back to the ways in which cultural studies has dealt with its disciplinary 'others' (in particular sociology and 'traditional' Marxism) during its emergence and defense of its existence as a valid area of research. To illustrate this, I want to focus here on the debate that took place in the mid-1980s between Hall and Jessop (and his co-authors) concerning the nature of Thatcherism. This debate was published in the *New Left Review* in 1984 and 1985 and involved an original article by Jessop *et al.* (1984), followed by a reply by Hall (1985) and another reply by

Jessop *et al.* (1985). To an extent, it has been an ongoing debate between the two authors: Hall's discussion of "New Labour's Double-Shuffle" (2003) provoked another comment by Jessop (2004b). In this section, I want to take a closer look at this exchange, since it is here that many of the methodological limitations of cultural studies (but also, in turn, of critical political economy) are highlighted in their most concise form. Even more importantly, however, the *New Left Review* articles contain first clues on how to develop a more sophisticated understanding of culture in relation to political economic processes.

The main point of contention between Hall and Jessop revolved around the nature of Thatcherism and the extent to which ideology was central to the popularity and power of this regime. Briefly put, Jessop and his co-authors argued that Hall's account was prone to 'ideologism' i.e. the tendency to reflect on the ideological dimension of Thatcherism only, whereas they argued that much more emphasis should be paid to the political and institutional context in which this regime developed. In the subsequent cultural studies literature, this critique has usually been characterized as representative of a Marxist 'reductionist' approach that is insensitive to the important role of ideology in unifying a variety of discourses and actors and creating popular consent with a particular political economic project. There is certainly a grain of truth to this general critique, but a closer analysis of the Hall/Jessop debate reveals a range of more precise points of divergence.

Hall, in earlier work, had developed the concept of authoritarian populism in order to be able to characterize Thatcherism as a regime involving the construction of authoritarian forms of class politics, but also as simultaneously rooted in certain popular forms of discontent. This Gramscian appropriation enabled Hall to foreground questions of ideology and to focus on "the ways in which popular consent can be so constructed, by a historical bloc seeking hegemony, as to harness to its support some popular discontents, neutralize the opposing forces, disaggregate the opposition and really incorporate some strategic elements of popular opinion into its own hegemonic project" (1985, 118). It is this sensitivity to the inclusion of 'the popular' by the state that forms the main theoretical advance on Jessop *et al.* at the time, since the latter hardly offer any tools to understand the success of the Thatcher regime in resonating with popular concerns. It is in this respect that the allegation of economism is correct. In the 1984 and 1985 articles, Jessop and his co-authors largely downplay the role of ideology and often fall back onto rather 'thin' conceptions of human sociality and motivation. Thus, whereas Hall emphasizes authoritarian populism, Jessop *et al.* warn the reader to also look at more pragmatic (read:



economic) interests such as “lower direct taxation, council house sales, rising living standards for those still in private sector employment, lower inflation, and so forth” (1984, 78-79). Although this is certainly important, the almost exclusive emphasis on these economic interests in the two articles makes Hall’s critique understandable and basically correct.

What has not so often been acknowledged by cultural studies, however, is that Jessop *et al.* might have been wrong on this first, but largely right on most other points. Thus, another point of divergence between the respective authors had to do with the level of analytical abstraction. In his reply to Jessop *et al.*, Hall admitted that his theorization of authoritarian populism was “a bit rough and ready” (1985, 118), but he argued this was linked to the level of abstraction at which one preferred to work. As he writes:

I do not believe that all concepts operate at the same level of abstraction — indeed, I think one of the principal things which separates me from the fundamentalist marxist revival is precisely that they believe that the concepts which Marx advanced at the highest level of abstraction (i.e. mode of production, capitalist epoch) can be transferred directly into the analysis of concrete historical conjunctures. My own view is that concepts like that of ‘hegemony’ (the family or level of abstraction to which AP [authoritarian populism] also belongs) are of necessity somewhat ‘descriptive’, historically more time-bound, concrete in their reference — because they attempt to conceptualize what Marx himself said of ‘the concrete’: that it is the ‘product of many determinations’. (118)

It is worth quoting Hall at length here, since this argument contains a number of problems that cause certain methodological biases particularly prevalent within cultural studies. Hall’s main point here simply seems to be that the notion of hegemony needs to be understood as part of what Merton (1968, 39-72) called theories of the middle-range i.e. theories in-between radical empiricism and grand theories. It is questionable, however, if the notion of hegemony is capable of performing this task, because even though Hall accepts that he only offers a partial explanation of Thatcherism — namely, of the “political/ideological conjuncture” (119) — he uses the notion of hegemony to refer to “changes in the ‘balance of forces’”, which includes the “modalities of political and ideological relations between the ruling bloc, the state and the dominated classes” (119). But surely, not all relations that determine changes in the balance of forces are best characterized as ideological? Economic crisis or breakdown, for example, is without a doubt ideologically mediated, but hardly reducible to this moment of mediation — it is (also) an *economic* crisis, after all. Hall acknowledges this with his emphasis that he doesn’t accept the “dissolution of everything into discourse” (122), but his lack of attention to questions of political economy

makes it impossible for him to understand the extent to which “economic activity”, as Jessop *et al.* put it in their reply, needs to be considered “as a determining element in hegemonic politics” (1985, 93; also see Kellner 1997). In Hall’s account, in other words, the choice for a middle-range level of abstraction through the concept of hegemony involves not so much a concretization of highly abstract Marxist concepts, but a lack of theorization and marginalization of political and economic determinations. Although this is a legitimate move (after all, not everyone *has* to do research on political economy), it tends to lead not only to misguided characterizations of the political economy, but also to false claims on the terrain of culture itself. If ideology is the only determination that is seen to actively impact on culture, then every reception, production or other action that deviates from the main hegemonic ideologies tends to be interpreted as a progressive moment of resistance or, less normatively, as difference. It is such a theoretical schemata that partly explains, I would argue, many of the trends within cultural studies: from research on subcultures to reception analysis, everyday life tactics and queer subjectivities, to name just a few of the many strands. Research on the role of ideology in structuring cultures and lifestyle subjectivities is enormously important and without cultural studies we would have hardly been aware of this role in any depth, but the dominance of the ideology/culture couplet in the discipline has caused its own methodological biases.

### 2.2.2 URBAN CULTURES AND CRITIQUE

Many strands within cultural studies have move beyond this Gramscian analysis and notions such as discourse, text or practice have increasingly replaced the notion of ideology, even though the role of cultural critique has remained central to the self-description of the project of cultural studies. Nevertheless, I would argue that the methodological biases produced by Hall’s theoretical conceptualization still inform many of the cultural studies’ analyses of urban cultures. This is important to recognize, since cultural studies has always been a discipline concerned with the urban environment. Although ‘the urban’ is often not explicitly thematized as such, if one looks at the actual empirical research undertaken, there is a clear orientation towards cultural practices within an urban context. From ‘classics’ such as Dick Hebdige’s *Subculture* (1979), Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), Hall and Tony Jefferson’s *Resistance through Rituals* (1976) or Paul Gilroy’s *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* (1987) to newer work such as Scott Lash’s *Critique of Information* (2002) and Ben Highmore’s *Cityscapes* (2005), many publications focus on urban cultures in one

way or another. In this section, I will merely discuss the later two examples in order to point to some of the central problems of this tradition. A more exhaustive analysis is certainly needed, but would go beyond the limits set to this research project.

Thus, in his recent *Critique of Information*, Lash goes so far as to argue that critique as we know it is no longer possible, since we are now part of a global information order that no longer allows any “transcendentals” or an “outside space” for reflection. Instead, “the critique of information will have to come from inside the information itself” (vii). This argument is couched in a narrative that is global in orientation, but which takes the urban as a starting-point. Lash argues that the information order is constituted and connected by networks, which has radical consequences for the city:

[i]mportant here is the occupation of expensive space [i]n the central districts of the increasingly generic global cities, again opening up the array of face-to-face communications and transactions [...]. The consequence is the emergence of a global elite, whose point of identification is the global elite in other such cities. Thus in the global culture industries, the elite in São Paulo (journalists, TV presenters, curators, architects, film distributors, pay television producers, advertising, pop music sector etc.) have more in common with their counterparts in Tokyo, New York, London, Paris, Milan and Los Angeles than they do with their own compatriots in Brazil. [...] To self-include and self-identify in the context of *global* information and communication flows is to self-exclude and dis-identify from the *national* flows. (4-5)

There are at least five major problems to this depiction of the global city. First, it is characterized by a local/global dichotomy that simply does not do justice to the complexities of contemporary urban life. Does identification with global flows necessarily entail a dis-identification from national flows? Hardly ever, I would argue. Even those global elites that do intensely communicate with other elites in other global cities are by no means disconnected from sub-global flows, such as television, newspapers, family members, friends, tax collectors and local companies.<sup>4</sup> Second and related to this first problem, it leads Lash to argue along simplistic ‘elite vs. the excluded’ lines: you are either in (the global information flows) or out. By doing so, he reproduces the same conceptual mistakes made by Manuel Castells in his work on the network society (e.g. 1996). This creates a highly reductionist notion of social stratification that cannot come to grips with societal differentiation (such as the emer-

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4 It is Lash who would argue that these examples are all part of ‘flows’ and my immanent critique follows his line of argumentation, even though I would argue that such a broad use of the notion of flows loses most analytical value.

gence of global subcultures or the fragmentation of the working and middle classes) nor does it have much to say about unequal forms of inclusion into these global flows. Often, the problem is not so much the forced exclusion of the “underclass” by the “overclass” (5), but hierarchical inclusion and control — the global labor market would be an example of this. Third, Lash hardly has anything to say about the role of state institutions or other forms of governance in either contributing to or inhibiting the emergence of this information order. According to him, “[n]ational economic, political and cultural relations are in decline and being displaced by global flows”. Although he does acknowledge that these national relations are replaced by “supra- and sub-national institutions” (26), this remains on the level of observation. There is no analysis of how these new forms of governance impact on and structure the global flows, which leads to a persistent technological-economic determinist tendency in his larger argument. Fourth, Lash’s generalizing argument leads to a flattening of social and urban space, which makes any sophisticated understanding of the continuing differences between cities very difficult. Comparative research becomes impossible or even unnecessary, since cities are simply “increasingly generic” (4). And fifth, the book operates with a very linear and one-dimensional view of history, despite Lash’s constant references to non-linear “socio-technical assemblages” (112), non-linear “multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism” (20), non-linear “reterritorializations” (163) and non-linear “networks” (183). In contrast to the openness and movement promised by this kind of language, history paradoxically moves in one direction only: from the manufacturing society to the global informational culture (32), from economies of scale to economies of scope (82), from practical to discursive knowledge (142), and from ideological power to informational power (1). It is left unexplained how to theorize the connection between these many non-linear movements and the broader one-directional thrust of history.

It is only on the basis of this flawed conceptualization of the urban information society that Lash can come to the conclusion that critique — as old-fashioned *Ideologiekritik* — is no longer possible, but will have to come from inside information itself. Informationcritique is the word he uses to refer to this new situation. According to Lash: “[...] as long as we have a transcendental realm of thought, and this transcendental realm is identified with truth, being, the primordial and the like [...], we are still in the realm of *Ideologiekritik*. [...] This ideologycritique has been effective. But it is suited much better to the constitutive dualisms of the era of the national manufacturing society. The problem is that the global information culture tends to destroy these dualisms, tends to erase the possibil-

ity of a transcendental realm. [...] As transcendentals disappear, thought is swept up into the general plane of immanence with everything else” (8-9). As a result of his over-reliance on the notion of immanence, however, Lash confuses the philosophical distinction between the transcendental and the empirical with actual distinctions and changes *within* the empirical realm. According to him, the global information culture not only tends to question national boundaries (which it clearly does and this is empirically observable), but it also tends to erase the transcendental realm, which is an argument that makes no sense, since the transcendental realm is a theoretical construction to begin with.<sup>5</sup> As Scott Cutler Shershow, in a similar critique of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri has pointed out, “signification itself always involves a relation between immanence and transcendence, between the ontic and the ontological, between becoming and Being.” Refusing transcendent ideas as such is an impossibility, since that would mean “a refusal of thought itself” (2005, 70).<sup>6</sup> Also, Lash remains quite unclear as to what his so-called informationcritique actually involves. In the section I quoted above, he even argues that not only *Ideologiekritik*, but informationcritique as well is “swept up into the general plane of immanence” (9) — a comment I take to mean the near impossibility of any form of critique. At other points, he argues that we need a more situated and grounded critique of informational capitalism (see in particular Ch. 9 where he discusses Henri Lefebvre) and more empiricist, phenomenological accounts (see in particular Ch. 12). One of the main problems of phenomenological accounts, however, is their reliance on categories that are not simply given within the experience of phenomena, but that need to be actively constructed by consciousness and through theory-building. This gap between phenomenological sense-data and theoretically overdetermined categories and concepts is strikingly obvious in Lash’s account and causes his problematic wavering between data and theory without making explicit the methodological linkages between them. Maybe as a result of this confusion, Lash too easily ends up

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5 Although this of course does not mean that this transcendental realm is universally objective or applicable. It is a theoretical *construction*, after all. I therefore agree with Lash’s point that this transcendental sphere is a historical achievement, the universality of which has been relativized and questioned by technologies of transport and communication and the possibility of cultural comparison. I disagree with him, however, that this has led to an impossibility of abstraction and transcendence. Thanks to Ignacio Fariás for forcing me to clarify my position here.

6 Lash does indeed tend toward the conclusion that thought is impossible, but this seems to me a dramatic overstatement. Also see Rossiter (2006) for an excellent critique of Lash’s argument.

advocating Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of *amor fati* — we need, in other words, to embrace our fate. Focused critique, no matter how positive or modest, is not provided.

In *Cityscapes*, the second example, Highmore offers a highly readable and absorbing account of urban culture in the nineteenth and twentieth century with ample references to film, literature, architecture, shopping and infrastructure. My critique of his work is somewhat unfair, since Highmore never claims to offer a full-blown systematic analysis — he embraces Lefebvrian-inspired rhythmanalysis as a way of orienting attention towards the “multiple rhythms of modernity” (11) — nor does he strive towards an explanatory account — his main interest is descriptive in the sense that he treats the urban as dense, thick and complex (17). His interpretive skills are impressive and he nicely manages to convey the complexity and unruliness of urban life. By doing so, he comes much closer to the modest empiricist critique advocated by Lash (xii) than does Lash himself. Nevertheless, Highmore does claim to be a realist in the sense that he treats cultural materials as a “product of real-world limits and pressures” (22) and he therefore finds himself linking particular cultural objects and practices to the broader political economic context via notions such as exchange, gentrification, commodities and consumption. It is precisely at those moments of linkage, however, that certain methodological and theoretical problems arise. This can be most clearly illustrated with reference to chapter three, in which Highmore analyzes shopping. His rhythm-analytical approach enables him to emphasize the plurality of shopping rhythms, countering a popular view of shopping history as involving a replacement of one form by another. As Highmore writes: “[...] a rhythmanalysis of urban modernity needs to extend attention beyond the glamour of *emerging* and *dominating* cultural forms to take account of the tenacious persistence of more established practices (the corner shop as well as internet shopping, so to speak)” (64). A few pages later he argues: “One point to note, then, is the spatial specificity of different forms of exchange. The other point to note is the tenacity of seemingly outmoded practices of circulation” (67). These are important remarks and they counter the often-hyped discussions of new social, technological, political or economic developments not just within cultural studies, but also within many other disciplines. At the same time, this simultaneous existence of plural practices necessitates a more complex conceptualization than the one put forward by Highmore with his emphasis on circulation and rhythms. What is lacking is a real grasp of the ways in which ‘seemingly outmoded practices of circulation’ are re-organized as a result of their existence next to newer and emerging, but often more dominant forms of exchange. In other words: an

understanding of the hierarchization of exchange networks is missing and, as a result, the analysis of power — central to the project of cultural studies — is not undertaken. It needs to be asked therefore what kind of heterogeneity this is. To what extent do these older forms of exchange really link up with older social practices? And to what extent have they simply become post-Fordist forms of niche production? In order to interpret these data, however, a more sophisticated theoretical framework is necessary. Thus, not only should cultural studies pay attention to the diachronic dimension — how have particular cultural practices changed over time? — but also to the synchronic dimension — what is the position of particular cultural practices within the hierarchical urban context and in relation to other cultural practices? Most importantly, it needs to look at the intertwinement of these diachronic and synchronic dimensions, since it is this intertwinement that produces the “peculiarly condensed material” (6) of urban culture. Highmore is aware of this, but in the actual moment of analysis he falls back into a non-relational mode of argumentation in which the “seemingly out-moded practices of circulation” are understood as autonomous from the “emerging and dominating cultural forms” instead of being partly constituted by them.

### 2.2.3 CULTURE, POLITICAL ECONOMY AND URBAN COMPLEXITY

So how does one acknowledge urban complexity and what are the consequences of this acknowledgement for understanding urban cultures? Clearly, simply embracing complexity won't do, since it leaves open the basic methodological question of how to apply such a notion to empirical data (McLennan 2003, 558). In my view, more attention should be paid to the following aspects:

First, analysis might benefit from taking more seriously the premise that urban cultures are the product of multiple determinations. Although cultural studies often subscribed to this view (see Hall's quote above, but also the constant references in the literature to culture being 'overdetermined'), it never really got a handle on the analytical complexity lurking behind this premise. There are, of course, many ways of theorizing determination, but within cultural studies this issue has largely been governed by the often polemical discussions surrounding explanation vs. description. As Gregor McLennan (2002) reminds us, early Birmingham cultural studies, as part of its critique of empiricist sociology, actually aspired towards a more explanatory understanding, “achieving proper depth and perspective, with a more adequate transformative political practice to follow as a consequence” (639), but in later work this aspiration has either been rejected or has moved to the background

of conceptual attention. I take the position that some level of explanation (and not 'merely' description) and analysis of causality is necessary for all forms of social inquiry and critique.<sup>7</sup> It is not enough, for example, to simply refer to neoliberal cities as some broad context determining cultural change; one has to be much clearer about how this context relates to particular institutions and actors. Fortunately, some recent work within cultural studies is starting to address these questions. Thus, in their analysis of twentieth-century Vienna, Wolfgang Maderthaler and Lutz Musner (2002) choose to analyze urban cultures within the broader paradigm of Fordism. As they argue:

Culture as a social text in this model is neither a direct after-effect of the market nor simply a socio-structurally or historically mediated entity. Rather, the given reciprocal dynamic of accumulation and regulation generates the characteristic texture of the social fabric, which can be interpreted as 'culture' [...]. (874)

This is useful work, since it neither sees urban culture as an effect of the market nor as an autonomous phenomenon, but instead as shot through with political economic determinations on various levels.<sup>8</sup>

Second, acknowledging these multiple determinations makes it easier for cultural studies to understand how discourses cluster around particular "institutional fixes" (Peck and Tickell 1994) and how this creates a certain sedimentation and stabilization of these discourses and their material effects. Although cities have always played a central role both as sites of cultural production as well as capital accumulation and for that reason ought to be central objects of investigation, it can be argued that this role has become even

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7 Please note that I am explicitly not defending a radical distinction between explanation and description. Description, as practiced by most in cultural studies, is never mere description, but always involves 'ideal types', reinterpretation and exemplification. Similarly, although explanation is often seen to involve purely the identification of causal links, this argument is built with reference to the identity of this cause. As McLennan argues: "[...] we are trying to identify certain *constitutive tendential features* that might give us a more comprehensive grasp of the phenomena in question. Causality can thus be broadened out of its traditional remit to *include* those various relations of determination, structural correlation or 'constitutional-ity' that characterize things and processes" (2002, 643).

8 Although, it must be added, Maderthaler and Musner do seem to grant too much explanatory power to the notions of accumulation and regulation, ignoring the incompleteness of these processes. In doing so, they adopt an overly totalizing perspective on regulation theory. See chapter three for a critique.



more important due to the crisis of Fordist-Keynesian capitalism during the 1970s and the resulting emergence (however partial) of a KBE (Jessop 2002a).<sup>9</sup> As a result of this crisis, cities have become explicitly targeted by states as sites for the development of entrepreneurial and competitive practices. This has been accompanied by an expansion of governance mechanisms through a variety of public-private partnerships, infrastructure development as well as urban, social and cultural policies (Brenner 2004; O'Connor 2004). Cultural studies could certainly spend more time investigating the impact of these strategies on urban cultures. At the same time, I am not making this argument in order to emphasize the actual successes of such strategies in making these cultures more compliant with capital accumulation. On the contrary, what needs to be kept in mind is that the many networks of cultural and aesthetic production and consumption are not mere derivations of the capitalist economy, but always also "alternative modes of regulation" with their own logics that "can never be fully fixed within any one mode of regulation" (Jessop 2002b, 103). Although the political economy literature has sometimes emphasized this dimension, it has hardly done any research on these alternative forms of regulation. It is here that I can see cultural studies offering important contributions to a truly transdisciplinary debate, since it is one of the few disciplines that has developed a highly differentiated knowledge of contemporary cultures. In order, however, not to fall back onto a simplified and amorphous view of culture, there is a need to investigate where and how these urban cultures interact with other and possibly more dominant modes of regulation.

Adopting a research perspective in which more care is taken to distinguish multiple determinations constituting social phenomena and in which the focus is on the intertwinement of dominant and alternative modes of regulation offers many advantages. Methodologically — and this is the third and last point — it enables cultural studies to engage more seriously in historical research. The political economy tradition has developed a sophisticated theoretical framework with which to analyze the historical transformations of capitalism in a variety of spatial contexts and on multiple scales, but a similar level of analysis has not been achieved by cultural studies. Although "[h]istorical contextualization", according to Richard Johnson, "was and remains an important aspect of cultural

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9 These comments are meant to apply to Western Europe and North America only, since it was in these areas that the Fordist regime in combination with a Keynesian welfare mode of regulation was most fully developed. In other areas around the world, it is likely that the trajectory will have been different. See Leitner *et al.* (2007) for an excellent overview of urban neo-liberalisms across the world.

studies method" (2001, 266), it could be argued that the tendency to focus on the ways in which historical representations are appropriated by contemporary actors often leads to a discursification of history that analytically marginalizes the structuring role of historical trajectories on contemporary actions. Having said that, I see no reason why this more structural dimension of history cannot be included, since the research narratives within cultural studies are often implicitly driven by historicized arguments. Thus, whereas many in the political economy tradition emphasize the path dependency of political economic change — largely in order to emphasize the persistence of institutions and their role in defining and delimiting agency — as well as the 'layering' of new rounds of political regulation and economic accumulation on older already sedimented layers (e.g. Massey 1985), cultural studies tends to highlight the continuity of cultural form (despite constant transformations) and the relative autonomy of 'the popular' (despite its partial instrumentalization).

#### 2.2.4 CULTURAL ANALYSIS AND RE-SPECIFYING CRITIQUE

So where does this leave cultural studies, its sensitivity towards cultural practices and the role of critique? In the previous sections, I have argued that cultural studies was never simply about the celebration of cultural practices, but always about the analysis of these cultures *in relation to* broader and often more powerful processes of regulation and control. If I am correct in this characterization of the core of cultural studies, then this means that research will have to conceptualize this relation. It is here that the critical political economy tradition offers useful tools that could be appropriated by cultural studies. The preliminary methodological and theoretical thoughts I have developed in the previous sections largely draw upon neo-Marxist work on the contemporary (urban) political economy, but I see no reason why this approach could not be replaced by or combined with other approaches — the framework is 'weak' enough to accommodate a variety of perspectives. The only ontological premise of this framework is that the world is structured, layered, differentiated and relatively resistant to all-encompassing cataclysmic social change, which is the result of my reliance on a critical realist ontology.<sup>10</sup>

In its engagement with popular cultures, cultural studies has been very good at decentralizing the truth claims of the academy through the acknowledgement of the critical potential of various

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<sup>10</sup> See Dean *et al.* (2005) for a useful introductory overview of critical realism. See section II.3 for a development of this critical realist methodology.

cultural practices. At the same time, in the more interesting work there has always been an acknowledgement of the simultaneous regulation of these cultures: Hall's notion of authoritarian populism discussed above tried to capture this two-sidedness. This is a very specific form of critique that comes close to Fredric Jameson's notion of "double hermeneutic", simultaneously embracing both the negative hermeneutic of ideology-critique and the positive of a 'non-instrumental conception of culture'" (Milner 2006, 117).<sup>11</sup> Such a notion of critique necessitates an engagement with the practices of and arguments put forward by social actors, while simultaneously pointing to the biases of these practices and arguments. In order to explain these biases, this critique needs to be related to the structured, layered and differentiated reality in which (urban) cultures operate. It is at this point, however, that the cultural studies' notion of critique all too often finds its limits, since it doesn't deal satisfactorily with social complexity. As we saw above: Hall's discursified account of hegemony tendentially leads to a simplistic characterization of political and economic processes; Lash's discussion of information and immanence as the central dynamics of the current era unhelpfully conflates the distinction between epistemology and ontology and produces an unrealistically flat ontology of the contemporary global city; and Highmore's analysis of shopping as constituted of multiple rhythms cannot come to grips with unequal relations between various exchange networks.

If anything, therefore, critique needs to be re-specified in order to be able to reflect on the structuring power of multiple and partly overlapping and interacting processes. Figure one<sup>12</sup> offers some first

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11 The reference is to Jameson (1981), 286. Please note that Milner discusses this notion of double hermeneutic in relation to Raymond Williams' approach, but it seems to me that this equally applies to the early Hall, even though Milner himself harshly criticizes the later work of Hall.

12 This figure is partly derived from Downward and Mearman (2007), but is developed here in a different direction and in a different context. The figure approaches the practice of critique from a critical realist perspective and thus distinguishes between an intransitive domain of structured reality (including events and causes) and a transitive domain of knowledge in an epistemologically relative context. The 'empirical' straddles the line between the intransitive and transitive domains. On the one hand, it provides the point of access to the actual events and real causes. On the other hand, it constitutes the data with which we develop our knowledge. The arrow on the left-hand side points from events to causes, since this reflects the direction of analysis: the analyst reproduces from events to causes. If the figure would present the ontology of reality, the arrow would point in the different direction (since causal mechanisms produce events) or in both directions (since events can also exert feedback effects on and transform causal mechanisms).

thoughts on how to develop such a re-specified critique, even though answering this complex question would clearly benefit from much more extensive debate than can be accomplished here.

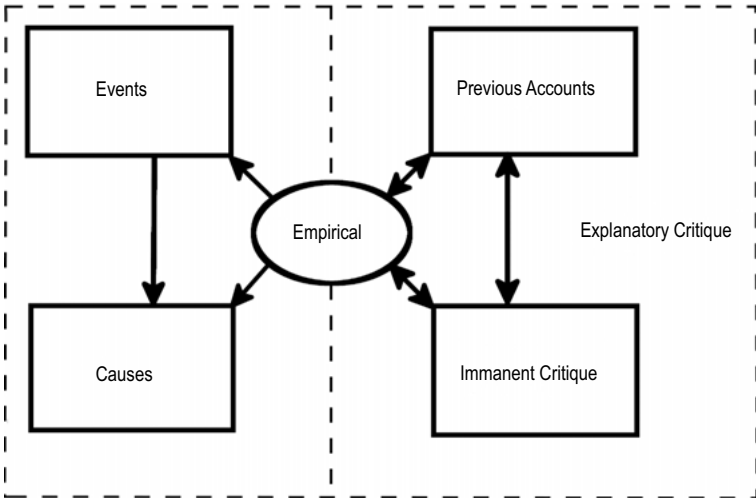


Figure 1: Immanent and Explanatory Critique

Firstly, there is a need to engage with cultural and aesthetic practices *on their own terms* — something referred to in the literature as immanent critique and practiced by many in cultural studies. As explained by Mervyn Hartwig, this avoids “the ‘bad circularity’ or arbitrariness implicit in external criteria of knowledge [...] by taking its departure from within the accounts it seeks to situate, correct or replace [...] to demonstrate either that an account is theory-practice inconsistent or, if consistent, beset with aporiai or problems that are insoluble in its own terms” (2007a, 107). This immanent critique not only reflects on the phenomena that are the object of investigation, but also on explanatory and/or descriptive accounts used by others to analyze these phenomena, since it is often only through these discourses that one can ‘extract’ many empirical data in the first place. Although causal argumentation can be and often is used on this level, it is only on the second level that we arrive at a more comprehensive explanatory critique. It is here that the problems and paradoxes of the earlier inadequate account are taken up and explained theoretically and sociologically by showing that the identified problems are the effect of particular social causes on

deeper (more general) levels of reality.<sup>13</sup> Once again, this critique needs to be undertaken towards the cultural practices under investigation as well as towards other theories used to describe these practices.

## 2.3 Critical Realism and Empirical Research

In the attempt to overcome the specific weaknesses of cultural studies — in particular the ‘flattening’ of urban space, the unsatisfactory grasp of multiple determinations, and the limited conceptualization of the link between empirical data and theory — I have found a critical realist methodology very helpful. This section, therefore, discusses some of the key tenets of and concepts in critical realism that guide my analysis of networks of aesthetic production in relation to the urban political economy. This work has been mainly associated with the philosophy of Roy Bhaskar, but is now being developed in a number of directions.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.3.1 RETRODUCTION

As a methodology, critical realism is characterized by a retroductive research strategy, which offers an alternative to positivism as well as hermeneutics. Retroduction, as a concept, refers to a specific form of argumentation. While clearly illustrating the (necessarily) rhetorical nature of academic writing, it simultaneously makes explicit my research strategy by identifying a starting point, a particular way of ‘doing research’ (on a general methodological level, since it does not specify particular methods), and a provisional endpoint. A brief look at the etymological roots of this term is useful here. The Latin prefix *retro* has to do with going backwards, but simultaneously provides, according to Phyllis Chiasson (2005, 225-226), an implication of deliberateness, of deliberately choosing to go backwards.<sup>15</sup> In combination with the suffix ‘ductive’ from the Latin

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13 As Hartwig puts it: “Ideology-critique, and more generally, explanatory critique, may thus ground a threefold criticism, (1) of theories (theoretical ideologies), (2) of social practices (practical ideologies) and (3) of the generative social structures that underpin them [...]” (2007a, 108).

14 For major publications, see Bhaskar (1975, 1989, 1993).

15 This dimension of deliberateness is not contained within the Latin *retro*, but emerges in the use of this prefix in combinations with other words. Thus, Chiasson points to ‘retroactive’ (make something operative as of an earlier date) and ‘retrofit’ (modify an earlier model in order to improve) as examples of this deliberateness. Please note that the remainder of this discussion on retroduction also largely relies on Chiasson’s argument.

*ducere* (to lead), this implies that retroduction is intended to involve not only the observation of an interesting and extra-ordinary fact and the formulation of an ensuing hunch, but also that this hunch is deliberately related to something that came before – which, within a critical realist ontology, are underlying structures or mechanisms (but more on this below). Retroduction, therefore, involves more than abduction — another form of argumentation and one that is increasingly popular within the social sciences. In contrast to ‘retro’, the prefix ‘ab’ means ‘away from’. Both in the case of abduction and retroduction the starting point is the same (an interesting observation and the formulation of a preliminary hunch), but whereas retroduction involves a going backward to explicate and evaluate this idea, abduction knows an outward movement that is not subject to stringent analysis. According to Chiasson, Charles S. Peirce — whose work on the logic of scientific inquiry is foundational in this context — “even ventures so far as to insist that pessimists cannot properly perform abductive reasoning, since pessimism closes off entire categories of possibilities and is thus a hindrance to obeying the ‘law of liberty’” (2005, 230).<sup>16</sup> This is probably not wholly untrue and in my own writing I would have to plead guilty to this charge, since a retroductive research strategy (particularly when applied in the context of regulationist theories, as discussed in chapter three) does tend to produce theories of constraint: empirical phenomena are related back to underlying causes or mechanisms. At the same time, it must be emphasized that retroduction is a much more encompassing logic of inference than either deduction or induction and should actually be understood as the recursive interplay between abduction, deduction and induction. The research cycle, following such a retroductive approach, is thus constructed as follows: first, the observation of an interesting or surprising fact is followed by abductive reasoning, which tries to make a guess that could explain the fact; second, deductive reasoning is applied to explicate the guess (through the formulation of a general rule); and third, inductive reasoning is used to test and evaluate the guess (on the basis of observation). In the messiness of actual research practice, however, these analytical moments will interact and co-constitute each other at all stages of the research project. More problematically still, the moment of abduction remains inescapably marked by its refusal to become formalized.

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16 Wirth (2003), for example, points to the ways in which abductive inference is an aesthetic operation and a “strategy of innovation” related to fantasy and imagination. Also see Kleining and Witt (2001) and Kelle (2001) for a defense of a heuristic methodology (which is, in many ways, a synonym for abductive research), while simultaneously (esp. in the case of Kelle) defending the usefulness of methodological rules.

Guided by the 'law of liberty' and oriented towards the discovery of the new, abduction introduces a dynamic of instability and uncertainty into the analytical process that cannot be captured by overly formal modes of reasoning. This was also recognized by Peirce who, even though he believed that all scientific inquiry was dependent on mathematics, argued that abduction and retroduction could also draw on non-mathematical models, most importantly aesthetics as a "state of potentiality" (Chiasson 2005, 235).

Closely intertwined with this retroductive research strategy is the critical realist insistence on a distinction between the so-called transitive (epistemological) and intransitive (ontological) dimensions of reality. Generally speaking, the transitive dimensions are the concepts, theories and models used to understand and explain aspects of reality, whereas the intransitive dimensions are the real events, structures and mechanisms that make up the natural and social world. This distinction, of course, is central to all versions of realism, but the adoption of retroduction forces critical realists to develop a sophisticated understanding of the relation between both dimensions. This is because the process of retroduction demonstrates the mutual intertwinement of transitive and intransitive dimensions at all stages of the research process: induction is constantly alternated with deduction; and the intimate connection between abduction and aesthetics 'infects' the more encompassing strategy of retroduction as such. Instead of rejecting realism entirely, however, critical realism broadens the notion of epistemology, while grounding it within a much wider-ranging, complex and possibly limitless ontology. The transitive dimension or epistemology, according to Hartwig, needs to be understood in "its broadest, socially contextualised or materialist (non-idealist) sense [...] encompassing everything imbricated with human praxis and currently being affected by it" (2007b, 264). This socialized approach to knowledge production allows critical realists to acknowledge the concept-dependence of the social — social structures and practices are reproduced and transformed, at least in part, semiotically — while limiting this constructivist argument in space and time. Temporally, the transitive dimension is limited to the present, since the epistemological process is related to human praxis and the enrolment of objects, institutions, structures, discourses, etc. in this project of knowledge production. Once a particular project is finished, however, the transitive dimension can be seen (by a perspectival switch) "as continually passing over into the intransitive, without annulling the distinction" (265). In other words, epistemology gains a certain ontological reality through the passage of time (what else are the sedimented layers of history?). Spatially, the transitive dimension relates to the intransitive by emphasizing the spatial differentiation

of complex societies. Naturally, knowledge production operates within certain spaces (e.g. laboratories, schools, the home) and is socially grounded and mediated, but this social process is also spatially limited, since each spatially embedded transitive moment operates within a much vaster and wider-ranging ontology that is left untouched by our knowledge.

### 2.3.2 ONTOLOGY

So what is the ontology of critical realism? Leaving aside the differences between the various contributions to this tradition, the following four themes emerge.<sup>17</sup> First of all, critical realism accepts a “commonsense realism” (Collier 2005, 335): concrete objects such as human beings, animals, buildings and planets are real and exist independently of our knowledge of them, even though we can clearly only know these objects under particular descriptions (i.e. the adoption of a realist ontology in combination with a relativist epistemology). Also, as discussed in the previous section, these epistemological dimensions might feed back into the actual construction of these (and possibly new) objects. In taking this route, critical realism hopes to avoid the ‘epistemic fallacy’ that completely collapses ontology into epistemology.

Second, the fact that natural and social reality does not constitute a closed system (as might be the case with laboratory experiments<sup>18</sup>) limits the extent to which one can rely on Humean constant conjunctions i.e. the regular succession of events (whenever A occurs, then B will follow) as an indication of causation.<sup>19</sup> Whereas the laboratory enables the isolation of one mechanism to test it in a closed system, in the reality outside the laboratory this mechanism operates alongside other causal mechanisms, and these conjointly bring about an outcome that is irreducible to each single mechanism (Collier 2005, 329). In order to grasp this causal complexity, critical realism works with a notion of depth realism or ontological depth, which is “a realism that insists upon the structured, stratified and orderly nature of reality” (Dean, Joseph and Norrie 2005, 8). In Bhaskar (1975), this reality is divided into three

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17 See Blaikie (2000), in particular 108-114 and 180-181, for an excellent discussion of critical realism and the retroductive research strategy in relation to research design and methodology.

18 Although, as even the early ethnographic literature on laboratory science (e.g. Knorr-Cetina 1981; Latour and Woolgar 1979) has shown, this image was always more of an ideal than a practical reality.

19 Although note that Hume always relates this definition of causation to the argument that the connection between A and B is identified as causation in the mind due to experience and expectation.



overlapping domains: the real (comprising causal mechanisms); the actual (constituted by events that can but do not have to be observed); and the empirical (experiences). The three domains are interrelated, with the real encompassing the actual and the empirical, and the actual including the empirical.

Third, and following from this understanding of reality as stratified, critical realism argues that scientific inquiry should involve the discovery of underlying mechanisms that can explain certain events but that are simultaneously not always manifested in these events. This involves a shift in research priorities away from the analysis of causation between events towards the analysis of the causal relations between events and underlying mechanisms. More precisely, critical realism distinguishes between causal powers, tendencies, mechanisms and structures. Whereas a causal power is a potential that may or may not be exercised, a tendency involves a causal power which is exercised, but which may remain unactualized and/or unmanifested to people. The notion of causal or generative mechanisms is used to refer to either a power, a tendency or both. All these are instantiated in structures, including social structures (Pinkstone and Hartwig 2007). Structures, in other words, are not neutral time-spaces of organization, but possess causal powers and tendencies that derive from deeper layers of reality.

And fourth, critical realism (at least its dialectical version) operates with a critique of 'pure presence' (or a critique of 'ontological monovalence') that emphasizes the importance of absence in the structuration of reality. The role played by absence is already acknowledged by Bhaskar's early distinction between the real, the actual and the empirical, since this creates a gap between what is experienced and the whole of reality — there is (potentially) more to life than what you experience or observe. At the same time, this account can be criticized for simply positing an ontology of pure presence at a deeper level, namely the 'real' level of generative mechanisms. In Bhaskar's later work (starting with Bhaskar 1993), however, this critique is answered by emphasizing more strongly than before the importance of potentiality at the level of the real and by placing, as Alan Norrie points out, "at the heart of the underlying and co-constituting real a sense of mobility, unfinishedness, and openness to the new [...]" (2005, 101). There are similarities here between the work of Bhaskar and the negative dialectics of Theodor W. Adorno in the sense that Adorno also tried to think through this gap, although he distinguishes between *das Ganze* ('the whole') and *die gesellschaftliche Totalität* ('the social totality').<sup>20</sup>

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20 Pointed out by Norrie (2005), footnote 20. The reference is to Adorno (1973), 47. Also see Norrie (2004).

### 2.3.3 CRITICAL REALISM AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

Bhaskar's philosophy and many of the debates within critical realism are pitched at a highly abstract level and there is a need to develop this ontology in relation to substantive social research. In this context I have found Jessop's strategic-relational approach particularly useful. Instead of relying too heavily on the philosophical distinction between the real, the actual and the empirical, he retains the idea that reality is stratified and complex, but concretizes this general ontology. According to Jessop, structures should be conceptualized as "strategically-selective in their form, content, and operation", whereas actions should be seen as "structurally-constrained, more or less context-sensitive, and structuring" (2005, 48).<sup>21</sup> Stated like this, this approach doesn't seem to differ too much from Anthony Giddens' structuration theory (1984), but Giddens repeated characterization of a structure as a 'system of generative rules and resources' which is instantiated by social actors lacks spatial and temporal specificity (structures tends to be posited outside space and time (Thompson 1989)) as well as ontological depth (Jessop 2005, 45). His theory implies that a structure is equally constraining and enabling for all actors, which makes it difficult for him to think through the ways in which specific structural constraints have differential effects on actors. Jessop, in contrast, is much more sensitive to this and to the ways in which "structures emerge in specific places and at specific times, operate on one or more particular scales and with specific temporal horizons of action, have their own specific ways of articulating and interweaving their various spatial and temporal horizons of action, develop their own specific capacities to stretch social relations and/to compress events in space and time, and, in consequence, have their own specific spatial and temporal rhythms" (51). The strategic-relational approach, in other words, enables a historically and spatially sensitive analysis of social structure and action in which the notion of path dependency is taken as a premise: the prior development of structures shapes subsequent action. At the same time, Jessop's critical realist ontology leads him to argue in a non-determinist fashion that although these structures instantiate tendencies, these tendencies might remain unactualized or unmanifested. More contingently still, the structures themselves need to be socially reproduced and are therefore also tendential. This creates a situation of double or multiple tendentiality (Jessop 2005, 51). Reflexivity, according to Jessop, is important in this regard, but should "include reflection on the specific spatio-temporal selectivi-

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21 Also see Jessop (2001).

ties of structures and the appropriateness of different spatio-temporal horizons of action" (52). This kind of "second-order observation" (52) concretizes my earlier remarks concerning the need for a two-level notion of critique, involving both immanence and explanation.

But even the strategic-relational approach is in need of further methodological refinement, since it still lacks clear guidelines for empirical work: how does one, for example, identify spatio-temporal selectivities? Here we need to return to the retroductive research strategy discussed above, but this time we can be more precise. As we now know, retroduction involves a method of iterative abstraction by which causal mechanisms are isolated in relation to concrete phenomena — the objects analyzed are transformed into ideal-types through a one-sided accentuation of certain aspects of these objects. As Henry Wai-chung Yeung points out, there are two analytical criteria that can be applied in order to decide whether a postulated mechanism can indeed be considered a causal mechanism: "1) When this mechanism is activated under appropriate circumstances or contingencies, will the proposed phenomenon occur?" and "2) Can this phenomenon be caused by other mechanisms?" (1997, 59). To give a concrete example: the emergence of entrepreneurial subjectivities might not simply be the effect of processes of neoliberalization, but instead (or also) the effect of strategies of radical self-organization. Analysis, therefore, needs to be sensitive to these situations in which one phenomenon or object can be (and usually is) governed by multiple determinations. As I pointed out in my section on cultural studies, one has to keep in mind the interplay between dominant and alternative modes of regulation. This interplay cannot, of course, be determined in advance, but needs to be demonstrated through specific research inquiries and *post hoc* reconstructions.

Another way of bringing critical realist philosophy closer to social research is by focusing on so-called quasi-closures. As institutional economics has shown, structures as well as actions can be understood as institutionally mediated in the sense that specific institutional contexts promote particular forms of behavior, ethics, or aesthetics, while discouraging or actively excluding others. This, as Paul Downward *et al.* (2002) have pointed out, produces "situations of quasi-closure", since "agents' mental models of situations acquire a close level of overlap or high degree of sharing, as mutually consistent and stable interpretations of that situation, its assumptions, values, beliefs, knowledge and information" (488). Critical realist research, therefore, can analyze these quasi-closures, since they offer clues to the spatio-temporal selectivities and the underlying causal mechanisms that guide action. At

the same time, it is through the modification of these institutions that actors can open up new possibilities and new ways of acting that were previously impossible.

#### 2.3.4 EMERGENCE

Critical realism's stratified account of reality, its argument that social reality should be understood as an open system, the view that causal mechanisms and structures possess tendencies instead of causal laws and its emphasis on absence distinguishes critical realism from other 'macro'-explanations such as structural functionalism that analyzes society as a closed system tending towards equilibrium. Central to this account is Bhaskar's argument that we should understand the relations between the different strata of reality as simultaneously rooted and emergent (Collier 1994, 110). Rootedness simply means that higher levels (for example, society) presuppose lower or deeper levels of reality (e.g. biological, chemical, physical, matter). Emergence is more complex to grasp, but refers to the fact that higher levels — despite their rootedness — are irreducible to lower levels of reality. Jamie Morgan offers the best summary of this relation by highlighting the three characteristics of emergence:

(1) that some substance, entity, property or system  $\beta$  is dependent for its existence upon some other substance, entity, property or system  $\alpha$ ; (2) that dependency implies some form of co-variance where fundamental changes in  $\alpha$  mean fundamental changes in  $\beta$ ; and (3) that the form, operation and consequences of  $\beta$  cannot be reduced to  $\alpha$ . Thus, though (1) and (2) imply some form of relation that may perhaps be conceptualised as non-constant conjunction, or irregular, and/or multiply realisable causation, (3) makes the form of that relation conceptually problematic because irreducibility implies some form of disjuncture between  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  such that  $\beta$  cannot be translated, explained or predicted from  $\alpha$  alone. (2007, 166)

Placed within a stratified ontology, the concept of emergence acknowledges not only that the interaction of generative mechanisms produces certain events that can be explained with reference to these mechanisms, but also that this interaction produces events that, in turn, can create new higher-level strata (with their own generative mechanisms), which cannot (fully) be explained with reference to the underlying strata. To an extent, this implies that events at higher levels of reality will tendentially be subject to a broader range of causal mechanisms operative at multiple levels of reality than those events at lower or deeper levels of reality: human beings, for example, are constituted by social, neurological, biological, physical and other mechanisms, whereas rocks are subject to a

few of these mechanisms only. At the same time, emergence potentially operates in two directions, questioning this vertical hierarchy of strata. First of all, higher-level strata can produce feedback that affects the workings of lower-level strata, thereby possibly (and somewhat paradoxically) complicating the reproduction of the stratum from which this feedback emerged. An example would be ecological crises that are clearly societally produced, but which threaten the livelihood of human beings due to the destruction of necessary underlying strata of reality. Second, the interaction of causal mechanisms or social structures within higher strata might not directly impact on lower strata of reality, but the dynamic and emergent properties produced by these interactions can only be understood with reference to the social organization in which these interactions are situated (Creaven 2002, 137). This relativizes the emphasis in critical realism on relations of vertical causality between different strata, since the analysis of such interactions necessarily downplays the structuring role of lower-level on higher-level strata (through vertical causalities), while emphasizing intra-stratum interactions (or, horizontal causalities). Andrew Brown even goes so far as to argue that there is nothing that necessarily relates the higher to the lower stratum and that each stratum can be adequately conceptualized in isolation (2002, 173), but this seems to be pushing the argument too far. As I see it, it is to be expected that the identification of the respective importance of vertical and horizontal causalities is dependent on the phenomenon under investigation, indicating the need for more substantive social theory. As Sean Creaven puts it: "realism' as such is non-committal in relation to the fundamental question of which strata of reality are basic to or emergent from which, and this applies as much to the stratification of nature as to that of society" (2002, 142). As we will see in chapter three, regulation theories try to concretize this critical realist ontology by locating accumulation and, to an extent, regulation on deeper levels of reality than other social processes. This is a productive approach, since it enables a sophisticated analysis of the political economic stratum on which other social processes operate. At the same time, this Marxist concretization of a critical realist ontology structurally downplays the irreducibility of higher social strata to this underlying stratum, while operating with a reductionist understanding of this deep level of reality. In chapter three, therefore, I introduce the concept of network as a complement to accumulation and regulation in order to counter this particular bias.

## 2.4 From Disciplinary Deconstruction to Transdisciplinarity

All this has important implications for research practices, since a critical realist orientation — if it is to grasp the specificities of social processes within a highly complex and stratified reality, while holding on to an encompassing notion of critique — cannot be discipline-based or specialized, but needs to incorporate and transcend a variety of disciplinary discourses and methods in order to explore the mutual constitution of political, economic and cultural processes at all scales (Brenner 2004, 23-25). Methodologically, this involves a “reciprocal analytical movement between the micro through the meso to the macro and back again” (Jessop and Sum 2001).

Even though I subscribe to such a notion of and need for transdisciplinarity<sup>22</sup>, it is important to recognize that often this search for a new transdisciplinary understanding of research remains wedded to an ideal of a unity in knowledge. But this is a highly problematic ideal, since it assumes that the various disciplinary knowledges add up i.e. that their integration will actually provide us with a more comprehensive and unified knowledge of one and the same object. However, this still presupposes that the object actually has only one reality, whereas it needs to be recognized that each discipline also constructs its own objects and realities — the separation of disciplinary knowledge and object is an impossible task.<sup>23</sup> Thierry Ramadier (2004) instead has argued that in order for transdisciplinarity to be possible we need to move away from this kind of thinking in terms of division (which can then be re-unified) and instead start thinking in terms of deconstruction. As he argues:

Deconstruction follows an entirely different principle, since in this perspective an object can be seen as pertaining to different levels of reality. The numerous levels of reality reflect the different structures of a single object reality. [...] If

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22 Please note that I use the notion of transdisciplinarity, whereas other authors might prefer postdisciplinarity (e.g. Jessop and Sum 2001; Brenner 2004). I prefer transdisciplinarity, since it refers, in my view, to the integration of disciplinary frameworks at a higher level, while simultaneously acknowledging the distinctions between disciplines. Postdisciplinarity too easily ends up with a pick-and-mix situation in which certain concepts from various disciplines are selected without paying attention to the theoretical coherence between these concepts. This, however, is clearly not the version of postdisciplinarity Jessop and Sum or Brenner propose and my understanding of transdisciplinarity largely overlaps with their version of postdisciplinarity.

23 See Law (2004) for a longer exposition of this problematic.

one takes the example of cities, a city refers to various realities (for example, geographic, sociological, economic, etc.). Thus, a city is no longer a natural object but a cultural object to which neither the researcher nor any other person can be completely exterior. (429)

This deconstruction is followed by a process of reconstruction that is no longer guided by a notion of unity, but that instead aims to seek coherence between these different accounts and that tries to understand the interactions between these different levels of reality (429). Disciplinary knowledges, in other words, are certainly not superfluous (or even avoidable), but always — through disciplinary deconstruction — need to be put in a wider context and in relation to other disciplinary knowledges (430). Here I can point to my earlier distinction between immanent and explanatory critique, which was developed to accomplish this task. Unavoidably, however, paradoxes and contradictions will remain, since a unified body of knowledge is impossible.

There are also political reasons for holding on to this constitutive tension between disciplinarity and transdisciplinarity and of the latter being based on the former. This once again has to do with my earlier distinction between immanent and explanatory critique. Even though it often might be tempting to imagine an all-encompassing theory of everything, this evades the fact that contemporary society is highly differentiated and (re-)produced by numerous specialized (and thus disciplinary) knowledges and practices — both within and beyond academia. If a critical theory is to have any chance of effecting actors in these highly specialized fields, it needs to be familiar with their vocabulary used in order to be able to re-orient this vocabulary towards different theoretical and social imaginaries. This applies to academic disciplines, but also and at least as important to disciplinary knowledges produced by policy networks, economic agencies or subcultural groups, to name but a few. In the following chapters, my analysis involves such an immanent critique and will engage with the discourses and practices of the music networks in London and Berlin as well as the representations of these networks within policy circles. By relating these to a critical realist ontology and (as discussed in chapter three) a (post-)regulationist theoretical framework, I hope to be able to show its biases. This by necessity goes beyond a positivist data collection exercise, since engagement also means the interpretive analysis of the often theoretically inspired languages and modes of communication adopted by the various actors in these fields. Based on such a broad understanding of disciplinary knowledges (encompassing both academic as well as non-academic discourses), this transdisciplinary approach therefore also registers the growing discontent with the division of labor between the academy (respon-

sible for theory development and abstraction) and everyday life 'out there' (constituting empirical data that can be appropriated) and proposes a much more hybrid process of knowledge production that connects these everyday and academic worlds and that acknowledges the theory-laden character of everyday practices (Turnbull 2003-04, 110). Gilles Deleuze, dramatic as always, made this point most poignantly when he argued: "True lived experience [le vécu] is an absolutely abstract thing. The abstract is lived experience."<sup>24</sup> In taking this route towards transdisciplinarity, it bypasses the 'academicization' of the term and instead builds on a more radical lineage — visible in Félix Guattari and Sergio Vilar's *metamethodology* (1992, as qtd. in Genosko 2003) and recently developed further by Gary Genosko (2003) and Ned Rossiter (2006) — that intimately connects transdisciplinary research practices to institutional change and the emergence of new social forms.

## 2.5 Methods and Data Collection

The above methodological discussion has direct implications for my understanding of methods. Following Andrew Sayer (1992), this book takes the position that a critical realist research strategy is compatible with various methods, as long as these methods are matched to the appropriate level of abstraction and the object under investigation. Methods — understood here as techniques of data collection and transformation — do not presume certain ontological positions, but can be used in combination during the process of retroduction. Downward and Andrew Mearman (2007) follow this line of argument and also emphasize that the use of methods is dependent on the levels of abstraction stressed at various points of one's argument:

[...] the level of abstraction required for the analysis ultimately determines which methods are used as, say, retroduction proceeds. The point is that methods are merely redescriptive devices revealing different aspects of objects of analysis. (90-91)

Such an understanding of methods as redescriptive devices is related to the earlier discussion on coherence instead of unity as the goal of knowledge accumulation. Methods are very much like disciplinary knowledges in that respect, since each method reveals different features of the phenomena being investigated. In the proc-

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24 <http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=67&groupe=Kant&langue=2> (27.06.2007). Thanks to Tobias c. van Veen for pointing me to this Deleuze lecture.



ess of this discovery, however, the features can no longer be extricated from the method used. From such a perspective, unity is no longer an option and it is only transdisciplinary coherence that remains. This implies an understanding of research in which “a nexus of mutually supportive explained propositions can be constructed in which the whole stands distinct from its parts” (Downward and Mearman 2007, 92). According to Downward and Mearman, retroductive research aimed at the formulation of a nexus of mutually supportive explained propositions involves not so much a strict reliance on methodical rules (as ideally achieved in deduction or induction), but a “question and answer’ theoretical structure” (91) that asks questions about a specific object of analysis. To answer this question, certain methods are needed. Each answer to the question provokes another round of questions that might necessitate the use of different methods. Although the ultimate goal of critical realist research is the discovery of underlying causal mechanisms, not all questions need to be directed towards causal relations — for example, the interpretive analysis of particular phenomena might reveal more about its specific dynamics and its complex position within a stratified and emergent reality than a mere causal analysis.

For this project, I started with research questions that would enable me to find out more about the dynamics of creative networks in relation to capital accumulation and state regulation. In order to approach these questions, I decided to heuristically focus on three dimensions: location, communication, and labor. Within each of these three dimensions, I asked questions and selected those methods that would be supportive in collecting relevant data to answer each question. Thus, in relation to location, I wanted to find out how music networks operated spatially and in what ways one could understand these spatial dynamics as related to the spatialities of regulation and accumulation. To answer the first part of this question, I engaged in a spatial data mapping of the various nodes of these music networks in order to map these nodes onto the geographies of Berlin and London. It soon became clear, however, that the explanatory power of such a quantitative approach — due to the nature of the spatial data — would be limited and could not answer the question of how these nodes were actually linked to each other. Answering this question, I decided to focus on an institutional analysis of music networks, relying on secondary literatures (publications on the sociology of music and the cultural industries) and qualitative interviews. Answering the second part of the main question proved to be more difficult, since the notions of regulation and accumulation operate at various levels of abstraction simultaneously and encompass not only the analyzed networks, but also

the broader temporal and spatial environment characterized by multiple overlapping and interacting but partly decoupled processes. In relation to spatial regulation, I decided to focus in the interviews on the role of possible couplings between music networks and creative industries policy mechanisms through an analysis of clustering processes. Accumulation was analyzed, on the one hand, by investigating the capitalist spatial dynamics within the music networks (secondary literatures and interviews) and, on the other hand, by understanding policy regulation as strategically and spatially selective and oriented towards the promotion of the KBE.

The analysis of the second dimension of communication tried to answer the question of how one can understand the communicative dynamics of music networks and to what extent and in which ways this networked communication is related to accumulation and regulation. After specifying my definition of communication, it seemed to me that one useful route towards answering the first part of the question would be to simply analyze the main discourses prevalent within these music networks. Drawing largely on secondary literatures, but illustrating these with examples from London and Berlin, I identified three main narratives that substantially shaped (and, to an extent, still shape) the dynamics of these networks. Once again and for the same reasons as above, answering the second part of the question turned out to be more difficult than originally expected. The approach, however, remained the same. Accumulation was theorized as structuring the broader social dynamic, while policy regulation was characterized as possessing a strategic selectivity oriented towards the emergence of the KBE. First, I analyzed in more depth the various creative industries policies in London and Berlin, since I wanted to better understand its discursive dimensions as well as the possible ambivalences within these policies. This was achieved through an extensive discourse analysis of the various policy publications on the creative industries in the two cities. Second — since this policy analysis still could not give me any answers concerning the actual coupling of policy mechanisms and music networks — I tried to analyze this coupling and the structuring role of accumulation and regulation through an analysis of four features (intellectual property; free choice and commodification; built environment; discourse of flexibility and change) that are central to the reproduction of the capital relation, while paying attention to the ways in which recent creative industries policies aim to re-articulate these features in order to make them fit with the new requirements of the KBE. I derived my data from interviews, secondary literature, policy documents, music magazines, music websites and online discussion forums.

Finally, the research on the third dimension of labor was oriented towards the question as to how networked labor operates and to what extent and in which ways we can understand this form of labor as related to capital accumulation and state regulation. Drawing on interviews and secondary literature, I tried to answer the first part of the question by concentrating on the entrepreneurial dimensions of labor in the discussed music networks. This one-sided accentuation of this aspect of labor was undertaken in order to highlight the structuring role of accumulation within these networks, but these entrepreneurial dimensions also need to be seen in conjunction with other (non-entrepreneurial) practices and discourses as discussed in the analysis of communication. The question concerning policy regulation was partly answered by analyzing the discourses on creative industries policies in relation to labor. As with the other two dimensions (location and communication), however, this still did not answer the question concerning the role of policy-music couplings in re-orienting music networks towards a form of labor compatible with the KBE. Answering this question, I decided to concentrate — relying on interviews, secondary literatures as well as further theoretical development — on an analysis of the constitutive role of free or unremunerated labor in explaining not only the parallels between policy discourses and music labor realities, but also the limited direct regulation of these music networks by policy mechanisms.

Methodically, this research relies on the following approaches: discourse analysis, involving interviews and other primary literatures such as music magazines, websites and online discussion forums; and spatial data analysis, relying on spatial data derived from music magazines as well as online event calendars. The following paragraphs briefly discuss these methods and associated data in some more depth.

### 2.5.1 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis is a useful approach in the context of this project, since it aims to connect discursive forms to larger power structures. I am above all interested in those strands of discourse analysis that investigate the rules of discursive formation — “non-positivist ‘laws’, which organize the production of specific discursive acts, their combination to complex ensembles of distinctive elements as well as their inscription into certain institutional contexts” (Angermüller 2005, par. 40) — and less in more openly hermeneutic and ethnographic accounts that try to offer Geertzian-style “thick descriptions” (Geertz 1973). In some ways, this involves a going back to Michel Foucault’s ‘early phase’ (Foucault 1966, 1972), dur-

ing which he started moving away from the Saussurean structural linguistic tradition without, however, completely rejecting structural ways of theory-building.<sup>25</sup> It was in his 1969 book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) that he introduced the notion of discursive formation, a term that clearly incorporates both static ('structural') as well as dynamic ('poststructural') dimensions. On a similar level of analysis, Dominique Maingueneau's theory of "self-constituting discourses" (1999) argues that each discourse implies a certain scenography, which involves a particular representation of the speaker, the addressee, the place (*topography*) and the moment (*chronography*) of discourse, with each scenography linked to certain ideological positions. In order to better understand the role discourses play in these ideological processes, we need to analyze these scenographies, the specific tone and corporeality ("ethos") that is produced by these texts and the "linguistic codes" they use. There is overlap here with Bourdieu's notion of corporeal hexis and his work on language and symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991) as well as the emerging field of critical discourse analysis, which explicitly aims to analyze the ideological use of discourses (e.g. Fairclough 1995; Wodak and Meyer 2001). Also, Maingueneau urges discourse analysts to consider the 'mediological' dimension of utterances<sup>26</sup>, by which he means the ways in which these discourses are circulated and are part of material infrastructures.

Above all, any analysis of discourse needs to pay attention to the ways in which narratives are constructed. Narratives here can simply be defined as a structure of representations of events in a particular temporal and spatial order. As a rule, narratives will possess "objectifying devices" (Jaworski and Coupland 1999, 32), which means that the narrative will locate certain elements in the realm of the true and the objective, whereas other elements will be designated false. Further, narratives in general are littered with

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25 Despite his own claims to the contrary. See the 'Foreword for the English Edition' in Foucault (1970), in which he humorously and arrogantly writes: "In France, certain half-witted 'commentators' persist in labelling me a 'structuralist'. I have been unable to get it into their tiny minds that I have used none of the methods, concepts, or key terms that characterize structural analysis. I should be grateful if a more serious public would free me from a connection that certainly does me honour, but that I have not deserved. There may well be certain similarities between the works of the structuralists and my own work. It would hardly behove me, of all people, to claim my discourse is independent of conditions and rules of which I am very largely unaware, and which determine other work that is being done today. But it is only too easy to avoid the trouble of analysing such work by giving it an admittedly impressive-sounding, but inaccurate, label" (xiv).

26 The reference is to Debray (1991).

what V.N. Volosinov (the colleague or possibly alter ego of Mikhail Bakhtin) called the 'evaluative accent' of specific words or phrases (1986), i.e. the way in which these signs convey specific judgments in relation to the object the sign refers to.<sup>27</sup> Also, it is important to attend to the emergence of patterns in discourse, which can be identified within the utterance of one actor, but also within the utterances across various actors, institutions and networks (Wood and Kroger 2000, 117-127).

### 2.5.2 QUALITATIVE DATA

As discussed above, I relied on interviews to answer questions in relation to location, communication and labor. Semistructured interviews seemed the best option in this regard, since they enable a relatively open form of interviewing while still being restricted to a particular range of topics. My original idea was to send out a large amount of e-mail questionnaires to a wide variety of actors in order to gain a representative level of empirical generalization. The low response rate, however, led me to move away from questionnaires towards a more restricted number of in-depth face-to-face and e-mail interviews. The selection of interviewees is, of course, never an objective process, but driven by previous knowledges and interests. In order to control this, however, the interviewees were selected according to the following criteria. First of all, there had to be a balance between actors performing the various functions within the electronic music networks (i.e. a balanced mixture of label owners, distributors, venue owners, publishers, etc.). And second, they had to be based within the urban areas that emerged as important 'clusters' as part of the spatial data analysis (see below). All the interviews were digitally recorded and took place in the period from November 2006 until December 2007. The first step in the analysis of the interview data involved the identification of explicit descriptions that could be thematically developed in relation to the broader argument of this book (Mayring 2003), while simultaneously remaining sensitive to the existence of possible negative instances that contradicted this argument. I decided against the full transcription of all interviews, since such a process would have been very time-consuming with only limited added analytical value to be expected.

Besides interviews, other important sources of data were the many publications (off- as well as online) available on electronic music and based in Berlin or London as well as other cities around

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27 See Bamberg (1997) for a similar concept of 'narrative positioning'. See Korobov (2001) for a review.

the world. The 'popular' discourses surrounding electronic music are intense and need to be acknowledged in any sociological analysis of networks of aesthetic production, since these discourses constitute the aesthetics of music to an important extent. Just as importantly in the context of this book is the fact that these discourses connect with wider historical, social and political economic processes that are projected back into the 'music itself'. As Georgina Born argues, it is "the forms of talk, text, and theory that surround music — the metaphors, representations, and rhetoric explaining and constructing it — that may be liable to analysis as ideological" (1995, 19).

### 2.5.3 SPATIAL DATA ANALYSIS

One of the premises of this research is, quite simply and as Doreen Massey and John Allen (1984) declared over twenty years ago, that geography matters. Spatial data analysis is interested in the geographical references of data and is based on the assumption that variation in a data set is geographically structured (Haining 2003). Explaining this double variation (namely variation in the data values as well as actual *spatial* variation) is achieved in this project through a process of retrodution about the real. On the level of method, this raises a number of issues that need to be discussed and clarified. For one thing, due to the nature of spatial data used, this research can only employ a very restricted form of quantitative analysis and descriptive statistics. Electronic music is produced within highly informal and unstable networks, which makes a classical probability sample impossible: at no point can one statistically identify the relation between sample and population. The data have been acquired through a variety of sources and I am confident that the used sources (see below) are exhaustive, but they are certainly not complete. Also, in statistical research all data should ideally refer to one point in time (or the aspect of time should become an explicit part of statistical reasoning) in order to homogenize the relation between data. This has not been possible in this research, since the collection of data has been an ongoing process over a 1.5-year period and I have relied on sources that usually do not address the temporal references of its data. Finally, the data I have collected are at their most nominal (such as postal codes of electronic music nodes) and are often more usefully described in qualitative terms. For example, in chapter four on location, I could of course have quantified the relations between music nodes (for example, the amount of connections between record labels and music venues), but this ignores the constantly changing nature of these connections, their intensity and their frequency. The quantitative aspect of

my research, therefore, is very limited and should mainly be seen as a way to: 1) generalize qualitative findings by being able to identify the actual frequencies of specific data; as well as 2) facilitate qualitative research by revealing spatial patterns that can be investigated in more depth by qualitative methods.<sup>28</sup>

#### 2.5.4 QUANTITATIVE DATA

In the case of spatial data analysis, my original and main goal was simply to collect data on what is actually 'out there' in the field of electronic music and to relate this to their locations within the two cities. Partly this was for the reasons discussed above, but it should also be seen as an attempt to develop a clearer understanding of the spatial grounding of music networks and the different uses of space among actors within these networks than is usually undertaken by the literature on music production. It was clear from the beginning, however, that it would be an impossible task to map all actors and firms and I decided therefore to exclude single artists from the mapping process. All data were entered into SPSS and categorized according to postal code, city and activity. This last category was given the following values: record label; venue (clubs, bars, galleries); agency; distribution; publication (magazines, blogs, online forums); event organization (either specific club nights or activities in various venues); store (records or DJ equipment), radio (off- and online); and various (including professional networks, post-production and software/hardware, festivals). Naturally, some cases would occupy more than one value and where this was the case I either assigned them one specific value based on their primary activity or — if a primary focus was not visible — I assigned them the 'other' value. Nevertheless, the majority of data could easily be grasped by the use of these values.<sup>29</sup> The data were intermittently collected over a period of approximately 1.5 years (November 2005 until March 2007). Due to the informal nature of many of these activities, it was not possible to use official statistics and survey data and I had to rely therefore on a variety of different sources.

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28 The distinction between 'facilitate' and 'generalize' is derived from Spicer (2004, 299-302).

29 Still, one problem remains: it is very well possible that certain nodes show up in the data set as occupying one category, but that these nodes are simultaneously involved in other music activities that, however, are not as visible. Thus, a label owner might also work as a DJ at certain club nights or organize a series of events for a limited amount of time. This points to the performance of multiple roles particularly prevalent in music networks and is something that needs to be acknowledged when interpreting these data.

These sources were the following: *De:Bug* (electronic music magazine, based in Berlin); *The Wire* (experimental music magazine, London); *Knowledge Magazine* (drum and bass magazine, London); *Zitty* (event calendar, Berlin); *Time Out London* (event calendar); berlinatnight.de (event calendar, Berlin); Flavorpill LDN (event mailing list, London); Kultureflash (event mailing list, London); Allinlondon.co.uk (overview of clubs and bars; London); Resident Advisor (website on electronic music); *e/i* (electronic music magazine); LondonNet Club Guide (website with guide to clubs; London); *DJ Mag* (music magazine, London); and *International DJ* (music magazine). One important gap in these data needs to be acknowledged. Although event organizers (those actors that organize club nights or put on shows by DJ's or bands in venues or other locations) play an important role in electronic music networks, they are hardly visible in the quantitative data and the numbers attached to this value can therefore be considered much too low. One possible reason for their invisibility in this data set is that these actors often operate 'behind the screens' (in contrast to record labels or venues, they are usually not directly in contact with audiences) and are less spatially 'fixed' than other nodes in the network, since their activities rely on their mobility between venues (usually within one city, but sometimes in multiple cities). Even if their existence would be registered, therefore, it is likely that they still would not emerge in the spatial data set, since they often cannot be attached to a particular postal code.

## 2.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to develop a sophisticated methodological starting point that will enable us to acknowledge the stratified, differentiated and emergent nature of reality that can then be used to further develop particular theories and undertake more substantive social research projects. After discussing certain strands within cultural studies, I closed the first section with some preliminary thoughts on a revised notion of critique. The second section introduced the philosophy of critical realism, focusing in particular on its methodological consequences. Central to critical realism, it was argued, is a retroductive research strategy that offers a particular form of argumentation and logic of inference. Retroduction is informed by a philosophical position that distinguishes between the transitive (epistemological) and intransitive (ontological) dimensions of reality, while acknowledging the important role played by semiosis in transforming causal mechanisms and social structures. This section also introduced the idea that realism is stratified and onto-



logically 'deep' and pointed to the importance of absence in the structuration of reality. Concretizing these philosophical reflections in relation to social research, I introduced Jessop's strategic-relational approach and offered some further guidelines for empirical work. I closed the section with a discussion of the important role played by emergence in open systems and already directed attention towards the reductionist tendencies of the regulation approach. Section II.4 analyzed the consequences this critical realist approach has for research practices and argued for the need to conduct transdisciplinary research, although always in relation to disciplinary knowledges. After these methodological reflections, I discussed the implications of this critical realist approach for the actual use of methods and data collection. Building on this methodological approach, the following chapter introduces the three main concepts of this book — accumulation, regulation, and networks — and develops a theoretical framework sensitive to a stratified reality, multiple determinations, dominant and alternative modes of regulation, and emergence.



## **3. ACCUMULATION, REGULATION, NETWORKS**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The goal of this study is to investigate the operation of networks of aesthetic production in urban environments and the ways in which and to what extent these networks can be understood as structured by the broader accumulation regime and mode of regulation. The previous chapter developed a critical realist methodology that can come to grips with stratification and emergence. This chapter develops the more substantive theoretical sociological framework necessary to understand the role of creative networks in relation to urban socio-spatial change.

Section 3.2 presents the main regulation theoretical concepts through a compact analysis of the development of regulation theory, its overlap with other theoretical approaches and its main strengths as well as weaknesses. Particular attention will be paid to the spatiality of regulation. Section 3.3 argues that there is a need to continue the regulationist concern with the stratification of reality, but to simultaneously broaden and diversify the notion of networks as adopted by regulationists in order to gain a more complex grasp of the emergent dynamics of networks of aesthetic production. It does so by discussing a variety of network theories in order to illustrate the ways in which these theories go beyond the more limited understanding of networks in the regulation approach. Section 3.4 concretizes these theoretical reflections with reference to accumulation and regulation in the case of London and Berlin as well as the main characteristics of the analyzed music networks. The following empirical chapters will build on these contextual data and add more detailed empirical as well as theoretical analyses, where necessary.

### **3.2 Accumulation and Regulation**

Contrary to what textbooks often claim through their self-imposed brevity, theories are and have never been unitary and self-sufficient frames (that can be compared one-to-one with one another), but

always assemblages comprised of various elements – immanent to the proposed theory as well as derived from other theories; and with acknowledged as well as hidden influences. Regulation theory is no different in this respect. First of all, regulation theory has a heterogeneous origin. It builds on earlier theoretical developments in the work of, among others, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but also Adam Smith, Friedrich List, Werner Sombart, Max Weber (Becker 2002, 23-60), nineteenth-century German historicism and early twentieth-century American institutional economy (Basle 2002, 21-27) as well as structural Marxism — with Alain Lipietz describing himself and other regulationists as ‘the rebels sons’ of Louis Althusser (Jenson, 1987).<sup>1</sup> Second, it has developed from the very beginning a number of overlapping research strands. Jessop (1990a) even goes so far as to identify seven regulationist schools, including: the Boccarien approach developed by Paul Boccara (1973), chief economist of the French communist party; the work by the *Groupe de Recherche sur la Régulation d'Économies Capitalistes* (GRREC) in Grenoble (de Bernis 1983); the well-known and influential Parisian school (Lipietz 1987; Boyer 1990; Aglietta 1979); the West German state-theoretical approach (Hirsch and Roth 1986); the Amsterdam School (van der Pijl 1984; Overbeek 1993); the Nordic economic policy models school (Mjøset 1987); and the social structure of accumulation (SSA) approach developed in North America (Gordon *et al.* 1982; Bowles and Gintis 1987). Many authors have therefore argued that it is better to speak not of regulation theory as a theory, but instead as an approach (Goodwin 2001, 71-72) or a research program (Boyer 2002b, 13). As long as it is clear that we are not talking about a unified body of thought, I have no particular preference for either of these terms and in this text I will alternate for stylistic reasons these terms in order to refer to this theoretical complex. I will largely draw upon the influential Parisian school of regulation theory and, above all, its subsequent development in Anglo-American research, since it is this latter tradition

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1 At the same time, in this same interview with Jenson, Lipietz emphasizes that the regulationists could also be seen as the rebel sons of Massé – the commissioner general responsible for the formulation and implementation of the French National Plan (*Commissariat général du Plan*) from 1959 to 1966 – since most of the early regulationists were trained as polytechnicians and worked in the institutions in charge of implementing the Fordist economic model in France after World War II. This institutional policy orientation perhaps explains, to an extent, the differences between regulation theory and the more radical strands of post-Althusserian Marxist theory, such as (post-)operaismo (discussed in chapter six) and, more broader, post-Marxism.

that has paid most attention to the meso-level of institutions as well as urban and regional change.

One main starting point for all regulation theories is their rejection of the assumptions of neo-classical economics — or the “asocial disposition of general equilibrium economics”, as Gordon MacLeod (1997, 531) describes it. The economy is conceptualized not as a sphere separate from broader social relations that can be analyzed by focusing on exchange relations in a world of perfect markets populated by economically maximizing rational individuals; instead, it emphasizes the openness of the capital relation and the need to socially and institutionally stabilize its reproduction. In order to analyze these stabilizing mechanisms, the regulation approach has developed a range of concepts at various levels of abstraction, the following of which are central to the theoretical framework of my argument.

### 3.2.1 ACCUMULATION REGIME AND MODE OF REGULATION

According to regulation theory, capitalism is best analyzed not as a transhistorical reality, but as an historical phenomenon that exhibits its dominant patterns of production and consumption within certain eras and areas (more on this spatial dimension below). Thus, regulationists do follow Marx and his law of value in arguing that capitalism is inherently accumulative and driven by profit and competition<sup>2</sup>, but they also point out that each historical era is characterized by a particular accumulation regime, which refers to a complementary pattern of production and consumption that remains stable for an extended period of time. The most-cited example — and the one that has received the most attention by the Parisian regulationists — is the accumulation regime of Fordism, characterized by mass production and mass consumption (Aglietta 1979). The accumulation regime needs to be understood as a macro-economic concept, since it focuses on the dominant regularities of accumulation within a particular space (in the case of the Parisian regulationists, the national state), relegating other forms of accumulation to a subordinated location within this space. As a result of this conceptualization, at this point of analysis we are already dealing with three interrelated temporalities: first, the *longue durée* of capitalism as such, dominated by the value form; second, the medium-term temporality of a particular accumulation regime characterized by dominant patterns of production and consumption; and

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2 This applies at least to the Marxist strand within regulation theory. Others, most importantly Boyer (e.g. Hollingsworth and Boyer 1999), have increasingly moved away from this Marxist tradition and now use a much more eclectic framework.

third, the short-term temporalities of subordinated and alternative forms of accumulation.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent studies have also shown, however, the difficulties of subsuming the different path dependencies and economic specificities of particular states under one category of Fordism. A partial solution has been to argue that each country exhibits particular versions of the ideal-type of Fordism, such as flexi-Fordism in Germany or obstructed Fordism in the United Kingdom (Boyer 1986). Irrespective of these variations, however, core dimensions of Fordism are: a system of work organization dividing labor into separate tasks, the mechanization of production processes and a separation between production and conception; an institutionalized share of productivity gains with employees (often called a national bargain or social contract); and mass production in economies of scale with processes of adjusting production and demand taking place primarily within one country (Boyer 2002c, 232-233). It is important to emphasize that describing an economic space and historical era as Fordist does not mean, as Jessop (2002a, 56) points out, that “every branch of the economy must be dominated by Fordist production techniques for this mode of growth to be realized: it is sufficient that the leading sectors are Fordist”. Fordism, as such, is always only partial and emergent and other non-Fordist production processes can and did exist. Being a macro-economic concept, Fordism refers to the dominant and not the marginal patterns of production.

This stability of the accumulation regime, however, is only possible through the support of a large number of rules, social norms, institutions, laws and policies, collectively referred to as the mode of regulation. The mode of regulation, according to regulation theory, “ensures the unity, regularization and normalization of the accumulation process” (MacLeod 1997, 532). As Robert Boyer (2002a, 1) points out, this attention to regulation is not to be confused with the more limited focus implied by the English term ‘regulation’. Whereas the English term (which would be translated into French as ‘*réglementation*’) refers to a more microeconomic approach concerned with improving the administrative governance of economic processes, the French term *régulation* is much more encompassing, referring to the regulation of the economic and extra-economic dimensions needed to stabilize particular accumulation regimes.

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3 Actually, it is by no means certain if these subordinated forms of accumulation need to be short-term. It might very well be possible that alternative forms of accumulation exist for an extended period of time — even surviving a particular accumulation regime — by operating in a societal niche. It is important to recognize that an accumulation regime is never complete, but always tendential and, as such, is always confronted with the limits of its reach due to institutional, functional and spatial differentiation.

Thus, building on the work of Marx, Michel Aglietta understands regulation as the processing and moderation of social relations in order to contain the inherent contradictions of capital, focusing in particular on wage labor, competition and money as the “structural forms” of regulation, although he simultaneously emphasizes the role of institutions in mediating these structural forms (1997, 44 qtd. in Becker 2002, 80-81). Boyer (1990, 37-48) identifies five key institutional forms: 1) monetary and credit relationships; 2) the wage-labor nexus; 3) competition between businesses and markets; 4) forms of state intervention; and 5) the mode of articulation with the international regime.

Social stability — or, the suppression of conflict, since regulation theory operates with the assumption that conflict is central to capitalist social relations — is achieved in those moments where these structural and institutional forms intermesh so that stable accumulation-regulation couplings emerge (Becker 2002, 89). It is in these moments only that one can talk about a relatively stable model of development (Jessop 1990b).

### 3.2.2 POST-FORDIST ACCUMULATION AND THE COMPLEXITY OF REGULATION

As history has shown, stable modes of development are prone to crisis and it is by no means certain that a successful coupling of accumulation and regulation occurs. Following this line of thought, one of the central arguments of regulation theory is that the Fordist accumulation regime coupled with a Keynesian/welfare mode of regulation underwent a destabilizing structural crisis in the 1970s. Although the causes of this crisis are complex and contested, most regulationist authors emphasize the following aspects. Economically, the increasing saturation of economies of scale within the respective national spaces led firms to develop stronger extraverted forms of accumulation, expanding into foreign markets. This undermined the state-centeredness of the Fordist-Keynesian regime and increased the dependence of firms on foreign credit, finance capital as well as oil supplies, since further economic expansion was literally fuelled by continuing access to affordable oil. The oil crises in 1973 and 1979 questioned this precarious balance. At the same time, the increasing bargaining power and militancy of labor and the consolidation of the welfare state produced a limit to increased capital accumulation ‘at home’ and offered a rationale for transnational firms to relocate their activities to other countries. Politically, the welfare state was confronted with high expenditures on social welfare benefits due to increasing unemployment in a period in which firm revenues in the home market decreased, the-

reby complicating and reducing capital's contribution to state revenues.

The reality as well as discursive articulation of economic crisis has since been matched by both economic and political developments to escape this crisis. Confronted with declining revenues in the home market, firms started increasing not only their activities abroad, they also increasingly moved away from an accumulation strategy based on mass production and consumption to one based on differentiation, niche markets and flexible production — in other words, from economies of scale to economies of scope. Politically, this led to a stronger interest in supply-side policies that were seen to create incentives for firms to produce goods and services for global markets. Wages were now no longer seen as a source of domestic demand, but instead as a cost of production, which caused a strong downward pressure on wage levels. Similarly, the state in the 1970s and 1980s engaged in a host of neoliberal policy shifts aimed at the reduction of welfare spending in order to improve the competitive position of the state within global flows of capital.<sup>4</sup> This is the process described by Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell as 'roll-back neoliberalism' (2003). Most regulationist authors would argue that this process of economic and state restructuring is by no means completed and that current political and economic shifts need to be understood above all as attempts to develop a new and stable accumulation-regulation coupling (Leborgne and Lipietz 1992; Peck and Tickell 1994). I also subscribe to this skeptical view and my later analysis of networks of aesthetic production within the broader regulatory context of the creative industries will show the extent to which regulation as well as accumulation is problematized.

Emphasizing the constructed as well as precarious nature of these developments — contra explanations that posit a necessary and/or completed shift from Fordism to post-Fordism — Jessop (1990a) distinguishes between state projects and state strategies in order to develop a more conceptual understanding of these regulatory attempts. Specifying his strategic-relational approach (as discussed in 3.3.3), he describes accumulation and regulation as a process in and through which both capitalism and the state (i.e. the value form and the political form) institutionalize and reproduce

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4 The above paragraphs summarize and rely on a voluminous amount of literature on the crisis of Fordism and attempts to move beyond Fordism, including, for example: O'Connor (1973); Offe (1984); Hirsch and Roth (1986); Marglin and Schor (1990); Huber and Stephens (2001); Jessop (2002a); Koch (2006).



themselves.<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, state strategies refer to initiatives that mobilize state institutions towards specific forms of socio-economic intervention. Although Jessop does not theoretically pre-judge the precise function of these interventions — as part of his larger argument on the need to understand the state as strategically (and not structurally) selective — in actual research, he does focus on those state strategies that contribute to the reproduction of capital and the emergence and regulation of particular accumulation regimes. The object of these strategies is society and the goal is to promote particular forms of economic development through the establishment of hegemonic projects. Over the last decade, Jessop has increasingly focused on those state strategies involved in the promotion of the KBE.<sup>6</sup> The KBE is a highly heterogeneous notion, but one that has acquired the status of a “master economic narrative” playing a “key role in guiding and reinforcing activities that may consolidate a relatively stable post-Fordist accumulation regime and its mode of regulation” (2004c, 154). From this perspective, the promotion and institutional implementation of economically relevant knowledge — signified through the popularity of terms such as the creative industries, tacit knowledge, human capital, information and communication technologies, intellectual property rights, knowledge society, information age, lifelong learning, etc. — becomes the key focus of state strategies. State projects, on the other hand, are oriented towards the institutional structure of the state with the aim to endow it with a degree of internal unity and organizational coherence. States are by no means automatically coherent or simply functional to the requirements of capital; instead, they consist of a wide variety of institutions with different rationales and orientations. The guiding narrative of the KBE offers a way to ‘synchronize’ these institutions by shifting their orientations towards a concern with the economic development of knowledge, creativity and information. The discourse on the creative industries exemplifies this shift, since it has partially managed to subordinate cultural and social policies (and the related state institutions) to the mantra of economic development by almost fully conflating these terms and interpreting them through the lens of the KBE.

This process, however, is by no means complete nor is it certain that it will be successful. First of all, the state is confronted with conflicting accumulation strategies of various capital fractions ne-

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5 Also see chapter five in which I further discuss the value form and political form as well as Jessop’s notion of strategic selectivity in order to come to grips with the role of communication in this process.

6 See: Jessop and Sum (2001; 2006); Jessop (2004a; 2004c); and Jessop and Oosterlynck (2007).

cessitating diverse modes of regulation (Jessop 2000; Overbeek 2004). Although the KBE is used as a meta-narrative, the institutional specificities hiding behind this term are extraordinarily diverse and difficult to capture with one type of regulation only. Second, the shift away from Fordism has intensified this conflictual dynamic, since the A-R coupling can now no longer be easily fixed on one dominant scale (in contrast to the dominance of the national scale under Fordism). Although the literature on re-scaling has addressed this issue (e.g. Brenner 1999b; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999), it remains uncertain to what extent this re-scaling exercise of the state can match the re-scaling and mobility of the different forms of capital. Whereas during Fordism one could argue that there was a considerable overlap between the territorial and interaction spaces of regulation and the interaction spaces of accumulation, this is no longer the case (Becker 2002: 166; 266). And third, this also applies to the temporality of the accumulation-regulation coupling. It is very well possible that the duration of particular accumulation strategies and certain characteristics of regulation are not identical, leading to a “temporal phase shift” (Becker 2002: 201). Patrick le Galès comes to similar conclusions and relates these developments to the increased importance of networks: “[...] the proliferation of networks is leading to the disappearance of the traditional conception of the boundary. The coincidence of social, political, economic and cultural structures is coming to an end, and this is opening the way for the logic of deterritorialization of networks and of actors on the one hand [...] and of reterritorialization on the other hand” (1998: 500). I will analyze this role of networks in section 3.3 below.

### 3.2.3 MESO-LEVEL INVESTIGATIONS AND THEORETICAL INTERSECTIONS

For now, I want to continue my analysis of the regulation approach by describing the intersection of regulationist accounts on meso-levels of abstraction with other accounts of socio-spatial change. The acknowledgement of the emergent nature of the post-Fordist accumulation regime and associated mode of regulation has contributed to a shift in regulationist research away from macro-level theorizations of the capitalist political economy towards more meso-level investigations into the institutional dynamics of capitalist and state restructuring. This has led to increased interaction between the regulation approach and other theoretical strands within a variety of (sub-)disciplines, demonstrating the value of and need for transdisciplinary research (as discussed in 2.4) in order to come to grips with the complexity of current transformations. The following theoretical literatures have proved influential in this regard:

First of all, economic geographers in particular have analyzed subnational (i.e. urban and regional) spaces of production, characterized by flexible accumulation, vertical disintegration and a mixture of formal and informal labor markets. Examples of such regional economies always referenced include Silicon Valley and 'the third Italy' (Piore and Sabel 1984; Scott 1988; Schoenberger 1988; Saxenian 1994). Drawing eclectically on a variety of intellectual sources — including regulation theory, but also Alfred Marshall's (1890) account of industrial districts, Ronald Coase's (1937) and Oliver E. Williamson's (1985) transaction costs theory, innovation theory (Lundvall 1992) as well as economic sociology (Granovetter and Swedberg 1992) — authors have argued that regional economies can realize place-specific economic advantages by drawing on local networks of trust, cooperation and interaction. The research on creative clusters, analyzed in chapter four, can be seen as a more recent development in this strand of literature. Although one has to acknowledge the heterogeneity of this literature, there is a strong sense in which it overemphasizes transaction costs (MacLeod 1997: 538-539) as well as the role of cultural and social 'assets' in contributing (instead of inhibiting) economic development. Also, and in contrast to at least the more recent developments in regulation theory, research on flexible accumulation and spatial agglomeration tends to downplay the role of the state and particular modes of regulation that affect these local economies (the focus is, as Ash Amin (1994, 14) puts it, "on the arena of production").

Research on governance — the second strand of literature interacting with regulation theories — has proven to be more sensitive to questions of political regulation. Nevertheless, Boyer's (2002a, 1) point discussed above becomes relevant here: the mainstream literature on governance largely concerns itself with improving the administrative steering of economic processes and by no means reaches the critical breadth and depth of regulation theory, focusing instead largely on policy development and execution. Particularly in the UK, a normative model of urban governance has emerged in which efficient interaction between state institutions, local communities and businesses is presented as desirable (Leach and Smith 2001). In the context of the creative industries, emphasis is put on the importance both of social cohesion (mediated through communities and social capital) and economic development (achieved through cultural production). This policy-friendly discourse on governance and the management of the creative industries has certainly globalized, although it is always inflected in ways sensitive to local socio-spatial particularities. Theoretically, however, there is no need for research on governance to be dominated by this normative model and one can point to similarities between regulation

theoretical accounts of local regulation and analyses of governance. Thus, according to Jon Pierre, the “governance perspective on urban politics directs the observer to look beyond the institutions of the local state and to search for processes and mechanisms through which significant and resource-full actors coordinate their actions and resources in the pursuit of collectively defined objectives” (2005, 452). This approach is similar to the regulationist analysis of the economy in its inclusive sense, even though regulationists are more sensitive to questions of power by connecting such an analysis to neo-Gramscian discussions on the construction of hegemony. Also, both regulation and governance theories can be understood as reactions against earlier theoretical positions. Where the regulation approach defined itself against neo-classical equilibrium theories and its asocial conception of the market, researchers of governance have argued for the need to move beyond static conceptions of the market, hierarchy, the state and civil society towards an analysis of economic practices that are much more hybrid (Jessop and Sum 2006, 248-250). In this context as well, the notion of network is often used to refer to these hybrid forms of economic coordination, encompassing public-private partnerships, relations of trust, spaces of dialogue and multi-level and multi-sector interaction.<sup>7</sup> Parallel to the Marxist regulationist research that tends to analyze these policy networks as expressions of a neoliberal agenda (e.g. Leitner and Sheppard 2003), the governance literature is often quite critical – the difference being that its critique is usually formulated in liberal terms, with concern focusing on the lack of democratic accountability of these networks (e.g. Sørensen and Torfing 2005; Bogason and Musso 2006; Hirst 2000; Loader 2000). In directing, however, the analytical lens towards questions of interaction and communication, governance research has come much closer than regulation theory to an understanding of the role of discourses and practices in constructing particular modes of regulation (Hay and Richards 2000). It is also this meso-focus that has enabled a dialogue between governance debates and research within the disciplines of cultural studies and media and communication studies (in which, after all, most of the research on cultural production, including popular music, takes place) (Levy and Spiller 1996; Hale 2002; Kendall and Wickham 2001, Ch. 2).

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7 This actually points to a debate among governance (as well as flexible accumulation) researchers concerning the discreteness of networks. Some argue that the network constitutes a discrete form of regulation, different from markets and hierarchies (see, for example, Powell 1990). Others, however, argue that networks are hybrids of multiple regulatory forms (see, for example, Williamson 1985). My analysis broadly follows this hybridity argument.

The Foucauldian research on governmentality is a third theoretical strand and one that moves beyond the institutional focus of governance research as well as the macro-analyses of regulation theory. Although Michel Foucault rejected, in contrast to regulation theorists, abstract theorizations on the form of capital or the state and favored detailed and bottom-up studies of discourses, subjects and power, he did connect these data to broader social relations by referring, for example, to such concepts as state apparatus, biopolitical power and neoliberalism. On a meso-level of research, therefore, it seems defensible to use Foucauldian analyses of governmentality in combination with a critical realist and regulationist argument, even though my critical realist approach substantially diverges from Foucault's ontological assumptions. As Thomas Lemke points out most clearly, "the concept of governmentality demonstrates Foucault's working hypothesis on the reciprocal constitution of power techniques and forms of knowledge". There are two sides to this concept. On the one hand, it refers to a specific form of representation with governments establishing "a discursive field in which exercising power is 'rationalized'." We are dealing here with a question of problematization: through the definition of concepts (say, 'creativity') and the provision of arguments, governments enable a problem to emerge by offering certain strategies to solve the problem. On the other hand, governmentality also refers to specific forms of intervention. Having established a discursive field in which certain problems are thematized, governments can now develop political technologies — bureaucratic procedures, agencies, institutions, legal forms, etc. — "that are intended to enable us to govern the objects and subjects of a political rationality" (2001, 191). Developing this theoretical perspective, much important work has since been done on analyzing the emergence of entrepreneurial subjectivities within neoliberalism. Various authors have argued that we are not so much witnessing a simple retreat of the state as the active promotion by the state, through political rationalities and techniques, of citizens as self-responsible, self-governing, individualized and flexible actors.<sup>8</sup> This parallels and complements the regulation theoretical concern with the shift from welfare to workfare (Peck 1996) by offering a much more detailed analysis of particular discourses and subject positions. There are, however, a number of problems with governmentality research that need to be

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8 This argument has been made in relation to a wide variety of fields, including: counseling (Bondi 2005); education (Mitchell 2006); border control (Sparke 2006); religion (Gökariksel and Mitchell 2005); health care (Prince *et al.* 2006); the environment (Oels 2005); and, important in this context, labor (Marsden 1998; Manning 1999; Yurchak 2002; Chet 2004; Oglesby 2004; Hoffman 2006).

recognized. Above all, and despite the fact that Foucault understood “discourse as social structure and discursive practice as social practice” (Diaz-Bone *et al.* 2007, par. 2), most governmentality research has focused on the analysis of published texts, such as policy publications or management texts (e.g. Boltanski and Chiapello 2006), thereby foregoing a more nuanced understanding of the ‘messy actualities’ (Larner 2000) of particular projects and institutions. This is a problem visible in regulationist research as well: despite its argument concerning the importance of materialist analyses, many authors are reluctant to engage in-depth with the collection of empirical data beyond those directly articulating with particular accumulation regimes or modes of regulation. As a result of this reluctance, both regulation and governmentality theorists acknowledge the possible limits of regulation or governance due to the failure of government programs or the resistance by social groups, but have a hard time identifying and locating these failures and resistances as processes with their own dynamics only partially connected to (and thus regulated or governed by) broader modes of regulation and governance. In short: both theories are often too totalizing.

### 3.2.4 WEAKNESSES OF THE REGULATION APPROACH

This discussion of regulation theory, its shift towards meso-level research and its overlap with compatible theories has highlighted the strengths of the regulation approach, but has also addressed some of its weaknesses. Before moving on to my conceptualization of networks (that I feel will remedy certain, but certainly not all, problems), let me recapitulate the main limits of the regulation approach. Four main problems have been identified so far. First, the focus of the Parisian strand of regulation theory was on the national state: the accumulation regime as well as the mode of regulation were understood as ‘fixed’ on the national scale with dominant patterns of production and consumption oriented towards the national space. Although this conceptualization certainly did not deny the existence of subordinate or alternative patterns of production and consumption, the crisis of Fordism has further questioned this scalar fix, leading to a situation described in the literature as re-scaling (Brenner 1999a), scale fragmentation (Uitermark 2002), remaking scale (Smith 1995) or scale bending (Smith 2004). All in all, it has become much more difficult to identify which mode of regulation and regime of accumulation is dominant in particular spaces. A regulation approach interested in the contemporary era has to engage with these developments, but has to do so without being able to rely on the explanatory value of a clear-cut macro-

economic framework (such as Fordism). Second, this re-scaling exercise has limited the chances of creating a successful accumulation-regulation coupling that is necessary, according to regulation theory, to establish a relatively stable mode of development. This is because regulatory modes are now confronted with high levels of capital mobility, multiple and changing scalar fixes and conflicting accumulation strategies that are more intense than during Fordism. Third, regulation theory has been highly reluctant to analyze the role of discourses and practices in constructing particular modes of regulation, which has limited the extent to which regulationist analyses have been capable of engaging with discussions taking place in disciplines such as cultural studies and media and communication studies. Although an increasing number of authors try to combine regulationist theories with neo-Gramscian interpretations of hegemony (e.g. Leyshon and Tickell 1994; Kipfer and Keil 2002), the overriding methodological focus on the reproduction of capital tends to lead to an analysis that only focuses on those discursive dimensions of political, social and cultural relations that contribute to this reproduction (Purcell 2002). In other words: there is always a danger that regulation theoretical accounts rely too heavily on a selective choice of empirical data. Fourth and related to this third point, the regulation approach is sometimes too totalizing. Similar to governmentality theories, the possible limits of regulation due to the failure of government programs or the resistance by social groups are acknowledged, but they are not theorized as such. This makes it difficult for regulation theory to understand the interaction between complex social processes and broader modes of regulation and accumulation regimes. George Steinmetz – a social and cultural historian sympathetic to the project of regulation theory - has made this point most forcefully:

The regulation approach can remain relevant for understanding conflict and change in contemporary capitalist societies only by relinquishing such totalizing ambitions. More generally, Marxism can only remain viable as a theoretical perspective if it allows its central conceptual categories, such as commodification and social class, to coexist with a range of causal mechanisms rooted in other theoretical perspectives [...]. (2006, 45)

### 3.3 Networks

One route towards such a more modest Marxism would be to acknowledge the formative and emergent role of networks. In the regulation approach, networks are paradoxically understood both as producing crisis — since the proliferation of networks has provoked the crisis of Fordism — and as solution to this crisis — since net-

works are seen as hybrid entities that connect states and markets, hierarchies and civil society, possibly contributing to improved accumulation and regulation. Both are important interpretations, but this understanding of networks needs to be deepened and broadened in order to come to grips with the complexity of network emergence *in relation to* regulation and accumulation. In this section, therefore, I will discuss a number of strands of network theory and highlight their main strengths and weaknesses. My concern with the relation of networks to broader modes of regulation and accumulation regimes already implies that I do not believe that network theory on its own offers a convincing analysis of current network dynamics. Nevertheless, it does offer some useful theoretical tools that can be used to enrich the regulation approach.

So what are networks? As my cursory discussion of networks within regulation theory has shown, the current fascination with networks needs to be understood as part of the breakdown of Fordism, the reshuffling of scales and the intensification of processes usually summarized under the notion of globalization. It makes no sense therefore to talk about the essence or reality of networks as such; instead, the analysis of networks is inextricable from particular socio-spatial changes and disciplinary debates. In regulation theory, networks are strangely those moments in production that are simultaneously beyond accumulation and regulation as well as formative of new accumulation regimes and modes of regulation. As we will see, similar tensions also emerge in other theoretical debates on networks.

### 3.3.1 SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Thus, social network analysis — one important strand of network theory that has been developed since the 1950s — emerged above all as a critique of methodological individualism as exemplified by rational choice theory and mainstream economics as well as a critique of the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons.<sup>9</sup> Contra methodological individualism, it stressed the fundamental relationality of individual action, rejecting all attempts to explain social processes in terms of categorical attributes of individuals. Contra structural functionalism, it emphasized that social order was not so

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9 There are many publications providing a useful overview of social network analysis. See, for example: Scott (1991); Wasserman and Faust (1994); Freeman (2004); Carrington *et al.* (2005). As always, however, it is easy to identify precursors of network analysis even predating the 1950s, such as Durkheim's argument that strong interactions between individuals create an 'organic solidarity' and Simmel's understanding of the social as produced through association.



much a question of normative integration as an emergent effect of social interaction.<sup>10</sup> Often drawing on mathematical graph theory, analysts developed a quantitative and formal analysis of social networks in which individual or collective actors ('nodes') are linked (these linkages are often described as 'edges' or 'ties') to other actors and where it is argued that this assemblage of nodes and edges constitutes the particular social structure. One of two main research strategies tends to be used to investigate these network structures. A first strategy is to concentrate on the direct linkages between actors and, by doing so, to infer that these linkages explain the behaviors of the actors and the dynamic of the network. An acknowledgement of indirect influence between two actors is possible, but only *through* the mediation of another actor. For example: the success of a musician is dependent on the ability of distributors to distribute his or her records, but this is always mediated through the activities of the record label with which the artist is associated. This is different from the second research strategy, which analyzes not so much the relationality of actors as their positionality. This strategy has been of particular importance to the early work of Harrison White and his co-researchers (e.g. White et al., 1976; Boorman and White, 1976; Lorrain and White, 1971) and their development of the notion of structural equivalence. Structural equivalence exists in those cases where actors are in the same relationship to third parties, without necessarily being linked to each other. In effect, this broadens the research on social networks in such a way that it includes institutional and 'contextual' questions and the location of particular actors within institutions.

Both strategies have their limits. Although the positional (field) analysis avoids the assumption that contacts (ties) between actors fully explain the behavior of actors and the dynamics of networks, positional analysis still grants too much explanatory power to the analysis of network form. According to Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin (1994), three models have been implicit in both strategies, each with its own weaknesses. The first model they describe as structuralist determinism, which "rests analytically on a *reification* of social relations; it transforms the important *theoretical* distinction between a structure of social relations, on the one hand, and cultural formations, on the other, into an *ontological* dualism" (1427). The result is a network analysis that focuses on formal relations between actors while excluding the "potential causal significance of symbolic and discursive formations" (1436). The second model is referred to as structuralist instrumentalism. Although this model

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10 Mitchell (1974), however, has argued that most network analyses differed from such a macro-structural approach only in the level of abstraction at which these operated.

does acknowledge the active and historical role of actors, it tends to operate with a reductionist model of *homo economicus* to explain network transformation (1428), thus “relying on unwarranted assumptions about the overriding importance to historical actors of money, status, and power” (1436). As we will see in chapter four, the cluster theoretical argument so popular in policy circles often imports a similar reductionist understanding of agency into its explanatory framework, despite its insistence that actors are socially embedded. And finally, the third model of structuralist constructionism further opens up the notion of network to questions of “identity conversion, structural channeling of learning, and flexible opportunism”, pushing it beyond an economicist understanding, but still does not fully recognize “the (potentially) autonomous causal significance of cultural or political discourses in shaping the complex event sequences that it examines” (1436).

Emirbayer and Goodwin’s critique is apt and points to a number of core problems with social network analysis. First of all, the attempt to map networks through an identification of nodes and ties almost by necessity leads to a “static bias” (Marsden 1990, 437) that privileges space over time and that downplays the transformative, changing and dynamic dimensions of networks. As I discussed in chapter two and will also address in chapter four, this is a problem I confronted in my own attempt to map music networks in London and Berlin. In such ephemeral and informal networks, not only is the existence of nodes temporally limited, the linkages between nodes are extraordinarily flexible and subject to constant shifts. In order to account for this problem, Eugene Thacker even goes so far as to argue that “[...] in a sense, networks do not exist. They do not exist precisely because their dynamic existence cannot be fully accounted for within the tradition of the Eulerian-Kantian network paradigm. From this perspective, networks can only be thought of within a framework that spatializes time, and yet this excludes precisely what is constitutive to most networks — their dynamic properties” (2004). Although this, in my view, pushes the argument too far — the fact that network theory cannot fully capture the complex reality to which its concepts are supposed to refer does not disqualify the theory as such (all theories are selective) — it does sensitize us to the fact that networks are themselves characterized by a dialectic of consolidation and decomposition. A second core problem with social network theories relates to the question of boundaries and the role of discourses in shaping networks. From the very beginning, social network analysts were confronted with the problem of identifying the boundaries of networks: in setting limits to the reach of the network, they had to decide on who would be in- and excluded from the network. This, in a way, is a paradoxical

cal undertaking, since ultimately everyone is connected to everyone, but is usually pragmatically solved by relying on administratively or institutionally defined boundaries, such as school enrolment, participation in certain organizations, urban location or publication in newspapers and journals. Even this pragmatic solution, however, stills runs up against the problem that network boundaries can easily change and shift over time: actors can leave or join the network, shifting the balance of power within the network. More difficult still is the fact that relatively fluid and informal networks are not so much defined by the position of actors in relation to each other, but above all by their enactment through discourses. As Hannah Knox *et al.* (2006) have argued: “[i]n certain times and places these storied networks become institutionalized, so that, rather than discourse arising from network structures, more enduring and institutional ties can coalesce from storied networks” (129-130). Networks, in other words, emerge through their own self-description. This is true in the case of social movements — analyzed by a newer generation of social network analysis that incorporates these discursive considerations (Howard 2002; Garrido and Halavais 2003; McAdam 2003) — but it is applicable, I think, even more so to cultural production networks characterized by constantly mutating genres and aesthetic debates.

### 3.3.2 INTER-URBAN NETWORKS

A second strand of network theory is the research on world or global cities and the development of inter-urban networks (e.g. Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Friedmann 1986; Sassen 1991; Taylor 2004). Although the literature on cities is usually discussed in the context of a macro-structural political economy approach (and thus closely related to regulation theories), it is productive to also understand this literature as part of the shift of attention towards networks. This is because it aims to analyze the role of cities in a world characterized by the breakdown of Fordism and the rise of economic interactions not (primarily) mediated through the national scale. As such, it focuses on those moments that ‘escape’ the national space, while simultaneously constituting new forms of accumulation and regulation. In contrast to social network analysis, the reference framework is explicitly economic: the goal of analysis, as John Friedmann (1986) points out in his classic article, is to understand cities as a functional unit in the global spatial division of labor, as ‘basing points’ for global capital, as a center of control (through the concentration of business services, communications and finance institutions), as major sites for the concentration and accumulation of capital, and as important points of destination for domestic and

international migrants that contribute to the expansion of the low-paid and non-unionized workforce. This results, according to Friedmann, in a proliferation of interurban networks and an increase in world city competition. Despite differences between authors in the field of world or global city research, these basic tenets of world city theory have remained stable ever since and there are now various publications on case studies and/or comparative studies of particular cities (Sassen 1991, 2000; Massey 2007; Knox and Taylor 1995) as well as explicitly on the networks connecting these cities and structuring their activities as well as position within a global urban hierarchy (Beaverstock *et al.* 1999, 2000; Krätke and Taylor 2004). This has substantially increased our understanding of the hierarchical position of particular cities within global networks of capitalist production. At least the quantitative work on world-city networks, however, is confronted with a problem similar to the one identified in the case of social network analysis: its focus on network connections too often leads to the assumption that 'contact' is of primary importance in shaping the behavior of particular nodes. This leads to a network bias that repeats, in my view, many of the mistakes of structuralist determinism, as identified by Emirbayer and Goodwin (see above). Above all, it leads to a reification of networks that excludes those social processes that are not immanent to the network, but which might impact on the network.

### 3.3.3 COMMODITY CHAINS AND TRANSNATIONAL CULTURES

Other authors have also focused on networks, but have taken a more grounded and often qualitative approach to network analysis. On the one hand, this includes those researching global and transnational commodity and production networks. In effect, this research can be seen as a complement to (as well as critique of) the regulationist literature that concentrated on accumulation-regulation couplings on the national scale by emphasizing the more fluid and temporary dimensions of accumulation and regulation as they are mediated through various networks. Thus, we now have a wealth of information on global commodity chains, the role of transnational corporations and the global distribution of production (e.g. Smith and White 1992; Henderson *et al.* 2002; Gereffi *et al.* 2005; Whatmore 2002, Crang *et al.* 2003). Most of this research focuses on institutional analyses of production under the conditions of globalization and is less concerned with the interaction between these global networks and particular urban spaces. Recent research, however, has increasingly addressed this urban or regional dimension (e.g. Smith *et al.* 2002; Coe *et al.* 2004; Leslie and Reimer

1999) and this book can be understood as a further contribution to this emerging literature. In contrast to social network analysis, the research on global networks and commodity chains is sensitized to the dynamic nature of networks, but this comes at the cost of a somewhat more metaphorical use of the term.

On the other hand, this third strand of network analysis also includes those authors — often with a background in ethnography or media and cultural studies — that have analyzed the emergence of transnational spaces of cultural interaction. Research areas that have emerged over the last decades include: immigration networks (Basch *et al.*, 1993; Faist 2000); transnational and cosmopolitan cultures (Hannerz 1996); bottom-up transnational urbanism (Smith 2001); resistance and conflict beyond the nation-state (Evans 2000; Bank and van Heur 2007) and diaspora media (Karim 2003). It is impossible to review this voluminous literature within the limits set to this publication and clearly there is much interesting work done in this field, but — in the context of this discussion on networks — a number of analytical problems arise. First of all, the notion of networks used in this literature tends to remain highly metaphorical, which makes it easy to import concepts from related theories (such as theories on globalization, identity formation, media and communication, etc.) without, however, having to justify how and in what ways the network is distinct from other forms of socio-spatial organization. Second, this leads to analyses that are clearly sensitive to cultural specificities, the role of discourses and the positionality of particular actors within these networked environments, but that cannot conceptualize how networks interact and are partly constituted by broader modes of regulation and regimes of accumulation. Capitalism and the state tend to recede to the background of analytical attention, which often leads to a culturalist line of argumentation. Also, and similar to some of the work on global commodity networks, the specificity of the urban is lost out of sight.

### 3.3.4 ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

A final and fourth strand of research on networks is actor-network theory (ANT). With its methodological roots in symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, ANT is clearly operating on a different ontological ground than regulation theories: where regulationist accounts emphasize regularities, mechanisms, depth realities and structures, ANT highlights contingencies, flat ontologies, precarious assemblages and translations. Not surprisingly, therefore, academic positional struggles have rallied around this ontological tension, most recently mediated in the discipline of geography through the

question of scale vs. relationality.<sup>11</sup> The relationality-side of the debate builds on an earlier appreciation for ANT and the constitutive role of networks in the disciplines of geography, urban studies, sociology and cultural and technology studies (Smith 2003; Murdoch 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2001; Latham 2002; Latham and McCormack 2004; Bonner and Chiasson 2005; Kendall 2004; Law and Mol 2001; Pels *et al.* 2002; Hommels 2005a, 2005b). My position is clearly more on the regulationist side of the debate: I am interested in identifying and explaining structures and regularities and can therefore only grasp networks within a framework shaped by the notions of accumulation and regulation. This does not mean, however, that ANT has nothing useful to contribute to the further theoretical development of my regulationist account. For one thing, ANT operates with a much broader and complex notion of the object than is usually achieved within Marxist regulation theories.<sup>12</sup> To a large extent, the analysis of objects within regulationist accounts starts from the Marxist analysis of the value form, which almost by necessity skews the interpretation towards a concern with commodification and reification.<sup>13</sup> Although, on lower levels of abstraction, the regulation approach allows the introduction of alternative regulations and processes, the approach itself does not have any theoretical tools to grasp the complexity and heterogeneity of objects. This is why, in my view, the attempt to criticize ANT by emphasizing the role of dead labor and commodities in the production process (see Kirsch and Mitchell 2004) is understandable, but ultimately self-defeating. ANT accounts, in contrast, interpret networks as integrating material and semiotic environments in which human actors are decentered: humans and non-humans (objects, technologies) are seen to co-create their respective networks. In doing so, it goes beyond social network analysis that limits itself to an analysis of linkages between human actors or organizations.<sup>14</sup> This principle of 'generalized symmetry' automatically widens the reality and potentiality of objects, since these are now shot through with and part of a potentially unlimited amount of networks, dis-

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11 See: Collinge 2006; Grabher 2006; Hoefle 2006; Jonas 2006; Escobar 2007; Jones III *et al.* 2007; Leitner and Miller 2007b.

12 As is hopefully clear, this is not inherent to the tradition of Marxism as such - one only needs to refer to Benjamin's most famous article ('The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction') to make this point. See Benjamin (1963).

13 This bias is also visible, to an extent, in the research on commodity chains as well as the research on flexible accumulation.

14 The focus on organizations or collective actors could - in principle - refer to an assemblage of human and non-human actors, but this is not the route taken by social network analysis.

courses and practices. As a sophisticated form of ethnography, ANT also pays much more attention to the actual construction of these actor-networks and the ambivalences that result from this construction than the regulationist analyses of accumulation-regulation couplings and modes of production. This process has been described by Michel Callon (1986) as translation, involving four steps: 1) problematization, which defines the problem and the actors needed to solve this problem; 2) interessement, or the period in which primary actors try to interest other actors to participate in the network; 3) enrolment, during which actors take up the roles that have been defined during the second step; and 4) mobilization, which involves enrolled actors mobilizing their respective allies. In the context of state regulation, this understanding of networks actually comes quite close to Jessop's discussion of state projects and strategies, even though the respective theories are developed from completely different starting points. Where Jessop, however, is interested in identifying possible new regularities (even though he is clearly skeptical as to the feasibility of particular projects and strategies), ANT is certainly more comfortable with inconsistencies and transformations in the process of network building. Interestingly enough however, after two decades of ANT research, leading researchers in this field have expressed their concern that ANT has become too concerned with identifying network structures at the expense of identifying these inconsistencies. Thus, John Law worries that he and others might be contributing to a new form of functionalism: "[...] if we write as network analysts what we may be doing, what we're often doing, is buying into and adding strength to a functional version of relationality. One that is, to say it quickly, managerialist" (2000, 6). And Bruno Latour emphasizes that ANT has merely sensitized us to the fact that networks are not that interesting at all. Instead, as he argues, it is the "empty space 'in between' the networks, those terra incognita [that] are the most exciting aspect of ANT because they show the extent of our ignorance and the immense reserve that is open for change" (1999, 19). ANT, in other words, has become aware of its own blind spots and exclusions. Similar to regulationist accounts, the network ends up being constituted by, on the one hand, structure and order and, on the other hand, emergence and the 'in-between'.

### **3.4 Towards a Cultural Political Economy of Emergence**

As we now know, regulation theoretical accounts of socio-spatial change have focused on the breakdown of Fordism, the rescaling of

accumulation and regulation and the resultant difficulties associated with achieving a new stable accumulation-regulation coupling due to the proliferation of networks. Network theories have been developed (also) in order to explain this proliferation and the ways in which these networks circumvent and transform older forms of regulation and accumulation. Social network analysts have developed sophisticated tools to map networks, but its concern with the social form of networks has led to a relative neglect of its symbolic and discursive as well as temporal dimensions. The research on world city networks attempts to map the global and regional linkages between functionally important cities, but by doing so falls into the trap of a structuralist determinism that grants too much explanatory power to a 'contact' view of networks. Similarly, the research on global commodity networks can easily be accused of paying too much attention to the structuring role of the commodity. Those authors that confront the literature on commodity chains with spatial questions manage to avoid this bias by embedding the commodity and production within particular urban and regional environments. They can only do so, however, by pragmatically combining multiple theories, which raises the difficult question of how these theories interrelate. And actor-network theory (ANT), despite its insistence that networks are characterized by translations and transformations, does not completely manage to capture the complexity of those moments of translation and transformation in its own theoretical approach: Latour finds himself cherishing the "empty spaces 'in between' the networks, those *terra incognita*" (1999, 19), which, however, his own theory cannot explain.

Considering this situation, it is perhaps not surprising that a number of authors have chosen to abandon the theorization of the structural dimensions of social life altogether in order to focus precisely on those moments *in* these theories that cannot be explained *by* these theories. This, it must be emphasized, is not limited to specific disciplines such as urban studies, geography, sociology or media studies, but part of a broader shift in academic sensibilities. As Alex Callinicos has pointed out: "[o]ne striking intellectual reconfiguration that has taken place over the past generation is an increasing preoccupation with, instead of regularities, singularity, instead of structures, the event" (2006, 83; italics removed). This is already visible in Latour's fascination with *terra incognita*, but is further radicalized — in different ways — by those philosophers oriented towards an analysis of the event (Badiou 2005), the exception (Agamben 2005) or the virtual (Deleuze 1994) and has spawned a veritable cottage industry of writings dedicated to analyzing these "wormholes", as Eric Sheppard calls these "discontinuities in the warped space/time of the universe" (2002, 323-325). As Sheppard



also recognizes, however, the theoretical possibilities of these discontinuities are not equally transformed into reality and there remains an urgent need for sociological analysis that investigates the relation of these wormholes to particular accumulation regimes and modes of regulation.

The previous section in this chapter analyzed the regulation theoretical focus on accumulation and regulation, their potential couplings and the different levels of reality. I argued that regulationists analyzing the period after Fordism rely (explicitly or implicitly) on a three-level critical realist ontology: the root stratum locates the core features of capital and the state; on level i, the accumulation-regulation coupling on the national scale constitutes the dominant interacting mechanism; and on level ii, the urban scale and the transscalar are provisional grounds for emergent forms of accumulation and regulation that are only partially coupled. Network theories start from a different perspective than regulation theories. In principle, networks are analyzed as potentially limitless: ultimately, everything can be connected to everything; changing discourses change the very network structures through which these discourses are mediated; and the point of interaction between nodes is simultaneously also a point of translation and transformation. The research on world cities and inter-urban networks as well as the research on global commodity chains operates from a more structural political economic perspective, but even here accumulation and regulation can, in principle, take place everywhere. This flexibility of networks is one of their main strengths and explains, to a large extent, the current popularity of network theories, since they enable analysts to understand institutional emergence and the development of social formations in much more grounded detail than can be achieved by the regulation approach. As such, I would argue that network theories need to be understood as part of the broader shift towards meso-level research that followed the crisis of Fordism. Unfortunately, this interpretive and experimental flexibility of network theories is not only their main strength, but also their main weakness. Although networks are indeed best understood as open and dynamic, this downplays the difficulty of network reproduction within socio-spatial environments at least partially shaped by capitalist relations and which involves to a substantial extent the 'closing down' of these networks. Callon has usefully described this as a process of framing, which needs to be seen as an inversion of the argument concerning externalities as proposed by economists. Drawing on ANT, he argues as follows:

The evidence is the flow, the circulation, the connections; the rareness is the framing. Instead of adding connections (contingent contracts, trust, rules,

culture) to explain the possibility of the co-ordination and the realism of the calculation, as in the various solutions proposed by economists, we need to start out from the proliferation of relations and ask how far the bracketing of these connections - [...] 'framing' - must go to allow calculation and co-ordination through calculation. (1999, 186)

Framing, in other words, allows actors to close down networks in order for market transactions (what Callon terms calculations) to be possible in the first place. This framing is achieved through a wide variety of elements and devices, including intellectual property laws, the formalization of interpersonal relationships, the introduction of particular techniques of accounting, the strategic use of buildings and urban planning, and so on. Unavoidably, however, framing always remains incomplete and "overflowing" (1999, 188) will take place. Networks are thus characterized by this constant back-and-forth between framing and overflowing or between opening up and closing down.

The problem with network theories is that they cannot explain beyond the single case why this framing takes place and how this framing relates to broader socio-spatial transformations. In that respect, the regulation approach's focus on accumulation regimes and modes of regulation on various levels of reality is clearly superior to network theories. Nevertheless, networks play an important heuristic and experimental role in investigating this tension of framing and overflowing within particular socio-spatial environments. The important point about networks is not that they have a particular well-established form (i.e. networks as non-hierarchical and flat and as absolutely distinct from organizations, hierarchies or firms), but that central to their constitution is a relationality that connects the moment of framing with that of overflowing. In that respect, networks seem to parallel the methodological moment of abduction within retroduction, as discussed in chapter two. They are characterized by a moving 'away from' established causal mechanisms, but can simultaneously only be explained in relation to (if certainly not reduced to) these mechanisms.

### 3.5 Cities and Networks

This closing section briefly presents the main dimensions of the political economies of London and Berlin and interprets these two cities within the broader theoretical framework of accumulation and regulation, the crisis of Fordism and the provisional emergence of a KBE. It also describes the main characteristics of the analyzed music networks and their emergence and development over the last two

decades in relation to my theoretical understanding of networks, as discussed above. By doing so, this section merely sketches the basic empirical coordinates. The following chapters (four to six) build on these coordinates in more empirical detail, while simultaneously interrogating the empirical evidence and the strengths and limits of the adopted theoretical framework through a sustained discussion of alternative theories.

### 3.5.1 LONDON AND BERLIN

The restructuring of London and Berlin in the last decades can usefully be conceptualized in relation to a Fordist accumulation regime, its crisis and subsequent attempts to find a way out of this crisis. Thus, until at least the mid-1960s, London was an important industrial and manufacturing city, a major port for import and trade, and the central consumer market of Great Britain. The City of London was already a significant international financial center, but its contribution to overall employment was relatively low (approximately one in ten of all workers) (Hall 1962, 1964). Also, even though London clearly occupied a distinct position within the broader political economy of Britain, the postwar period was characterized by political attempts to redistribute employment and economic development throughout the national space (Brown 1972; Yuill 1979). State regulation of the London economy was located on different scales of government, including the urban — London had a London County Council (LCC) from 1888, which was replaced by the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1965 — but the urban scale was subordinated to the national scale. The British Parliament granted rights to local authorities, thus enabling a relative autonomy of the local scale, but these rights could always be revoked. Local authorities pursuing activities without previous authorization of Parliament could be forced by courts to halt these activities, since they were seen as operating *ultra vires* i.e. outside the law (Nissen 2002). Berlin in the postwar period can also be analyzed in relation to a Fordist accumulation regime, although in different ways. After the end of the Second World War, the division of the city caused most large companies as well as political institutions to leave Berlin. As a result, West Berlin declined in economic importance and was transformed from a central economic hub into a relatively marginal one within the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Nevertheless, due to high subsidies from the federal state, the cultural sector, the city administration as well as an industrial sector oriented towards mass production of simple consumer goods (with research and development located in different FRG cities) were developed into the central sources of employment for local workers (Wechselberg 2000;

Gornig and Häussermann 2002). This particular development was, of course, largely the result of the symbolic function of capitalist West Berlin within a socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR), but can also be related to the dominant Keynesian mode of regulation in the FRG at the time, which was oriented towards the redistribution of economic development across the entire national space and the support of economically disadvantaged areas (Heeg 1998). East Berlin, in contrast, became the capital city of the GDR and its main political, administrative, economic, cultural and academic center. Within the GDR, it operated as a supra-regional industrial- and service-center, but the level of productivity within these sectors was comparatively low and incapable of competing with capitalist accumulation regimes during the existence of the GDR and after the fall of the Wall (Wechselberg 2000).

The crisis of Fordism manifested itself earliest in London. From the mid-1960s onwards, London saw a dramatic contraction of industrial labor, losing around fifty per cent of its workers in manufacturing between 1961 and 1981 (Hamnett 2003a, 31). As Chris Hamnett makes clear, this decline was further reinforced in the period between 1981 and 1991. Total employment declined by 8.6 per cent, but the cuts were largest in the industrial sectors: manufacturing lost 47.5 per cent, construction 26.7 per cent, primary industries 27.8 per cent, and transport and communications 16.5 per cent. This was partially offset, however, by the dramatic increase of employment in banking, finance and business services (+ 29.6 per cent) (31-32). This economic restructuring continued into the 1990s with further employment growth in finance, business services, hotels and restaurants as well as the creative industries (33-36). It is important to realize, however, that these changes were not merely caused by the emergence of a new regime of accumulation, but intimately intertwined with and further intensified by regulatory shifts on and between multiple scales. From 1979 on, the Thatcher government pushed for a more market-driven style of development and actively promoted London as a global city oriented towards finance capital. It was capable of developing this strategy due to a long history of central-local relations with local authorities in a subordinate position to central government. Local authorities have been and still are to an important extent — between fifty-five and sixty per cent (Schröter 2002, 66) — dependent on grants from the central government and only a minority of their revenues is derived from local taxes. The Thatcher and Major governments further tried to control these already subordinate local authorities by shifting the responsibility for collecting business taxes away from the local to the national scale and by imposing constraints on the local administrations through a combination of spending control

and rate-capping policies (that set limits to the amount of local taxes that could be collected). It also intervened directly into the economic development of urban areas through the promotion of Enterprise Zones and Urban Development Corporations, the most important of which included the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) and which was responsible for the regeneration and economic development of the Docklands area in east London (Brenner 2004, 225; Batley 1989). Also, the Thatcher government in 1986 abolished the Greater London Council (GLC) — which had tried to implement a manufacture-based model of economic development in combination with community participation and leftist 'bottom-up' strategies — distributing its functions across local boroughs, public-private agencies and central state institutions. A new GLC, the Greater London Authority (GLA) was established in 2000, which constitutes a return to metropolitan-wide governance, but it needs to be kept in mind that the GLA remains sandwiched between the demands of the national government, which provides the overwhelming amount of funding, and the local boroughs who receive their own funding from the national state and can collect their own taxes. In effect, the rationale of the GLA is one of developing strategies, whereas execution needs to take place through the boroughs or its executive bodies. This includes the London Development Agency (LDA), which is responsible for economic development, but which is itself funded by central government (Syrett and Baldock 2003). In contrast to the earlier GLC, however, the GLA largely operates in line with the entrepreneurial logic espoused by the national Labour governments (see the following chapters for an analysis of London's creative industries policies). Although economically successful, many authors have pointed to the negative dimensions of this process of restructuration, including: 1) an increasing 'London-centeredness' of the UK economy involving deepening inequalities between the North and South (Brenner 2004, 187; Dunford 1995); 2) gentrification involving complex processes of social exclusion and polarization or even segregation (Atkinson 2000; Butler and Robson 2001; Beaumont 2006; Fainstein and Harloe 2000); 3) the emergence of non-accountable governance structures (Atkinson 1999); and 4) securitization of public spaces through the increased use of CCTV and private security firms, dedicated to the development of 'safe' spaces for commercial urban development (Coaffee 2004).

In Berlin, the crisis of Fordism only emerged after the political crisis in 1989 and the subsequent re-unification of East and West Berlin. Although this delayed the economic restructuration of Berlin, post-1989 developments fit within the broader shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, even though the city is characterized by a

temporal asynchrony in comparison to most other cities. Within three years, the former East Berlin lost nearly forty per cent of jobs. In contrast, the former West Berlin managed to increase its amount of jobs by approximately fifteen per cent, mainly due to the rise in trade and services within the former GDR area. From 1993 onwards, former East and West Berlin have increasingly aligned themselves with one another, although largely in a negative sense: until 1997, both halves of the city experienced an employment decrease of approximately fifteen per cent (Gornig and Häussermann 2002, 334-335). It was only after this period that certain sectors have grown, although by no means as dramatically as in London (see Ch. 5 for a discussion of this most recent period in the context of the creative industries). First, however, most industries declined. As Stefan Krätke (1999) has shown, this includes traditional industries such as food and textile (-20.7 % between 1993 and 1996), transport (-25.9 %), the building sector (-7.6 %) and trade (-8.9 %), but also industries that are usually associated with the rise of a KBE and post-Fordism. Thus, industries heavily reliant on R&D decreased in this period by 22.4 %, the cultural and media industries by 9.8 % and consumer services (hairdressers, laundering, etc. as well as employees in non-university educational institutions) by 5.5 %. Even the small finance sector further decreased (although only by 1.4 %). The only sector that increased in employment size during this period was business services (+ 7.2 %), which includes management consultancies, trade associations, security services, translation services, engineering firms as well as cleaning companies. In short, Berlin has experienced a similar decline in manufacturing and industrial labor as London, but only a limited increase in post-industrial labor. The period after 1996 has been characterized by a more positive economic development, but remains instable.<sup>15</sup> As in the case of London, these economic transformations were intimately connected to changes in the regulatory framework. First of all, the collapse of the manufacturing industries was directly connected to the reduction or cancellation of subsidies that these industries received from the federal state before 1989 (Heeg 1998; Gornig and Häussermann 2002). Second, this economic shift was further encouraged by political forecasts that Berlin would and should become a global city — comparable to London and New York — oriented towards services and knowledge-intensive sectors (Krätke 2001, 2004; Krätke and Borst 2000; Cochran and Jonas 1999; Lompscher 2000). This vision translated directly into the local government's programs of economic develop-

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15 For more recent data on employment trends, please see the website of the Berlin Senate for Economy, Technology and Women: <http://www.berlin.de/sen/wtf> (01.12.2009).

ment and also informs the current fascination with the creative industries. Third, this increasing interest in Berlin as an entrepreneurial, outward-looking global city followed attempts on the national scale to re-position "urban regions rather than the entire national economy as the most crucial geographical target for spatial planning policies" (Brenner 2004, 230). This involved a shift away from national redistribution towards a view of planning that understands uneven development as necessary in order to increase the economic competitiveness of major German cities within global circuits of capital. Having said all this, it is also important to acknowledge the limits of these various state strategies. As the discrepancy between the policy dream of Berlin as a global city and the reality of Berlin as a city with a structurally weak economy clearly illustrates, it is by no means certain that policy initiatives and mechanisms are or even can actually be implemented along the lines envisioned. This is something I will also address in my analysis of creative industries policies and the actual practices of networks of aesthetic production. Similar to London, the social effects of this restructuring of Berlin are by no means positive only. Researchers have pointed towards the following negative side-effects: 1) a rejection of older and more democratic planning strategies in favor of urban planning that is participatory on the surface, but exclusionary at its core (Lompscher 2000; Bernt 2003; Hain 2001; Lebuhn 2007; Holm 2006); 2) a promotion of a new image of *Stadtbürger* (urban bourgeois/citizen) as a property-owning, cosmopolitan actor that rejects the overly regulated Berlin of the postwar years and instead embraces a deregulated and privatized notion of urban engagement (Heeg 1998); 3) gentrification, social exclusion and polarization (Holm 2006; Marcuse 2000; Keil 2000; Knecht 1999; Veith and Sambale 1999; Krätke 2004; Krätke and Borst 2000); and 4) the securitization of urban space (Eick 1998, 2003).

### 3.5.2 MUSIC NETWORKS

Having discussed London and Berlin within the context of the crisis of Fordism and the provisional development of new forms of accumulation and regulation, this part briefly describes the analyzed music practices in relation to my theoretical understanding of networks. To recapitulate, my approach towards networks needs to be seen within a broader regulationist framework and, as such, interprets networks as encompassed by, but simultaneously moving away from dominant accumulation regimes and modes of regulation. There is, in other words, a constant tension between stasis and movement or between order and transformation that defines networks.

As I see it, the emergence of electronic music over the last decades can usefully be analyzed through the lens of this conceptualization of networks. Please note, however, that the notion of electronic music is vague — almost all music, in one way or another, is electronic nowadays — and also refers to the highly institutionalized forms of music production that emerged after the Second World War and which included both publicly and privately funded set-ups: examples include Max Matthews' or Laurie Spiegel's experiments at Bell Labs in the United States, Pierre Boulez's directorship of IRCAM in France or Herbert Eimert's work at the electronic music studio of the WDR in Germany (see Holmes 2002 for a useful overview of this history). In principle, I would not consider these institutions to be networks, since they are to a large extent shielded off from direct accumulation and regulation (in this case, the Fordist accumulation-regulation coupling) due to high levels of subsidization: even at the private company Bell Labs, internal subsidization opened up niche spaces in which a small group of actors could experiment without direct market pressure. Having said that, the identification of certain social processes as networks is always a relative one — it is certainly possible, for example, to argue that the Bell Labs' experiments and subsequent inventions by companies such as Casio, Roland or Korg need to be analyzed as networks, since they constitute processes that rely on but are simultaneously emergent from established forms of accumulation and regulation. In other words, these processes create something new, which can potentially lead to a shift in dominant patterns of accumulation and regulation. Paradoxically, this process of innovation has simultaneously become more central to the current era after Fordism as well as curtailed by it, since innovation and the promotion of spaces in which creativity and experimentation can flourish now seems to be much more directly subject to the requirements of capital accumulation than during the era of Fordism-Keynesianism.

It is this paradox — of emergence in relation to contemporary accumulation and regulation — that I want to investigate and I will therefore focus on more recent music practices. Electronic music, in this text, functions as shorthand for those forms of music production that rely on electrically produced sounds, created with computers, virtual instruments (software), synthesizers, samplers and other tools that can only function when connected to the electrical circuit. From this perspective, I also include record players and the use of record players by DJ's as belonging to the category of electronic music, since, first of all, the recorded music played is often electrically produced and, second, the use of the electric-powered record player as an instrument is central to the aesthetics of electronic music. This definition is a pragmatic one, however,



since even on the level of sound sources, there are many hybrids. Electro-acoustic music, for example, uses sounds from the outside world (the weather, the built environment, household objects, but also acoustic instruments) and is thus not properly electronic, but these sounds are often electrically modified to such an extent that I would consider this music to be electronic music. Similarly, voices or samples from traditional instruments can easily be incorporated into a musical texture that otherwise consists of electrically produced sounds. This book concentrates on the current state (i.e. the period 2006-07) of electronic music in London and Berlin, but incorporates these more historical reflections on the development of electronic music in order to emphasize the network-specific path dependencies of aesthetic production that are irreducible to the particular urban political economic environment in which this production takes place.

In relation to music genres, this leads to a focus on those dance music genres that emerged in the 1980s, such as house, techno, garage and rave<sup>16</sup>, although there are important links to earlier dance music cultures such as disco that need to be acknowledged (see Straw 2002, for example, for a discussion of the important role played by 12-inch vinyl in disco). Whereas these genres were and are often represented (by popular music scholars as well as participants) as belonging to particular communities or scenes (Straw 1991), subsequent developments have questioned this logic through a fragmentation of dance music genres into various micro-genres.<sup>17</sup> Aesthetically, the past decades have witnessed constant genre-shifts that have deconstructed and reconstructed established genres such as house and techno, while introducing new sounds and styles.

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16 There is by now a large body of literature, both academic and journalistic, on club and dance music cultures. See Thornton (1996), Reynolds (1998) and Gilbert and Pearson (1999) for a first overview.

17 Straw makes a distinction between communication and scenes: whereas communities are a population group with a relatively stable composition and whose musical practice involves a constant exploration of one musical idiom, scenes are to be understood as a "cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization" (373). My own understanding of networks matches to an important extent Straw's conceptualization of scenes, but further radicalizes his argument by emphasizing the moments of fragmentation at the expense of coherence. This difference in emphasis can be partly explained, I think, with reference to the time of writing. Whereas Straw wrote his article in the late 1980s at the high point of the popularity of electronic music dance cultures, I conducted this analysis in 2007 at the likely end of this era. We can now witness the 'de-emergence' of electronic music genres into the broader field of music.

Organizationally, electronic music production is characterized by thousands of small production nodes and the role of large conglomerates in this production process is a highly marginal one. Hesmondhalgh (1996) is correct in arguing against an optimistic view of flexible specialization as based on mutual trust and cooperation, but the hierarchical types of partnership that he identifies between large and small music industry firms are simply not that important within electronic music networks. And technologically, electronic music production is substantially shaped by the rise of the internet as an important mechanism of distribution (Jones 2002), which has questioned older accumulation regimes and modes of regulation (largely in relation to intellectual property) and has led to the development of new attempts at accumulation and regulation.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Building on the methodological chapter, this chapter discussed the three main concepts of this book: accumulation, regulation and networks. The first section introduced the regulation approach and its conceptualization of accumulation regimes, modes of accumulation and the coupling of accumulation and regulation as a model of development. Largely developed to analyze the era of Fordism, the second part within this section pointed towards the crisis of Fordism, the partial decoupling between accumulation and regulation and the analytical difficulties this creates in developing a coherent theoretical framework. The third part of this section described the ways in which regulation theories have increasingly moved towards a meso-level of analysis in order to grasp these complex changes and how this has created important intersections with theoretical discourses on flexible accumulation and urban and regional spaces of production, governance, and governmentality. After briefly discussing these theories, the fourth part of this section then summarized the main weaknesses of the regulation approach (its focus on the national state; the problematic assumption of a stable macro-economic framework; its lack of attention to discourses and practices; and its overly totalizing perspective). The second section of this chapter introduced the third central term — networks — as one way of addressing some of these limits of the regulation approach and in order to come to grips with the irreducible complexity of network dynamics in relation to regulation and accumulation. Four network theories were discussed: social network analysis; the world city literature with its focus on inter-urban networks; the research on global commodity chains and transnational spaces of

cultural interaction; and actor-network theory (ANT). Although each approach clearly operates with its own specific analytical schemes, I argued that they all represent attempts to come to grips with the fundamental tension between structure and emergence i.e. between stability and change. The third section continued these observations and argued that there is a need to develop a cultural political economy of emergence. The final section of this chapter concretized these theoretical reflections through a brief discussion of the main dimensions of the political economies of London and Berlin and the specificities of electronic music production networks. Having sketched these basic coordinates, the following three chapters delve into the empirical data as well as further theoretical analysis of music networks in London and Berlin through a focus on three heuristic dimensions: location, communication, and labor.



## 4. LOCATION

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the role of urban location by analyzing the tensions between networks of aesthetic production and the various 'creative clusters' that emerge from these networks. Following the main thesis statement, it is argued that we can witness a partial decoupling between the spaces of regulation and the spaces of accumulation, which complicates the implementation and limits the structuring effect of creative industries policies. This decoupling is related to the proliferation of networks of aesthetic production that transcend particular urban spaces, while simultaneously being irreducible to either capitalist accumulation or state regulation.

The outline of the chapter is as follows. First, I give a brief overview of cluster-oriented discourses and cultural policies in London and Berlin. I then present the mapping data on music production in these two cities and identify particular clusters and their dominant aesthetic as well as organizational dimensions. As the data show, the discussed music production networks show clear clustering tendencies (in the sense that we can observe spatial concentrations of music nodes), even though it has been impossible on the basis of these data to gain a better understanding of the actual interactions between these nodes. This is investigated in a more qualitative sense in the section that follows. Structuring my argument around three cluster characteristics as they are discussed in the literature (vertical and horizontal linkages; knowledge and learning; cluster growth and development), and basing my argument on interview as well other empirical data, this section shows the extent to which actual clustering is partial at the most.

### 4.2 Creative Cluster Policies

The notion of creative clusters — as part of the larger discursive shift towards the creative industries that has taken place since the mid 1990s — has become a popular shorthand for describing the

supposedly new relations between creative production and urban location. In many ways, it is a very insidious shorthand, since its use automatically subsumes all forms of creative production under one singular logic of economic clustering. Hence, the use of this term by policy-makers, journalists and consultants tends to participate in the institutionalization of the discourse on the knowledge-based economy.

Not surprisingly, in London — at the heart of the UK economy and New Labour's creative industries' policies — much emphasis is put on the role of creative clusters. Typical of the UK context (Oakley 2006b), economic development is not only related to support for a diverse cultural sector, but also to the larger goal of social inclusion. Thus, not only did the *London Cultural Capital* report (GLA 2004a) identify a number of cultural areas and clusters with the potential to develop into cultural quarters, it also stated that the creative industries:

have a well-established reputation for playing a multifaceted role in the regeneration of economies and environments and in supporting strategies for social inclusion (GLA 2004a, 139).

On the basis of this shaky foundation, the Creative London program, established by the London Development Agency in 2004, has identified 10 clusters in London with a high concentration of creative industries.<sup>1</sup> These 'creative hubs' tend to be administered by borough-level and publicly funded economic development agencies who work together with a variety of private actors and whose focus is to offer services and facilities for cultural entrepreneurs. Although most of these hubs are still in the process of implementation, it is somewhat questionable to what extent these economic strategies can contribute to social inclusion. As Panos (2004) has argued, it is likely that this will actually have the effect of deepening social inequality, since the example of Shoreditch — an urban area already transformed into an economically successful cultural quarter — shows that this has had little positive effect on lower-class residents due to escalating property prices and higher costs of living in general.

In the Berlin context, the notion of creative clusters is less explicitly tied to issues of social inclusion, but most certainly to the

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1 These creative hubs are located in the north (Barking; Haringey/North London; Kings Cross/Arsenal/Camden; Notting Hill/North Westminster), the south (Brixton/Elephant and Castle; South London/Croydon), the east (City Fringe; Deptford Greenwich/Creekside; Lower Lea Valley) and the west (West London). See: <http://www.creativelondon.org.uk/server.php?show=nav.009002>; last accessed 23 March 2007).

role of flourishing and diverse music scenes as economically relevant businesses. Thus, in the 2005 Cultural Industry in Berlin (*Kulturwirtschaft in Berlin*) report, the support of urban clusters (*stadträumlicher Cluster*) is explicitly identified as a central field of action; in the report, only the Osthafen is mentioned as an important cluster for the music industry, although it is acknowledged that more spatial clusters would have to be investigated (Projekt Zukunft 2005, 110). Not coincidentally, however, the Osthafen is the area in which MTV and Universal Music and clubs such as Maria am Ostbahnhof and the Arena are based and which has been promoted by a pool of commercial investors interested in the realization of large projects under the title of Media Spree Berlin GmbH.<sup>2</sup> Founded in 2001, Media Spree was converted into a form of 'regional management' in 2004 and involves a co-operation between real estate investors and representatives of the Berlin Senate, adjacent boroughs and the Berlin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK Berlin). This form of public-private partnership involves a public subsidy of €200 000 per year (for the period 2004-07) that is used to increase the brand awareness and to initiate the move of firms into this area. This is complemented by public-private infrastructural investments of tens of millions, 80 per cent of which is paid by public funding.<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that this area is explicitly promoted as one of the most important clusters for media firms and clubs in Berlin, development has already led to the move of small and low- or no-budget cultural producers away from this area (Bader 2004). Above all, as the empirical mapping data show (see later sections), this so-called cluster is much less important than it is made to seem: in the case of music nodes, only 2.0 per cent are based in this area.

The context in which the cluster vocabulary is used therefore raises serious questions concerning the underlying intentions of the main actors and seems to confirm the suspicion that the discourse of and investment in creative clusters mainly functions as a support mechanism for a boom in real estate markets.<sup>4</sup> It seems to me that

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2 See the website of Mediaspree: <http://www.mediaspree.de>; last accessed 15 March 2007. For more critical work that relates this project to gentrification and social exclusion, see Höpner (2005).

3 See: [http://www.mediaspree.de/cms2/fileadmin/bilder/projekte/Abgeordnetenhaushaus\\_Kleine\\_Anfrage.pdf](http://www.mediaspree.de/cms2/fileadmin/bilder/projekte/Abgeordnetenhaushaus_Kleine_Anfrage.pdf); last accessed 23 March 2007.

4 A suspicion uttered by the organizers of the 2006 MyCreativity conference in Amsterdam: "investment in 'creative clusters' effectively functions to encourage a corresponding boom in adjacent real estate markets. Here lies perhaps the core truth of the creative industries: the creative industries are a service industry, one in which state investment in 'high culture' shifts to

this 'unintended consequence' of the cluster discourse is partly an effect of the economic bias of cluster theory in which the dynamics of clusters are reduced to their economic orientation. This can be shown through an analysis of music clusters in London and Berlin in which I use cluster theory to understand the role of clusters in networked aesthetic production, while simultaneously using the empirical data to question some of the main assumptions of this theory.

### 4.3 Music Clusters

To start with a caveat: analyzing networked forms of aesthetic production in a comprehensive sense is difficult, since so many of the nodes of these networks are informal, temporally limited and partly hidden from a view interested in identifying general trends and tendencies. The informal and small nature of many of these activities made impossible the use of official statistics and survey data and I had to rely therefore on sources 'closer' to the actual music networks: magazines, mailing-lists, event calendars and websites. Even with these sources, however, problems arise because of the project-based or relatively short-term nature of some of these nodes (Ekstedt *et al.* 1999): specific nodes engage in collaborative projects for a couple of months; certain labels only exist for a brief period of time; and venues are sometimes used only occasionally. These problems are unavoidable when it comes to the mapping of these nodes characterized by a mixture of formal and informal arrangements and one therefore has to accept a certain level of imprecision.

In the case of London, I identified a total of 558 music nodes. Of these, 209 (37.5 per cent) could be categorized as venues, which means that these were locations in which music was played or performed on a more or less regular basis. Of the total nodes, 195 (34.9 per cent) were record-labels, both 'regular' as well as netlabels. The remaining categories were: event organization — 39 (7.0 per cent); store (records, technology) — 31 (5.6 per cent); publication (print or on-line magazines) — 14 (2.5 per cent); booking and/or promotion agency — 18 (3.2 per cent); radio (including on-line streaming) — 8 (1.4 per cent); and distribution — 7 (1.3 per cent). A final category covered those nodes that either did not fit one of these categories (post-production, associations, festivals) or that explicitly encompassed more than one of these functions: 37 nodes (6.6 per cent) belonged to this last hybrid category. Of the total of 558 nodes, 90

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a form of welfarism for property developers (<http://www.networkcultures.org/mycreativity> (15 March 2007).



(16.1 per cent) could not be directly assigned to a postal code. The remaining 468 nodes clearly tend towards spatial concentration in certain areas of the city, although there is still a relatively wide distribution of music nodes throughout London. Music production in London, in other words, does not show unequivocal clustering effects in one or two urban areas, but instead has produced multiple cluster tendencies.

Postal code area W1 in the Westminster borough (see figure 2 for a map of London) has the largest concentration of music production with a total of 62 nodes (11.1 per cent).

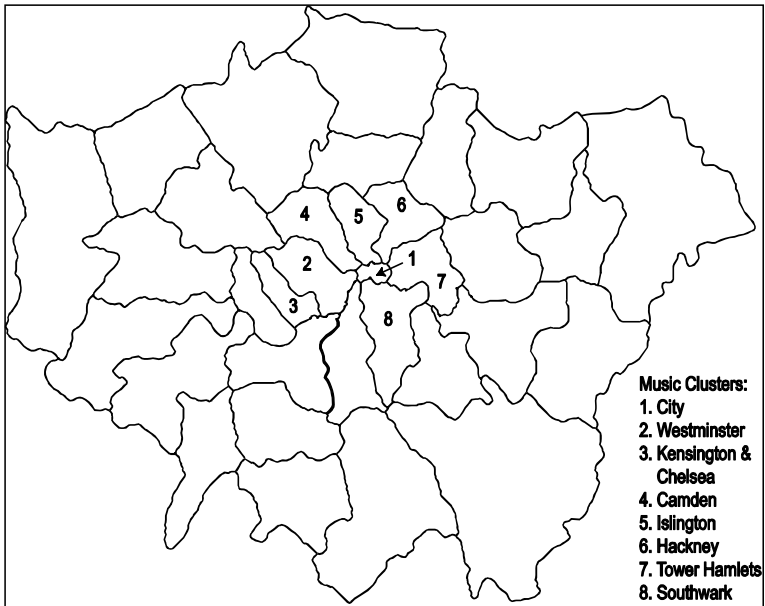


Figure 2: Music Clusters in London

Most of these are located in the Soho area. Soho has a relatively large number of record shops catering to music consumers and the range of genres on offer is very wide. Record labels tend to focus on mainstream genres, although there are some excursions into more 'leftfield' sounds. The clubs and bars largely play established genres. In W1 are also located a number of 'exclusive' nightclubs or bars that serve a more up-market audience. The areas east (WC1) and south-east (WC2) of Soho — geographically within the City of London, Westminster and the southern parts of Camden — also contain a number of nodes, but it is in Clerkenwell (EC1) (also see Evans 2004) and the Bishopsgate and Liverpool Street area (EC2)

that one can find more intense clustering effects. EC1 (covering parts of Islington, Camden and the City) and EC2 (parts of the City and Hackney) contain 26 nodes each (4.7 per cent). In general, the focus in the various venues is more on newer and emerging artists and genres than is the case in W1. There also tends to be a relative concentration of event organizers and agencies in this area and they also co-operate with and organize events in some of the clubs located in this district.

Directly north of EC1 and EC2 is postal code area N1, which comprises 30 nodes (5.4 per cent) in total and covers parts of Hackney, Islington and Camden. One main cluster is directly north of Old Street and is located mainly around Hoxton Square. The musical focus and differentiation are similar to EC1 and EC2. Another area of high spatial concentration of music production is E1, which has a total of 30 nodes (5.4 per cent). This area overlaps with E2 (both are located in Tower Hamlets and Hackney), which has a total of 19 nodes (3.4 per cent). The most intensive clustering takes place in those areas adjacent to EC2. Many of the nodes in this area deal with relatively (compared with the established genres) experimental, new or marginal sounds. All the clusters discussed so far are within the city centre or in directly adjacent areas. The only postal district with a decent-sized cluster that is outside this central area is W10, which has 18 nodes (3.2 per cent) and which covers North Kensington (part of the borough Kensington and Chelsea). Many record labels are located here, although they tend to specialize in well-established genres. It is also an area for long-standing labels and for labels that — from the perspective of the many micro labels active in music production — can be considered as medium-sized to large. W10 also houses a number of distributors, agencies and a handful of venues. Typically, the overwhelming majority of music production takes place north of the Thames. SE1 is the only district south of the Thames with an amount of production similar to the areas discussed so far: 17 nodes in total (3.0 per cent). There are a number of medium-sized or large venues in this area.

In the case of Berlin, I identified a total of 348 music nodes (see figure 3 for a map of Berlin). Of these, 98 (28.2 per cent) were categorized as venues and 136 (39.1 per cent) as record labels. This would mean that Berlin has fewer venues than London (28.2 per cent against 37.5 per cent in London), but approximately 7 per cent more record labels (39.1 per cent against 34.9 per cent). However, the inevitable imprecision in the collection of data makes it impossible to make any assertion purely on the basis of these data. The remaining categories were: event organization — 29 (8.3 per cent); store — 14 (4.0 per cent); publication — 3 (0.9 per cent); agency and/or promotion — 29 (8.3 per cent); radio (including on-line

streaming) — 5 (1.4 per cent); distribution — 6 (1.7 per cent); and various or other — 28 (8.0 per cent).

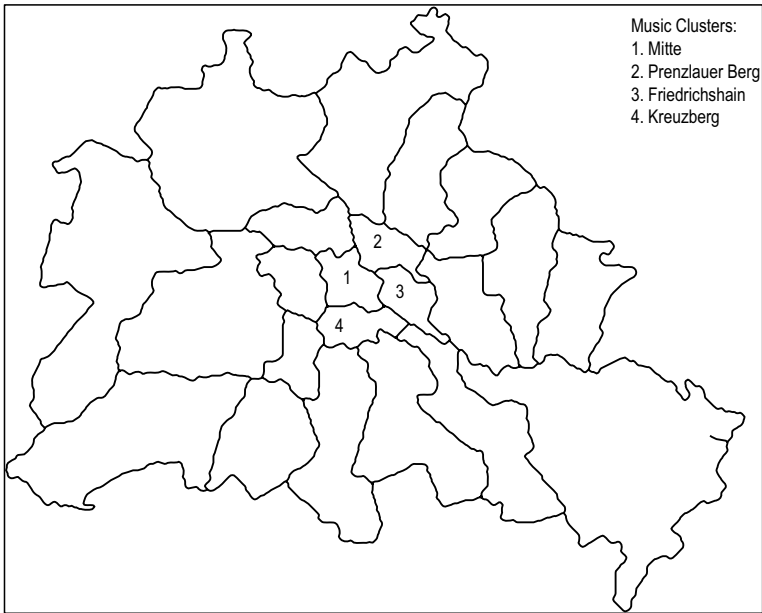


Figure 3: Music Clusters in Berlin

Of the total of 348 nodes, 38 (10.9 per cent) could not be directly assigned to a postal code. The remaining 310 nodes clearly tend towards spatial concentration. Similar to London, Berlin has produced multiple cluster tendencies. The difference between the two cities is that in Berlin all clusters are based in the eastern part of the city — more specifically in Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg — whereas those in London are more equally spread throughout the city. Thus, whereas the 348 music nodes and approximately 3.5 million inhabitants in Berlin roughly equal the 558 nodes and approximately 7.5 million people in London, the spatial concentration of nodes in the eastern part of Berlin is likely to lead to a higher level of *experienced* concentration than is the case in London. This partly explains the popular association in the press of Berlin as *the* city of contemporary music.

The highest number of music nodes is in Mitte in the postal code area 10178, which has a total of 26 nodes (7.5 per cent). Similar to Soho, there is a bias towards consumption at the expense of production: 19 of the 26 nodes are venues. Typical for Berlin, how-

ever, is the fact that, even in this central area of the city, the diversity of music on offer is high and hardly distinguishable from other parts of the city. Of course, there are a number of mainstream venues, but there are also many venues that consciously focus on leftfield sounds and emerging genres. Record labels are similarly diverse. To the north, this cluster connects with clusters in the postal code areas 10119 (Mitte), 10435 (Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg) and 10437 (Prenzlauer Berg) and links Mitte with Prenzlauer Berg. There seems to be an equal mix of categories here. Quite a number of booking agencies and promoters are located in this area, all covering a wide array of artists and music genres. One can also find here record labels releasing various genres. These sounds overlap with what is available in record stores and venues. Also, Ableton — one of the major players on the music software market — is based on the Schönhauser Allee. Geographically relatively separate from Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg is Friedrichshain (particularly the postal code areas 10245 and 10247), which also has clear clustering effects. These areas are also characterized by a balance between production and consumption. Whereas some venues cater to the more mainstream sounds, most other venues and almost all labels focus on newer and emerging genres or well-established sub-cultural genres. Finally, across the bridge from Friedrichshain is Kreuzberg, another important cluster of music production (mostly within postal code areas 10997 and 10999). In comparison with the other clusters, there are not many music venues here, but this is compensated by the amount and diversity of record labels, distributors, booking and promotion agencies as well as magazines.

#### 4.4 Cluster Exclusions

The data clearly show that music production exhibits clustering tendencies. The question, however, is why. Why does clustering take place and how central is this to the production chains of music? In this section, I want to take a closer look at the actual rationales behind the emergence of these clusters and relate these to the dominant explanatory models in the cluster theory literature in order to highlight the weaknesses of the latter. By doing so, this chapter aims to contribute to the growing literature that critically evaluates the cluster concept through sustained empirical research, in particular in the context of the creative industries (also see Turok 2003). It needs to be emphasized, however, that the cluster concept remains a rather 'chaotic concept' (Martin and Sunley 2003) that is often applied very liberally in theory and practice. In many ways, it seems more useful therefore to understand the debate surrounding

clusters as a 'multiperspectival approach' (Benneworth and Henry 2004) that addresses a number of overlapping themes and that draws on a variety of intellectual traditions, such as: Marshall's (1890) work on specialized industries and the local availability of labor, supporting infrastructure and complementary industries; Porter's influential neo-Marshallian analysis of clusters (1990, 2000); research by the Californian School on industrial districts and transaction costs (Scott 1988; Storper and Scott 1992); research on flexible specialization (Piore and Sabel 1984); and the work by the GREMI group on innovative milieus (Camagni 1991). There is no space here to do justice to the internal tensions between these different strands (but see Gordon and McCann 2000; MacKinnon *et al.* 2002), but one of the most remarkable shifts in the past decade in particular has been an increased acknowledgement of the role played by knowledge and sociocultural processes in shaping the emergence, institutionalization and development of clusters. This has led to three dominant (and interrelated) ways of explaining the position of clusters in (creative) production: an emphasis on the importance of cluster-based vertical and horizontal linkages; the highlighting of the role of clusters in knowledge and learning; and, the interpretation of cluster growth as based on these first two dimensions. In the remainder of this section, I will evaluate these theoretical arguments by relating them to my empirical data on music production.

#### 4.4.1 VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL LINKAGES

A central assumption of cluster theory is that clusters are constituted by vertical as well as horizontal linkages between firms or actors (Richardson 1972). The vertical dimension consists of nodes that are functionally dissimilar, but that carry out complementary activities — a situation often described as a production system of input/output relations. The development of a cluster will lead to a process of differentiation, in which suppliers emerge that cater to one particular process within this production system. The relations between these various nodes tend to be based on co-operation and less on competition, since they are not competing for the same customers. On the contrary, it is the interaction between these nodes that leads to an efficient and economically effective cluster. The horizontal dimension of clusters consists of nodes undertaking similar activities and the relation between these nodes is therefore based on competition, since the success of one actor or firm will be at the expense of others. Nodes, therefore, are involved in a continuous monitoring and observing of other horizontally positioned nodes, since their own survival depends on being one step ahead of

the competition. This tends to create a situation in which actors will copy successful competitors, while adding some elements of their own — as a result, a self-reinforcing process of variation is set in motion.

To an extent, this description is clearly applicable to music clusters in London and Berlin. Thus, vertical linkages exist between artists and labels.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes, this is the result of the fact that labels are micro labels run by artists themselves, which means that the vertical linkage is 'internalized'. Most labels, however, tend to be larger and represent not only the label-owner but also a handful of other artists that can be based in the same city. Previous research by Adamek-Schyma and van Heur (2006) has also shown the extent to which vertical linkages between artists and venues exist. In 2004, for example, artists living in Berlin conducted approximately 86 per cent of all the performances that took place in Berlin-based venues. No similar data are available on London, but it seems reasonable to assume that at least the majority of performances in London are conducted by London-based artists.<sup>6</sup> One important note that needs to be added is that it remains unclear the extent to which the artists are actually based within the same clusters as the labels or the venues. Instead of assuming a full spatial convergence between artists, labels and venues, it seems more likely that we are dealing with metropolitan intracluster formations, in which actors are very much aware of 'what is happening' within a number of clusters simultaneously. This already points to the need to attend to the relations between and across scales (as has been pointed out by a number of authors, such as Bunnell and Coe 2001; Wolfe and Gertler 2004) and will be further addressed later. Vertical linkages have also developed between record labels and distributors, radio stations and publications. To a large extent, this has to do with promotional effects as a result of the constant circulation of releases among the various nodes. Thus, record labels send releases to publications such as *De:Bug* and *Groove* in Berlin or *The Wire* and *RWD Magazine* in London. Similar networks have developed between labels and radio stations. At the same time, many of these links are also the result of actors occupying more than one nodal position

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5 I excluded artists from the mapping data, since the sheer quantity of artists in London and Berlin would have made the mapping process impractical, but they need to be included here in order to understand their position within and in relation to specific clusters.

6 This seems a reasonable assumption, since touring artists are in many ways only the most visible aspect of contemporary music production. Less visible, but quantitatively more significant, is the mass of artists performing on a regular basis in clubs and bars. Lacking data, however, this impression has to remain speculative.

simultaneously: artists can also be label-owners as well as DJs at clubs and radio stations or working in record stores. More examples of vertical linkages could be discussed (i.e. vertical linkages between shops and distributors, between DJs and radio stations, between booking agencies and artists, or between artists and software companies), but the analysis so far already clearly shows that vertical linkages contribute to the creative ecology of music production, thereby confirming the theoretical assumptions of cluster theory.

Horizontal linkages — connecting similar and therefore (according to cluster theory) competitive nodes — are visible as well within clusters in London and Berlin. Venues and event organizers, for example, tend to be very much aware of the activities of other venues and organizers in the same city and one can therefore observe these nodes copying successful competitors, while adding elements of their own — thereby setting in motion a self reinforcing process of variation and innovation. In that sense, the urban environment very much functions as a field of comparison, enabling actors to position themselves as part of, but simultaneously different from, other actors in the same city. This can be illustrated by referring to an interview I conducted with the owner of the 103Club in Berlin and his comments regarding the position of this club in the Berlin context:

103 Club is the only large club that deals with music, which is electronic music, but which is also influenced by hip-hop and less by rock—as is the case with the Rio, for example — and also less by techno. In any case, it deals with hip-hop culture, it plays a lot of maximal music, music that is mixed casually across the genres with hip-hop, punk and electro flowing together, whereas the other large clubs such as Weekend, Watergate and Berghain are very much techno and minimal techno oriented. [...] Our catchphrase is 'Maximal instead of Minimal'. So we do try to open a new door in the Berlin party-landscape (interview, 26 January 2007).

This quote clearly shows the extent to which venues are aware of their horizontal linkages. The owner's description largely deals with the ways in which the booking at the 103Club is characterized by a particular genre orientation, which makes it different from the minimal techno predominance in other Berlin venues — maximal instead of minimal.

Having said all this, it remains unclear the extent to which these vertical and horizontal linkages are *really* constitutive for cluster formation and development, since one can find a whole range of evidence that contradicts this apparent confirmation of cluster theory. The main problem with cluster theory is not that it is wrong in attributing emergent dynamics to clusters, but that its theoretical focus obscures the important role played by multiscalar or trans-

scalar networks of aesthetic production in co-structuring creative clusters. To an extent, I follow here the more recent critique of cluster theory, which argues that clusters are not merely closed phenomena, but link up with firms and actors world-wide through 'global pipelines' (Bathelt *et al.* 2004). My argument, however, goes beyond this rather obvious fact that cluster based actors actually do develop connections with the outside world. As I see it, it is much more important to pay attention to the "internal composition" (O'Connor 2004, 139) of each cluster if we are to understand what is actually happening within it. The dominant strands within the cluster literature, however, tend to assume implicitly that the advantages of spatial proximity are the same for all nodes — irrespective of their position in the production system. Clearly, this is not the case and certain music nodes will rely more on the cluster than others.

Thus, although it might make sense to argue that the horizontal linkages of venues tend to be dominantly cluster-based, it is much more questionable to assume that this is also the case with vertical linkages. Even though the majority of performances are conducted by artists based in the same city as the venue, there needs to be a sensitivity towards the status of these artists. Often, a club night will involve a DJ set or live performance by one or more artists *not* based in the city — but visiting the city as part of a tour — backed up by a handful of DJs and artists who are based in the city. Quantitatively, the 'locals' outnumber the touring artist(s), but qualitatively the latter will play a much more central role within the club night than the former. Related to this, it is not certain at all that the booking agencies, which usually organize the tours, are based in the same city as the venue. On the contrary, chances are high that venues develop vertical linkages with booking agencies based in other global cities as well as medium sized or smaller cities, since these agencies draw upon the resources made available through various global networks of music production and are necessarily a part of these networks.

The assumptions of cluster theory are even more problematic in relation to record labels. Besides connections with distributors, record labels develop their main vertical linkages with their artists. Most labels seem to rely on a considerable contribution by artists based outside the city in which the label is based. With hundreds of labels in each city, this is difficult to prove in any definitive sense, but it can be illustrated with the following example. In Berlin, Ad-noiseam — a label and mail-order that is known world-wide for its experimental music — has released around 80 records in its six-



year existence and this includes only one Berlin-based artist.<sup>7</sup> As the label-owner described his position within Berlin:

I'm not releasing a CD called *Berlin Dance* or whatever, and I don't even ... No I do have a Berlin artist on the label, but he is an American guy. [...] I don't even have a German at Adnoiseam (interview, 26 January 2007).

The case of other important labels might not be as extreme, but neither do they dominantly focus on Berlin-based artists or try to market 'their' Berlin sound. Naturally, the quantity of releases on medium-sized and large labels will mean that they are likely to include a sizeable amount of artists from outside Berlin, but there is no reason to assume that small labels — which are part of the creative atmosphere that is so often celebrated in policy-oriented literature — are in any sense more dependent on cluster-based linkages. A similar situation is visible in the case of London.

Nor are record labels dominantly oriented towards the cluster when it comes to horizontal linkages. According to cluster theory, horizontally linked labels would have to be interpreted as involved in competitive behavior, which would translate into the continuous monitoring and observing of other record labels within the cluster. As a result, one would have to be able to observe a situation in which labels copy other successful cluster-based labels and try to add elements of their own in order to gain a competitive advantage. Is this really what we see happening? I would argue that most record labels — despite the reality of spatial agglomeration — are not so much interested in cluster-based differentiation, but above all in global differentiation, since they are part of global sub-cultures and rely on a globally differentiated market for their products. This differentiation tends not to take place along the lines of geography, but according to genre and aesthetic divisions.

Similarly and finally, booking and promotion agencies as well as distributors are not as dependent on clusters as it might seem when observed through the lens of cluster theory. As already indicated, the vertical linkages they develop with artists and venues (in the case of booking agencies), with labels and record stores (in the case of distributors) or with artists, labels, radio stations and publications (in the case of promotion agencies) tend to take place on a broader scale than the urban — often national, but increasingly macro-regional (European or North American) or global. The horizontal linkages these nodes develop tend to be structured in a similar fashion. Thus, a promotion agency such as Stars and Heroes in Berlin is aware of the activities of similar nodes in Berlin (such as Dense Promotion), but positions itself in a European mar-

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7 Data derived from Adnoiseam website, accessed 13 March 2007.

ket in which horizontal comparison takes place on this Europe-wide scale (interview, 20 January 2007).

All in all, it is difficult to find clear-cut evidence that supports the view that these clusters are dominantly characterized by intense vertical and horizontal linkages. Clearly, nodes within the cluster have developed a large variety of connections, but this is more than compensated for by the large number of networked connections between cluster based nodes and nodes outside it. The bias towards cluster formation seems above all to be a result of the dependence of some nodes on physical proximity: venues rely on specialized audiences for their survival and will — in a competitive market — engage in ‘horizontal’ competition; artists increasingly rely on performances for their income, due to the decline in record sales. Artists, of course, have the opportunity to tour in order to increase the number of venues in which they can perform, but research has shown that performance geographies remain strongly locally and regionally structured: only a small minority of artists will travel the globe; most focus their attention on the regional or local scale (Adamek-Schyma and van Heur 2006). It is likely that this tendency will privilege large metropolitan conglomerations, since it is only within such areas that artists — those at least that are interested in making a living from their music — will have access to an ‘internal market’ of sufficient size.

#### 4.4.2 KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

This brings us to a second characteristic of clusters and one that is increasingly theorized within cluster theory: clusters as the spatial prerequisite for the creation of knowledge and learning. This view can be seen as an accompaniment to the older notion of clusters — dating back to the work of Marshall (1890) — according to which firms cluster because this gives them direct access to a dedicated infrastructure and collective resources, a pool of skilled labor and complementary industries providing specialized inputs. The focus on the importance of knowledge — and above all tacit knowledge — in the emergence and reproduction of clusters has been put forward as part of a purported shift towards a knowledge economy and the development and increasing ubiquity of communications technologies. The basic argument runs as follows. In a condition of globality, in which everyone can have access to codified knowledge, the production of new and innovative products or processes is fundamentally dependent on tacit knowledge (Maskell and Malmberg 1999). In contrast to codified knowledge, however, tacit knowledge does not travel as easily, since it cannot be expressed into signs (such as images or text), but is experiential and only

partly conscious. As Gertler (2003, 79) has pointed out, there are two other closely related elements to this argument. One is that this local nature of tacit knowledge makes it 'spatially sticky' (also see Markusen 1996), since the exchange of this knowledge between actors or firms can only take place if they share a common social context, which is largely locally defined. Related to this is the second element, which is the importance of *socially organized learning processes*, since innovation is now increasingly based on the interactions and knowledge flows between firms and other institutions such as research organizations or public agencies. Even though commentators have criticized this local 'bias' of the tacit knowledge literature and have argued that such knowledge can also be transmitted through organizational linkages between distant firms and that, in any case, tacit and codified knowledges need to be seen as intertwined (Allen 2000; Amin and Cohendet 1999; Bathelt *et al.* 2004), the basic argument that clusters are important in knowledge and learning has remained stable.

As other commentators have pointed out, activities within the creative industries, in particular, are constituted by tacit knowledge, learning-by-doing and local skills (Crewe and Beaverstock 1998; Leadbeater and Oakley 1999; Raffo *et al.* 2000). Others have addressed the need to acknowledge the mix of tacit as well as formal knowledge and local as well as global connections in the culture industries (O'Connor 2004). Although not a great deal of emphasis is put in the literature on explaining what constitutes knowledge and learning, in general the argument is that this involves a transmission of technical skills, talented people, entrepreneurial knowledge and information about external market conditions (Wolfe and Gertler 2004, 1076–1077).

Once again, to an extent this theoretical explanation makes absolute sense, but it is haunted by a similar ambivalence to the one described in the case of vertical and horizontal linkages. Clearly, spatial agglomerations of cultural production exist, but if the notion of the cluster as the spatial prerequisite of knowledge and learning is to have any added value, then it should be able to explain the ways in which the cluster — and not another form of spatial organization, such as the network — is the catalyst of knowledge and learning production. The evidence for this, however, is rather meager. As was indicated in the previous section, the assumption that vertical and horizontal linkages are dominantly based within clusters is questionable. If this critique is accepted, then it also becomes problematic simply to assume that tacit knowledge thrives within the creative atmosphere of urban clusters. In order to discuss this in more depth, I will focus here on the trans-

mission of technical knowledge and the acquirement of entrepreneurial skills.

The transmission of technical skills, which is seen as one dimension of knowledge and learning, can hardly be seen to be concentrated within clusters in any straightforward sense. This assumption seems to be a 'leftover' of the founding research on high technology clusters in which technical skills are communicated between research institutes and private firms (Angel 1991; Florida and Kenney 1988; Storper 1992), but is not directly applicable to creative clusters in which technical skills have a crafts-oriented quality and are much less part of complex organizational structures. Although this does not deny the social embeddedness of these technical skills, it does grant a relatively high level of individual autonomy to actors that is not comparable with other industries (but typical for the cultural industries — see Hesmondhalgh 2002; Ryan 1992). This can be highlighted by focusing on the biographies of artists, since this shows the ways in which the acquisition of technical skills is the result of spatially concentrated interaction — has predicted by cluster theory — and also of individual reflexivity and informal networks. As I see it, it is not possible to grant any extraordinary status to clusters in contributing to this acquisition.

To take an example, the October 2005 issue of the London-based music magazine *The Wire* included an overview of minimalist improvisers under the heading of "New London Silence" and used a vocabulary that resonated with the debates surrounding creative clusters. According to the journalist, Mark Wastell's Sound 323 record shop, his labels, concert promotions as well as performances with other artists "have established London as a significant hub in a global conspiracy of purging silences" (Bell 2005, 32). And indeed, the article starts with a description of the Sound 323 record shop and its direct urban environment:

Bobbing like a cork on the rumbling ocean of traffic that is North London's Archway Road, Sound 323 is a little shop full of records, an oasis of edgy sonic art. [...] Due south, two venues lie within a few metres: the Jacksons Lane Theatre ('North London's busiest arts centre') and newcomer The Red Hedgehog, which an estate agent would describe as full of potential. ... Both venues, as well as the Sound 323 basement, are regularly used by the shop's proprietor, Mark Wastell (Bell 2005, 35).

In a policy-oriented publication, this surely would have been categorized as an emerging creative cluster. Yet it cannot explain the ways in which technical skills are acquired, as becomes clear upon further reading. Instead of concentrating on cluster dynamics, the article directs attention to the musical training of Mark Wastell:

Starting out with no formal musical training, Wastell's road to Improv hell was at first paved with good composers. [...] "Around 1996 I was listening to the chamber string music of Morton Feldman, Helmut Lachenmann, Luigi Nono, Mathias Spahlinger, Giacinto Scelsi and Salvatore Sciarrino. [...] Through these composers I began to understand the capabilities of my own instrument. I began to realise how to truly project my sounds, not with force through propulsion and volume but with careful placement of notes, be they loud or soft" (Bell 2005, 35).

Can one say it was the cluster that enabled Mark Wastell to find his own sound? Or should one argue that global networks of music production 'transmitted' technical skills to Wastell? Clearly, the second answer makes more sense, since all the examples of influential composers provided by Wastell are or were (some have passed away) based outside London: Feldman in the US; Lachenmann and Spahlinger in Germany; Nono, Scelsi and Sciarrino in Italy.<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that clusters play no role whatsoever in contributing to the acquisition of technical skills: Wastell is part of the London Improv scene and he acknowledges the influence of London based Phil Durrant (i.e. a cluster-based horizontal linkage) on his own playing. Yet this is merely one influence amidst many others. Tacit knowledge, for example, is also communicated through touring artists and the article refers a number of times to the impact that touring artists had on developing Wastell's technical skills. Of course, one could still argue — as some of the cluster literature does — that these represent 'global pipelines' opening up the local cluster to new information; however, in situations where the majority of influences are acquired through non-clusterbased actors, I am skeptical if this modification of the cluster concept holds. In any case, the hypostatization of clusters does not seem to contribute to a better understanding of the acquirement of technical skills.

Clusters, however, do seem to play a particularly important role in supporting and promoting entrepreneurial skills, although not directly in the sense presented by cluster theory. Within the cluster literature, the notion of entrepreneurialism tends to refer to an awareness of market conditions and opportunities, personal responsibility, risk taking and a drive to achieve and grow. The background assumption of much of this literature is usually a meritocratic view of society in which achievement and the cultivation of social capital will pay — irrespective of structural inequalities (Somers 2005). Entrepreneurialism itself is not alien to the practices

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8 This highlights another interesting weakness of cluster theory. In its attempt to relate spatial agglomerations to processes of innovation, it overlooks the impact time — in this case, the listening to music from earlier periods — can have on innovation.

and strategies of networked forms of aesthetic production, but constitutive of their very existence. Building, supporting and reproducing these networks means continuous work — without the enthusiasm and time investment of thousands of actors, most music networks simply would not exist. This ‘weak’ version of entrepreneurialism is not limited to clusters, but is part of many forms of social interaction. Many of the actors currently working within so-called creative clusters have been actively involved in making music, organizing club nights or releasing records for years on end (often without payment). Once inside the cluster, however, weak entrepreneurialism can turn into a ‘strong’ version of entrepreneurialism. As indicated, this is not because the networks of aesthetic production were non-existent before and are now all of a sudden an emergent effect of clusters. Such a view abstracts clusters from the wider political-economic as well as social landscape and, by doing so, pretends (in its theoretical modeling) that clusters are self-generating mechanisms, while ignoring their structuration by wider influences (Wolfe and Gertler 2004, 1079–1080; Bunnell and Coe 2001). Instead, Gertler has shown how cluster dynamics need to be understood not only as an emergent effect of the interaction between firms and actors, but also as an effect of institutional proximity. Actors, in other words:

operate within a possibility set that is constrained by larger forces—particularly the institutional and regulatory frameworks at the national and regional scales (Gertler 2003, 91).

Such a view potentially offers a more thorough account of tacit knowledge and entrepreneurialism, since it highlights Polanyi’s (1944) and the regulation theoretical insight that “markets and the behaviour of economic actors are socially constructed, embedded, and governed” (Gertler 2003, 91). As Gertler puts it:

such institutional influences are subtle but pervasive: indeed, often so subtle that *firms and individuals are not even conscious* of the impact they exert over their own choices, practices, attitudes, values, and expectations (Gertler 2003, 93; original emphasis).

I would argue that this ‘possibility set’ and these “institutional influences” need to be understood in relation to the rescaling of state space and the development of new forms of urban governance oriented towards the promotion and regulation of competitive urban spaces (Brenner 2004). Urban institutions, in other words, are actively involved in shaping the conditions in which actors and firms operate. Put in more Althusserian or Foucauldian terms, it can be argued that clusters have a disciplinary function: they produce

forms of subjectification in which actors come to recognize themselves as 'strong' entrepreneurs oriented towards individual achievement, economic growth and competitive advantage (Styhre 2005). It is through the notion of creative clusters, in other words, that networks of aesthetic production are identified by policy-makers (and cluster theorists) in order to regulate. In London, this involves institutions such as the Greater London Authority (GLA), the London Development Agency (LDA) and its Creative London programme, as well as the various borough-level and publicly funded economic development agencies. In Berlin, this involves the Berlin Senate's administration Department of Economy, Technology and Women (Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Technologie und Frauen) and its Project Future (Projekt Zukunft) as well as the Berlin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK Berlin). This is not to say, of course, that these new modes of social regulation are necessarily successful, since they need to be articulated with a wide range of pre-existing networks of aesthetic production with their own internal dynamics.

#### 4.4.3 CLUSTER GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

This brings us to the third aspect of clusters as discussed in the literature. According to cluster theory, cluster growth and development are dependent on the prerequisites discussed earlier: vertical and horizontal linkages as well as knowledge and learning processes. It is acknowledged that "the evolutionary paths for cluster creation are highly variable" (Wolfe and Gertler 2004, 1075) and each analyst will highlight a different mix of elements that determines the success of a cluster, but — once established — cluster development is seen to rely on vertical and horizontal linkages as well as knowledge and learning. Taking this as a starting-point, Maskell has argued that cluster growth is dependent on an increase in the number of nodes through three processes:

First, already existing firms located elsewhere might be tempted to relocate all or a part of their activities to the cluster because of the real or imagined advantages of getting better access to the local knowledge base or to the suppliers or customers already present.... Second, a dominant position will also attract entrepreneurs with ambitions to start firms in the particular industry.... Third and finally, new firms come into being in the cluster by spin-offs; smaller or larger groups of former employees recognise a potentially profitable business opportunity and decide to exploit it by becoming entrepreneurs themselves (Maskell 2001, 932-933).

It is clear that this description also matches (to an extent) the realities of creative cluster development. Thus, one could argue that one

of the reasons why Berlin has become such a popular location for music production is because the various clusters in the city offer incoming actors access to the local knowledge base as well as local customers and suppliers. I have partly deconstructed this idealization of the local in the previous sections, but it remains true that clusters in Berlin have grown as a result of incoming actors. According to the policy-oriented documents published on Berlin, the creative industries have grown rapidly over the past decade.<sup>9</sup> Although these success stories need to be taken with a grain of salt, they partly overlap with more qualitative impressions on the spatial shift of music networks towards Berlin. Whereas Cologne, Frankfurt and Hamburg used to be important centers for music production (and they still are to a considerable extent), quite a number of actors have moved to Berlin during the past decade. This has been the case for visible 'majors' such as Universal or MTV, and also for many smaller labels. In policy work on London, there is less emphasis on the relocation of creative industries to the city, presumably because London has always played a dominant role within the UK creative industries. More attention is paid to the important role of the creative sector in fuelling the economic growth of London.<sup>10</sup> Within this creative sector, the music industry is not seen to occupy such an extraordinary role as in Berlin, but it is still emphasized that the growth in music is stronger in London than in the UK as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

This brings us to Maskell's second point. Creative clusters have also grown as a result of entrepreneurs moving in to start a firm in the field of music production. In the case of small cultural produc-

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9 In a report published by the German Institute for Economic Research (Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung), for example, Berlin is seen to play an increasingly important role for the music industry. Not only does the city contain 7.3 per cent of all employees and 6.2 per cent of all firms (making it the first city before Hamburg and Munich), turnover in 2002 supposedly increased by 18.9 per cent in comparison with 2001 (Mundelius and Hertzsch 2005, 229-230).

10 Thus, London is said to be "the UK's creative capital, with 40 per cent of the jobs in the UK's creative industries, and 29 per cent of jobs in the UK creative sector as a whole" (GLA 2004b, 1). Also: "London's creative sector is a major driver of its growth. It is growing faster than any other major industry except Financial and Business Services, and accounts for between a fifth and a quarter of job growth in London between 1995 and 2001 (GLA 2004b, 1).

11 According to the GLA data, of the total of 650 800 people employed in London's creative sector in 2002, 87 200 of these worked in music and the performing arts. This figure would mean that approximately 30 per cent of all employees in music and the performing arts are based in London (the 2002 UK total is 285 700) (GLA 2004b, 30).



tion such as music, however, there tends to be a temporal disjuncture between the moment of 'moving in' and the actual starting of a firm. This is related to the 'weak' locational factors identified by many authors (for example, Florida's (2002) 'bohemian atmosphere') as constituting an important element of actors' decisions to move to a certain city, but these factors do not directly translate into the starting of a firm. Many actors spend months or even years 'hanging around' in these urban environments and participating in the various networks of music production without turning these activities into a business. Practicing a creative and bohemian lifestyle, after all, has a lot to do with laziness, unfocused attention and free time and not just with following a career plan. As one journalist ironically commented: "The eternal waiting of bohemians almost provokes cowering in bars, promiscuity and drug use" (Waibel 2006). Usually, such a lifestyle is supported by a combination of university studies (and government funding), parental support, unemployment benefits and a range of part-time jobs. It is only after a certain time that some (not all) actors involved in these networks will actually try to develop a form of living that is economically sustainable. This temporal disjuncture needs to be taken into account in research on clustering, since the form and content of most networks of aesthetic production are heavily structured by this investment of free labor.<sup>12</sup>

And finally, Maskell's third point is that cluster growth has to do with spin-offs i.e. with actors discovering a niche to exploit. Both in London and Berlin, this can indeed be observed. Besides the already mentioned examples — such as the 103 Club (playing more hip-hop-oriented electronic music in an environment of minimal techno) — a promotion agency such as Stars and Heroes in Berlin also seems to conform to this logic. The owner had come to Berlin to do an internship at Mute Records Germany. After this, she started work as a PR assistant at the Kitty-Yo label and soon became head of promotion. As became clear during the interview, this discovery of a niche to exploit was an immanent process of talking to other people about possible business ideas, being confronted with structural changes of the music industry and seeing opportunities arise:

I was lucky in the sense that a friend of mine had started a new distribution firm and he had attracted many good labels [...] He then send a couple of labels in my direction. It all happened very naturally; I talked about what I would like to do and that indeed seemed to be a niche, a sort of specialization, and as a result the word got around relatively swiftly, even beyond Germany all the way to America, within these scenes at least (interview, 20 January 2007).

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12 The comments here are too brief, but the issue of labor will be discussed in a bit more depth in chapter six.

Considering these cluster effects (imagined and real), it is maybe not surprising that policy-makers have latched onto the cluster concept as a generally applicable tool for transforming cultural production into an economically successful sector. By assuming, however, that cluster development will more or less equally benefit all nodes within the cluster, they ignore the organizational specificities of networked aesthetic production. In the case of music networks, therefore, it might be productive to entertain the thought that networks do not merely converge in clusters, but that networks also offer an escape from clusters. Networks offer actors the opportunity to continue aesthetic practices that have been made impossible by cluster developments.

The shape of these developing clusters is directly related to the structural power of the current accumulation regime in particular urban spaces. Soho, for example — which was seen as an innovative and creative quarter from at least the 1900s until the 1960s — is now no longer home to small and networked forms of production with low or no levels of return, but is instead dominated by larger capital investment and consumption-oriented cultural environments.<sup>13</sup> Music nodes do exist in this area, but have adapted to their immediate urban context: those nodes based in Soho are mainly those dependent on spatial proximity to customers, other nodes are located in other areas. Thus, the area hosts a relatively large number of record shops with a wide range of music on offer, since this location gives these shops access to London based customers as well as the millions of tourists visiting London. Venues such as clubs and bars are also available in abundance, but these nodes are not involved in aesthetically more experimental sounds and largely cater to mass tourism and the employees from the City's financial district with a standard fare of mainstream house, dance and pop. In contrast to other areas in London, however, hardly any event organizers or actual DJs, musicians and artists are located in Soho, whereas precisely these actors tend to play an important role

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13 This is not to say that no aesthetic production takes place any more in these urban areas. In the case of film and television post-production facilities, for example, Soho is still a central area, despite high real estate costs (see Nachum and Keeble 2003). However, despite a similar organizational structure, these facilities are dependent on high levels of investment by or income from capital-intensive companies. Thus, advertising is much more integrated into the capitalist cultural economy than is the case with music networks. It is about time that cluster theory incorporates this more critical dimension in order to be able to distinguish between different kinds of culture industries in a way that goes beyond a mere highlighting of organizational differences. Some of the work done on moral economy offers useful perspectives here (see Banks 2006).

in developing new concepts and in pushing forward new sounds. Cluster theory could benefit here from research on gentrification, since this latter tradition is highly sensitive to the tensions between capital investment and local displacement of alternative social, cultural, ethical and aesthetic imaginaries and practices. It is certainly too easy to argue against any form of commodification, but cluster theory needs to incorporate a concern for a balance between consumption and production that is visible in the gentrification literature (for example, Zukin and Kosta 2004) and which is practiced by the many networks of aesthetic production crisscrossing the city.

The situation is similar and different in Berlin. It is similar, since areas such as Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg are heavily structured by the current accumulation regime and mode of regulation (Holm 2006), leading to an increasing spatial displacement of low-income forms of aesthetic production and a shift towards more consumption-oriented environments. The situation is different, however, because Berlin's relative economic marginality within Germany as well as Europe has meant that there simply is not enough capital available for investment in and radical transformation of urban spaces. As a result, even in central areas such as Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg, there is still space for low-income forms of aesthetic production, which is hardly the case in London. This is visible in the fact that many artists and event organizers are still based in these areas. It is likely, however, that further cluster development in Berlin — under the conditions set by the current accumulation regime and mode of regulation — will lead to a similar spatial distribution of aesthetic production nodes: with developed creative clusters in which nodes dependent on spatial proximity will adapt to the changing urban context and with nodes that are less dependent on spatial proximity circling these urban areas or moving out of the city altogether.

## 4.5 Conclusion

So what is the role of creative clusters in relation to networks of aesthetic production? As this chapter has tried to show with reference to music production in London and Berlin, clusters are not spatial concentrations of creativity in any straightforward sense. As cluster theory has rightly pointed out, clusters need to be understood as concentrations of nodes that are reliant on spatial proximity. Contra cluster theory, however, it is only a minority of the nodes involved in music production to which this applies. By not highlighting this point, cluster research on the creative indus-

tries ignores the organizational specificities of networks of aesthetic production.

To an important extent, this bias is a result of the rather “selective empirics” at work in many of the writings on creative clusters: although areas of agglomeration are always identified, there is a lack of evidence concerning the quality of linkages and knowledge spillovers (Martin and Sunley 2003, 18-23) in specific sectors of the creative industries. This methodological weakness leads to a whole range of problematic theoretical arguments concerning the supposedly central role of creative clusters in contemporary cultural production. As this chapter has shown, these theoretical problems include: the limited understanding of the differentiated relevance of vertical and horizontal linkages for particular functions within a cultural sector; an insufficient grasp of the logic of knowledge and learning in cultural work (also see Banks 2006); and the downplaying of the often adversarial tensions between cluster regulation, broader spaces of accumulation and network dynamics. The larger argument of this chapter is that this discursive selectivity (Somers 1994) serves obvious strategic functions. It is part of a broader attempt to re-align cultural production with the new knowledge-based regime of accumulation through the selection of particular clusters that can be regulated and governed. The neglect of networks in this “economic imaginary” (Jessop 2004a) is no accident or simply the result of hasty empirical analysis (although that surely plays a role), but an effect of this realignment process. This is because networks of aesthetic production such as music production employ a wide variety of rationalities that can only be reduced to cluster-based economic innovation with great difficulty and simplification — it is ‘easier’ to simply focus on clusters and hope that policy interventions in this spatially delimited sphere will restructure the existing and emergent networks of cultural production. As Jessop (2004a) has pointed out, this has a “potentially performative impact” (172) in the sense that “economic imaginaries identify, privilege, and seek to stabilize some economic activities from the totality of economic relations and transform them into objects of observation, calculation, and governance” (163). At the same time, I also pointed out that it is by no means certain these regulatory attempts will succeed, since they need to be articulated with a wide range of pre-existent networks of aesthetic production and forms of accumulation that are only partially dependent on cluster-based activities.

## 5. COMMUNICATION

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter is also interested in investigating the relations and non-relations between accumulation, regulation and networks, but focuses on the dimension of communication. Communication is understood here broadly as those semiotic forms, modes and techniques that constitute interaction between actors, but the specific focus of this chapter is on: 1) creative industries policies in London and Berlin; 2) the discourses circulating in and partly constituting networks of aesthetic production; and 3) the possible discursive interaction between creative industries policies and creative networks. In order to investigate this, however, there is a need to broaden the notion of communication beyond the regulationist concern with communication as an instrumental act (i.e. as linked to the reproduction of the value form and political form).

In order to come to grips with the simultaneous existence of multiple discourses, this chapter will commence (in section 5.2) with a brief analysis of the notion of texture as a key term for research on communication geographies. Reflecting a heterogeneous understanding of communication, it sensitizes our analytical perspective to the fact that policy discourses intervene in an urban space that is already overflowing with networked communication — the policy intervention, therefore, cannot make a clean sweep, but will have to negotiate with these already-existent networks. At the same time, the concept needs to be specified, since in the literature it remains unclear how textures intertwine with accumulation and regulation. Section 5.3 corrects this weakness by connecting textures more explicitly to the notion of strategic selectivity (a term already discussed in chapter three) and by emphasizing the discursive dimensions of the latter in order to direct attention to the selective appropriation by state institutions of broader and more diverse communicative textures. Sections 5.4 and 5.5 analyze this intertwinement in more empirical detail. Section 5.4 offers a detailed analysis of creative industries policies on London and Berlin, enabling us to understand the general narrative themes as well as

the specific shapes these themes take in the two cities and how this relates to the particularity of the respective urban environments. Section 5.5 shifts the focus away from the policy debates to the music networks in order to analyze the strategically selective impact of these policies on the music textures. This strategic selectivity is implemented through various interventions. The section will focus on: intellectual property; the appearance of free choice and commodification; the regulation of the built environment; and the discourse of flexibility and change. At the same time, this section also shows the highly contested nature of these interventions, which makes the enrolment of music networks into broader accumulation regimes and state strategies rather uncertain.

## 5.2 Urban Textures

André Jansson (2007) has recently proposed the notion of texture as a key concept for communication geography — a sub-field of research activity he locates within media and cultural studies and which is driven by the ambition to integrate the study of mediated cultures with questions of geography. Texture, according to Jansson, refers to “the communicative fabric of space” (194) and its analysis enables us to “understand urban space in a way that captures its communicative density, but at the same time allows us to point out more durable socio-material structures” (2006, 24). Following Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma (2002), he argues textures produce and are the effect of particular “cultures of circulation” (25).

Jansson’s conceptualization of texture is descriptive in the sense that it sensitizes attention to the communication-space nexus, but does not tie in with an explanatory social theory. This is typical for the ethnographic research strand that has occasionally adopted this notion as a heuristic tool and which has been highly attuned to the complexity, breadth and ambivalences of urban narratives, media and modes of communication (see, for example, Adams *et al.* (2001) and Lindner (2006)). In doing so, it offers an important decentralization of the political economic concern with communication as an instrumental act (communication as linked to the value form and political form). The following dimensions are important in this regard. First of all, urban textures are not simply semiotic traces of processes of regulation and accumulation as conceptualized by the regulation approach, but instead the result of the interaction of many networks. Henri Lefebvre — although certainly not an ethnographer, but a Marxist philosopher attentive to the complexity of the urban — perhaps understood this most clearly

when he argued that textures resemble above all networks or webs (1991, 118 and 222) that are “open on all sides to the strange and the foreign, to the threatening and the propitious, to friend and foe” (118). Second, textures might involve spatial manifestations, but they are also products of time. As argued by Gerald D. Suttles (1984), it is important to recognize the “time depth” (284) of local urban cultures, since these cultures do not simply emerge out of nowhere, but are the result of processes of variable duration. Although Suttles surely overestimated the coherency of the local, his comments enable us to understand the urban as “the site where multiple temporalities collide” (Crang 2001, 189) without losing out of sight the social, physical and material constraints through which these temporalities operate. The city, after all, is always both: becoming but also being, movement as well as stasis, circulation as well as sedimentation. Third — and this is where the ethnographic literature has been less useful — textures need to be analyzed as phenomena of negotiation and social conflict. This is the Marxist lesson of Lefebvre that is often lost in subsequent appropriations of his work, particularly in Anglo-American scholarship (Elden 2001). It also informs, as I have argued in chapter two, Hall’s notion of authoritarian populism. Both authors attempt to grasp the difficult relation between state regulation, capital accumulation and the social in a materialist manner. In the case of Lefebvre, this leads him to rely on his distinction between representational spaces (which constitute lived spaces that are affective, alive and passionate) and representations of space (which refers to conceived spaces that involve ideology, abstract knowledge and instrumentality) to explain this relation. As he argues:

We may be sure that representations of space have a practical impact, that they intervene in and modify spatial *textures* which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology. Representations of space must therefore have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction — [...] as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which call for ‘representations’ that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms. (1991, 42; Italics in original)

Lefebvre, however, is famous not only for his brilliant analyses of capitalism and cities, but also for his often opaque and dense writing style. To understand, therefore, in more depth and precision how these ‘interventions’ occur, it is helpful to connect the discussion of texture to the debate on strategic selectivity of the state.

### 5.3 Strategic Selectivity

As has already been addressed in previous chapters, strategic selectivity is a concept developed by Jessop to analyze the ways in which state institutions privilege particular social forces in shaping the organizational coherence of the state and its role in regulating the circuit of capital. The focus of this chapter is on the discursive dimensions of strategic selectivity, but it is important to keep in mind that these discourses are always subject to the structural biases of particular state forms. Grasping this bias necessitates a discussion of the concept of *structural* selectivity. Jessop rightly criticizes this concept for prejudging the forms and effects of the state — instead of theorizing selectivity as an outcome of particular sociopolitical struggles and thus as strategic — but the concept still informs his theoretical and substantive research as well as most neomarxist approaches towards discourse analysis.

Structural selectivity as a concept is inextricably intertwined with the history of materialist state theory and the role of form analysis. According to this tradition (which is much more diverse and internally conflicting than can be presented here), the basic social forms in which social relations under capitalism objectify are the value form — expressed in money — and the political form — manifested in the existence of a state separated from society (Hirsch 2005, 24-25). The value form has been analyzed by Marx who starts from the peculiarity of capitalist socialization as characterized by wage labor, private ownership of the means of production, commodity exchange and competition. It is in the value form of commodities that these social relations of production are embodied but simultaneously obscured, since social relations are always mediated through commodities that are defined by their exchange value on the marketplace. Social relations, in other words, are abstracted onto the plane of commodities and it is only through the estrangement and fetishization of commodities that actors can now see and experience their own sociality (or as Marx put it: “[...] the mist through which the social character of labor appears to us to be an objective character of the products themselves”!).

The political form can partly be derived from the value form. Similar to Max Weber, it is argued that the emergence of the state involves the monopolization of physical violence over a certain terri-

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1 This quote is taken from <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm> (12.03.2008) and is an online version of the first English edition (1887) of *Capital*, Volume One, Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 4 (The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret thereof). The original German is less poetic: “[...] den gegenständlichen Schein der gesellschaftlichen Charakter der Arbeit” (Marx and Engels 1968, 88).



tory. In this process, a juridical space is established in which the direct use of repression in order to appropriate surplus value is no longer required, since this is now achieved through the exchange of commodities (which includes labor<sup>2</sup>). This explains the institutional separation of the state and the economy in capitalist societies and it is in this broader context that one needs to locate Claus Offe's argument concerning the selectivity of political institutions. According to Offe, the state performs a 'double protective function' (Borchert and Lessenich 2006, 18) for the capitalist economy: first, state institutions need to protect capitalist reproduction as such from the narrow-mindedness and conflicting interests of single capitalists or capital fractions; and second, they need to protect capital from anticapitalist interests and conflicts (Offe 1972, 65-105).

There is always a tendency in such an interpretation — largely associated with the influential German state derivation debate as represented by authors such as Offe, Joachim Hirsch and Elmar Altvater — to understand the state as functionally arising from the needs of capital, which is problematic: it effectively closes the theoretical system and ignores non-economic determinations on the political field. Countering this functionalist tendency has therefore been one of the main tasks of subsequent theorists. Thus, whereas the early Offe tended to emphasize the formal unity of the state in the production of selectivity, Nicos Poulantzas (particularly in his later work) took a much more ambivalent position. On the one hand, he emphasized the heterogeneity of state institutions and the ways in which the various 'branches and apparatuses' of the state are characterized by different ideologies and linked to diverse social groups and classes. Here he comes very close to and draws on the work of Foucault and adopts a notion of power as relational and dispersed. On the other hand, he simultaneously emphasizes that a 'general line' is imposed on these heterogeneous state institutions (Poulantzas 1978). Poulantzas is clearly torn here between Offe's structural understanding of selectivity and state power and Foucault's ideas on power and strategy, but he never really manages to explain how these two approaches are connected (Jessop 1985, 134).

It is at this point of the debate that Jessop makes his intervention and advances the concept of strategic selectivity. Instead of assuming that "somewhere in the state there is something which can somehow guarantee bourgeois class domination", he argues that Poulantzas "should have taken seriously his own idea that the state is a social relation" (136). In effect, what Jessop does is to move away from abstract theorization towards a more sociological

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2 See chapter six for a discussion of the ambivalent status of labor as a commodity.

meso-level analysis of the role of the state and social struggle in particular socio-spatial environments. He thereby acknowledges that neither the value form nor the political form in and of themselves produce cohesive institutional arrangements, but that these need to be given “a particular substantive unity and direction” (MacLeod 1997, 544). This broadens and re-politicizes the debate on materialist state theory by emphasizing socio-political contestation and the constructed nature of state projects and state strategies (for a discussion of this distinction, see chapter three). At the same time, the concept of strategic selectivity cannot be understood in its full depth without acknowledging this history of materialist state theory and the ‘older’ notion of structural selectivity. Jessop himself is quite careful in not pushing the constructivist argument too far and the form-analytical approach grounds his more substantive analysis. This does raise the difficult question as to how precisely the value form and political form concretize in particular state and economic institutions, but Jessop is understandably reluctant to confront this question, since leaving out the analysis of form altogether would endanger the unity presupposed by Marxist theory in general and regulation theory in particular.

More important for the context of this chapter is the observation that this conceptual shift from structural to strategic selectivity entails a stronger acknowledgement of the role of discourses in the processes of regulation and capital accumulation. The reason for this is that state strategies<sup>3</sup> are strategically selective in the sense that particular social actors are privileged in order to direct state institutions towards particular forms of intervention. These selectivities and forms of intervention are not only but also (and necessarily) discursive: they include representations of the past and future, legitimizing arguments and specific economic imaginaries. The Marxist form-analytical legacy still grounds such an interpretation, since discourses are always seen to refer to capital accumulation and regulation. No free-floating discourses here.

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3 Since the goal of this and the next section is the analysis of policy discourses concerning the creative industries, I will focus here on state strategies (that are aimed at socioeconomic intervention) and not state projects (aimed at providing state institutions with functional coherence).

## 5.4 Creative Industries Policies

After this brief discussion of materialist state theory and the status of the concept of strategic selectivity, it is now possible to move on to the analysis of policy discourses on the creative industries in Berlin and London. I understand these discourses to occupy the discursive dimension of a strategic selectivity aimed at sensitizing state institutions, the objects of intervention (i.e. those active within the creative industries) as well as other readers of these policy publications to: 1) the value and importance of the creative industries in the respective cities as an economic asset; and 2) the importance of supporting these industries in such a way that their economic potential can be fully exploited. At the same time, it is important to recognize that these discourses are never mere instruments in the promotion of the KBE, but always the effect of ambivalent and complex social struggles that are often quite specific to each city. Here I will focus on the most visible policy publications on the two cities and discuss the main discursive similarities and differences.

### 5.4.1 GROWTH OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

All policy documents on the creative industries are structured by one founding assumption. This is the assumption that creativity *will become* increasingly important in the emerging KBE. Every single document departs from this starting point; indeed, the current hype surrounding the creative industries is incomprehensible without this assumption, since it is propelled forward by the hope that creativity will save the urban post-industrial economies from their structural downturn (and the anxiety that this might not take place). In that sense, the discourse on the creative industries is very much a language of sorcery used to pacify anxious minds and conjure up cities of affluence.

In Berlin, most of these discourses are produced by actors associated with *Projekt Zukunft* (Project Future), which is a local government initiative “devoted to structural change which lays the foundations for an information and knowledge society”.<sup>4</sup> In London, most of the policy research has been undertaken by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and it is guided by the same assumption. According to their report *Creativity: London’s Core Business* (2002a), for example, we are dealing here with “a fundamental transformation of London’s economy” (5). As discussed above, urban textures

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4 Flyer Projekt Zukunft, *Creative Industries Initiative: Creative Industries Berlin* (2006). Also available online: [http://www.berlin.de/SenWiArbFrau/ProjektZukunft/inhalt/pdf/kuwi\\_flyer\\_e\\_2006.pdf](http://www.berlin.de/SenWiArbFrau/ProjektZukunft/inhalt/pdf/kuwi_flyer_e_2006.pdf) (12.08.2007).

are also products of time and utterances such as these clearly represent attempts to fix the temporality of textures: the future — in case we had any doubts — will unavoidably be dominated by information and knowledge. This temporal meta-narrative as such is still relatively weak in the sense that it only sets very broad discursive coordinates in which communication is allowed to take place, but it is substantively specified through the further elaboration on a number of themes.

The first theme deals with the growth of the creative industries and positions the creative industries as the economic avant-garde that will direct us to the future knowledge society. Since the emergence of this new society is unavoidable — due to this being assumed within the meta-narrative — the policy literature needs to represent the growth of the creative industries as a *natural* outcome of current social transformations. Linguistically, this often produces a strategy of “passivization” (Thompson 1994; 66) in which central terms and the processes they refer to are not connected to specific actors, but are instead passively constructed. Thus, according to London’s then Mayor Ken Livingstone, “[w]e are becoming more individual and more discerning. This process requires greater and greater creative content in the goods and services that we buy. Both markets and firms become more diverse and more focused on particular niches” (GLA 2002a, 1). Similar strategies of passivization are at work in Berlin, as the following quote illustrates: “an ever growing part of industrial production and economic value creation is knowledge-based”. This leads the authors to argue that “[t]he number of creatives is consistently growing” (Stadtforum Berlin 2006, 31). These are assumptions, of course, but powerful assumptions nevertheless and the virulence with which they have been promoted within policy circles has certainly contributed to the globalization of the creative industries discourse.<sup>5</sup>

Recently, however, this growth assumption is starting to be questioned more explicitly even within policy circles. Thus, London’s Creative Sector 2007 update takes a much more cautious approach, arguing: 1) that the creative industries declined over the period 2001-2004; 2) that they suffer from elastic demand and are therefore highly volatile to consumer demand and business spending power; and 3) that an important part of the creative industries is dependent on the private sector of finance and business services for its sales (GLA 2007). This leads the GLA to conclude that: “over a sufficiently long period, their [the creative industries] average

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5 For other policy publications on London and/or Berlin also referring to the likelihood or even unavoidability of a knowledge-oriented future and the growth of the creative industries, see: GLA (2004a, 73); Häfele, Lehner and Ratzenböck (2005, 3); LDA (2006, 15); Mundelius (2006, 1 and 184).

growth rate may not be higher than the rest of the private sector, but it does show that they are more volatile, and for this reason more vulnerable in periods of general downturn” (28). Ironically, this much more skeptical position is an effect of governmental pressure to come up with ‘evidence-based’ policy (i.e. policy backed up by statistical and quantitative data) in order to prove the importance of the creative industries in the first place. This position has often been criticized for being instrumentalist towards culture and typical of New Labour’s neoliberal politics, but here it seems that the quest for evidence has to an extent turned the discourse of growth against itself. It remains to be seen if this is to have any effect on the larger meta-narrative.

#### 5.4.2 CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS

A second theme in many ways qualifies the inevitability of growth and the future knowledge society by emphasizing the important role played by creative entrepreneurs in constructing and developing the knowledge economy. There is a clear tension here between the first (emphasizing teleology) and the second theme (emphasizing agency), which is never addressed by the policy literature. For if the knowledge society is unavoidable, why bother to act at all? We might as well sit back and relax. But if we need to act as entrepreneurs, how can one then argue that the knowledge society is our destined future? Clearly, there is a strategy of depoliticization at work here in which local opposition and alternative forms of socialization are ignored in favor of a unidirectional and one-dimensional future (Peck 2005, 751; Gough 2003, 63-64): the current promotion of entrepreneurialism is necessary for the emergence of the knowledge economy to become likely. This promotion takes place in relation to two levels: the individual and the institutional. In relation to the first level, the policy literature is characterized by a constant going back-and-forth between description and prescription. The following quote, taken from the 2005 creative industries report on Berlin, is typical in this regard:

The businesses and people engaged in the cultural sector are not lacking in potential and internationally competitive products; and surely they are not lacking innovative minds either. But financially they are sometimes set up inadequately and they do not have enough business-knowledge. [...] Moreover, there is in almost all subsegments a weakness in relation to international marketing. For these reasons, many small- and medium-sized businesses cannot take sufficient advantage of their growth- and internationalization opportunities. (Projekt Zukunft 2005, 107).

This quote contains both a description of cultural producers in Berlin (they are full of potential and produce internationally competitive products) as well as a prescription offering a rationale for more state intervention (there is a lack of finance, business knowledge and international marketing). It is this lack that inhibits these entrepreneurs to fully exploit their potential. The quote also gives further direction and 'content' to the notion of entrepreneurialism. For one thing, entrepreneurial activities are intimately linked to export-orientation and the internationalization of capital. Having positioned creative entrepreneurs at the forefront of this development, it enables policy documents to discursively add another temporal dynamic, which complements the broader meta-narrative of structural transformation and the emergence of the knowledge society. This is the dynamic of 'the real-time economy' (Hope 2006, 285-288) and involves the assumption that we are currently living in a global marketplace characterized by an economy of speed, global competition and high levels of flexibility and competition. Instead of criticizing this dynamic and pointing towards the socio-historical conditions of its (partial) emergence, the creative industries policy literature intensifies the dynamic by embracing it as a challenge. The 2002 GLA report probably expresses this most succinctly when it states that "[t]iming is the key to modern flexible service delivery; it is what the Creative Industries have to deliver" (GLA 2002a, 35). Not surprisingly, therefore, almost all policy documents identify the problematic access to finance and venture capital as one of the key obstacles to the further growth of the creative industries.<sup>6</sup>

In relation to the institutional level, the policy documents build on the prescriptive dimensions of entrepreneurialism and develop a variety of strategic discourses and technologies that can intervene in and regulate the economic sphere in such a way that the imagined knowledge society can become a reality. Again, there is a constant tension in the policy literature here, since it emphasizes that individualistic creative entrepreneurs with innovative ideas abound, while simultaneously arguing that this is not good enough and that state intervention in order to intensify these entrepreneurial activities is of absolute necessity. This is a clear example, of course, of roll-out neoliberalism as described by Peck and Tickell (2003) during which the earlier phase of dismantlement of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions is stabilized through the construction of neoliberalized state forms and modes of governance dedicated to the promotion of economic entrepreneurialism. These interventions — largely discursive at this stage, but increas-

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6 See, for example: Creative London (2003, 27); GLA (2003, 44); Projekt Zukunft (2005, 107); LDA (2006, 45-46); Projekt Zukunft (2006, 2).

ingly implemented in practice — are aimed both at the creative entrepreneurs themselves and at the institutional context in which they operate and from which they emerge. Thus, the policy documents emphasize the importance of providing services to the creative entrepreneurs that can help them to increase their business knowledge. This has been developed furthest in London and the GLA and other governmental institutions highlight the important role played by business skills and knowledge on all levels of development. For example, the Supporting Talent to Enterprise Programme (STEP) — funded by the London Development Agency (LDA) and the European Social Fund — has been developed in order to train “emerging talent” in London in such a way that it leads to “employment and enterprise opportunities” in the creative industries (LDA 2006, 43). The Creative Business Accelerator Programme focuses on fine-tuning creative businesses through awareness events and workshops so that they can gain access to finance and achieve high levels of growth. Also funded by the LDA, it is offered free of charge and operated by the Greater London Enterprise (GLE), an economic development company that is commercially run but owned by the borough councils.<sup>7</sup> The Creative Capital Fund provides capital investment and business support to entrepreneurs. Managed by AXM Venture Capital Ltd as a matching fund (the fund investment needs to be matched by private investment), the core funding of £5 million has been provided by the LDA and the European Regional Development Fund. And finally, the Cultural Industry Development Agency (CIDA) has a broader remit and deals with the typical UK-hybrid of business support and networking events, promotion of cultural diversity, access to culture, and urban regeneration.<sup>8</sup> Although many activities focus on communicating ‘practical’ entrepreneurial knowledges and funding opportunities as close as possible to the lifeworld of cultural producers, it is also argued that the shift towards a knowledge economy needs to have consequences for formal educational institutions, such a universities and colleges. To a large extent, this amounts to the argument that educational institutions need to be more attuned to industry-

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7 The GLE has a long history. It was set up in 1982 by the Greater London Council (GLC) under the name of the Greater London Enterprise Board in order to counter the loss in manufacturing jobs. After the abolishment of the GLC, the GLE membership was passed to the local boroughs. Thirteen boroughs each invested a long-term, non-interest bearing £100.000 loan in the company. On the basis of this public funding only, the GLE has worked commercially ever since and is an influential voice in the economic development strategies of the boroughs, while remaining outside the framework of public spending controls. See: <http://www.gle.co.uk> (13.08.2007).

8 See: <http://www.cida.co.uk> (13.08.2007).

relevant skills and adapt their curricula to shifts in demand (see GLA 2004a, 92-95). Creative & Cultural Skills — one of the 25 publicly-licensed but industry-led Sector Skills Councils in the UK — has been created precisely for this reason and intimately links skills and education to a boost in productivity and globally competitive creative industries.<sup>9</sup>

Within Berlin, the policy discourses concerning institutional interventions are similar to London, but less advanced. Most of the work so far has concentrated on increasing network opportunities and creating presentation platforms for the creative industries. Sponsored by Projekt Zukunft and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), [soklingtberlin.de](http://soklingtberlin.de) — a database referencing firms in the music industry in Berlin has been developed.<sup>10</sup> The website [CreativeCityBerlin](http://CreativeCityBerlin) replicates many of these data, but aims to offer an information platform on all sectors in the creative industries.<sup>11</sup> Projekt Zukunft also supports the development of industry-wide networks. In the meantime, organizations such as the Label Commission — dedicated to intensifying professional exchange between all labels in Berlin — and the Club Commission — an association of club owners oriented towards enabling communication between club owners and functioning as a point of contact to local councils and the Berlin senate — already fulfill to a large extent this envisioned role. The policy documents also point to the need to provide more entrepreneurial support in the form of developing business plans and coaching (Projekt Zukunft 2005, 112; Mundelius 2006, 200), but this has so far largely remained on a discursive level. A similar situation applies to the question of access to finance. The music industry as a whole is funded between 770.000 and 2.9 million euro each year — with the money deriving from the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (Projekt Zukunft 2005, 46). In contrast to London, however, there is no clear policy on the development of new financial instruments for the creative sector. But this might be starting to change: in May 2007, a first panel discussion on this topic was organized.<sup>12</sup> Finally, in the Berlin policy documents there is less attention to precise strategies towards formal educational institutions and their role in relation to the creative industries, even though German universities and colleges are undergoing a restructuration of their activities similar to the UK due to the globalization of a competitive education market.

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9 See: <http://www.ccskills.org.uk> (13.08.2007).

10 See: <http://www.soklingtberlin.de> (13.08.2007).

11 See: <http://www.creative-city-berlin.de> (13.08.2007).

12 [http://www.berlin.de/SenWiArbFrau/ProjektZukunft/themen/kultur/kulturwirtschaftstagung\\_2007.html](http://www.berlin.de/SenWiArbFrau/ProjektZukunft/themen/kultur/kulturwirtschaftstagung_2007.html) (13.08.2007).



After this analysis of the meta-narrative of creative industries policy and the two main themes — the growth of the creative industries and the central role performed by entrepreneurs — it now becomes possible to move on to the more specific patterns in these discourses. It is important to investigate these patterns, since, first of all, they show that the discourse on the creative industries is not homogeneous and, second, they constitute concrete utterances that can be criticized in a detailed manner: an immanent critique that turns the discourse against itself. At least four aspects are important in this regard.<sup>13</sup>

#### 5.4.3 MAPPING AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

First, the policy publications emphasize the important role played by quantitative data, largely by way of example: ‘mapping’ has become one of the most favorite activities within policy circles and the various publications are stock-full with data, graphs, figures and maps — “a policy wonk’s dream”, as Kate Oakley (2006a, 2) aptly puts it. However, these exercises are not only criticized from outside the policy community, but its limitations are increasingly addressed among the ‘policy wonks’ as well, even though much of this criticism tends to remain hidden in footnotes. One of the most important doubts to have emerged over recent years is that statistical analysis might be useful, but that the quantitative data on which one has to rely exclude important information on many of those actors one claims to analyze: the cultural producers. I cannot discuss this problematic of data collection here in much depth, but the following points have raised concerns. For one thing, all statistical research on the creative industries starts from a definition of creativity, but it has turned out to be rather tricky to offer a practicable working definition of this term. Whereas, the 2002 GLA report still defines creativity as the “capacity to produce customised products on a large scale to tight deadlines”, in the 2004 report this has been revised. Creativity is now called “the creative factor” and is understood to involve the “capacity to deliver customised products to tight deadlines from incomplete or abstract specifications” (GLA 2004b, 14-15). This is a productive shift of meaning, since it enables the GLA to include in their statistical analysis not only the creative industries as such and other industries in which creativity might play a role (this was already possible with the 2002 definition), but also to focus more precisely on creativity as a *factor* of

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13 Labor would be a fifth aspect that is also addressed in the creative industries policies. This will not be discussed here, but as part of the separate analysis of labor in chapter six.

production. In effect, this enables a decentering of what used to be understood as the future core business of post-industrial cities: the creative industries. Instead, as pointed out in the 2004 GLA report, “what may in the long-term be most notable are the creative industries processes involving innovation and customisation” (16). Creative industries policy, in other words, becomes a discourse in support of general industry restructuring. The policy documents on Berlin are still much more in thrall with the creative industries as such — using the definition to refer to book and newspaper publishing, film and television, art, advertising, music, theater, architecture and heritage, and software and telecommunication (Projekt Zukunft 2005), although it seems that the recent subordination of the creative industries under the ‘cluster communication’ heading (also including information- and communication technologies, postal services and polling and marketing research) involves a similar decentralization.<sup>14</sup> Also, not only has the detailed attention to questions of statistical analysis shown that the creative industries are actually capable of decline (as analyzed in the 2007 GLA report), the research has also discovered the problematic ‘fit’ between the data sources and the actors to which these sources are supposed to refer. Thus, in Berlin the data on the creative industries are extracted from the statistics on turnover tax (*Umsatzsteuer*) and the statistics on employment. The turnover tax statistics, however, only registers those firms with an annual turnover of at least 16,617 euro (Projekt Zukunft 2005, 10), which excludes non-profit cultural activities, publicly funded cultural institutions and a substantial amount of creative entrepreneurs due to their low levels of capitalization. The statistics on employment are based on those employees that are subject to social insurance contributions (*sozialversicherungspflichtig Beschäftigte*) and who work at least 15 hours a week or earn at least 400 euro each month. These data are combined with data derived from the Artists’ Social Welfare Fund (*Künstlersozialkasse*) in order to include other employees not registered by the turnover tax statistics and to include the increasing group of self-employed workers (Projekt Zukunft 2005, 10). Although an improvement, these statistics are incapable of registering those workers that are not accepted into the Artists’ Social Welfare Fund as well as the considerable amount of unpaid and voluntary work undertaken within the creative sectors. In London, similar problems apply. The data on employment are more sophisticated than in Berlin, which largely has to do with the complex notion of the creative factor in production adopted by the GLA. In effect, the

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14 See “Cluster Kommunikaton: Wirtschaftsdaten Berlin 2000 bis 2005”. Online at: [http://www.berlin.de/SenWiArbFrau/ProjektZukunft/inhalt/pdf/Cluster\\_Kommunikation\\_Berlin\\_Kurzfassung.pdf](http://www.berlin.de/SenWiArbFrau/ProjektZukunft/inhalt/pdf/Cluster_Kommunikation_Berlin_Kurzfassung.pdf) (14.08.2007).

GLA calculates three kinds of workers: 1) employees in the creative industries; 2) self-employed workers in the creative industries (these have been included since the 2004 update and at that time roughly increased total employment estimates by 10 to 20 per cent (GLA 2004b, 3)); and 3) creative workers outside the creative industries. The original source of the data is the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI), which is based on a sample of firms taken from the Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR), which in turn is compiled from tax records. Firms are obliged to register once they reach a turnover of £61000 (April 2006), although they can and frequently do register with lower levels of turnover.<sup>15</sup> Although these statistics apparently cover 99 per cent of economic activity and 2.1 million out of 4.4 million businesses in the UK, it is likely that the rate of exclusion in the case of the creative industries is much higher than average. The IDBR does not include data on types of activity particularly prevalent within the creative industries: self-employment, firms with low levels of turnover (except those that choose to register) and non-profit organizations. Although on the one hand this underestimates the actual amount of creative employees, at the same time it is likely that the statistics overestimate the economic value of the creative industries by only marginally including organizations with low and no levels of turnover. This bias is only partly compensated by also relying on the data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS; since 2005 the Annual Population Survey), which is employee-based and therefore does include self-employment.

#### 5.4.4 THE AMBIVALENCE OF PUBLIC FUNDING

Second, the policy publications are characterized by an ambivalent position towards the role of public funding for the creative industries. On the one hand and in line with the neoliberal impulse behind the meta-narrative, policy emphasizes that public support is needed *in order to* increase the economic productivity of the creative industries. For example, the London Cultural Capital report might emphasize the value of supporting creativity, but this is done above all out of a fear of losing out in the competitive marketplace: “[t]o keep a competitive edge, London needs to maintain its creative flair and readiness to break new ground. In an area dominated by self-employment and small companies, support structures for small businesses and to nurture new talent needs to be established” (2004a, 18). And in a report on the Berlin borough Pankow, Marco

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15 I owe this information to Alan Freeman, supervisory economist at GLA Economics. The registration threshold amount has been taken from National Statistics (2006).

Mundelius clearly operates with this instrumentalist notion of cultural subsidies, when he argues that the goal of public support should be to activate cultural entrepreneurs in such a way that they will be able to help themselves (*Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe*) through the production of market-relevant products (Mundelius 2006, 5-6 and 203). This instrumentalist understanding of culture also shows in the rhetoric on branding cities, which is supported both by the London and Berlin policy documents.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, there is an acknowledgement that the voluntary and non-profit sectors are important to cultural production and that culture as such — i.e. without linking it directly to economic development — plays an important role in the livability of cities (GLA 2004a, 196; Respect 2003, 19-22), even though most of these comments are scattered throughout the policy papers and subordinated to the larger project of economic innovation. The Berlin case seems to be slightly different in this respect. Maybe because of its relatively high levels of public cultural funding (almost three times as high as London or Paris (Häfele, Lehner and Ratzenböck 2005, 8-9)) — derived to an important extent from the federal government and which the Berlin Senate understandably wants to retain — there is an almost old-fashioned social-democratic emphasis on the value of culture. As the 2005 *Kulturwirtschaft* report describes: “[t]he production of culture, cultural activities and the support of cultural institutions is impossible without public support; in addition, charitable engagement plays an important role” (Projekt Zukunft, 107). Although this certainly does not lead to a disavowal of the economic role of culture, the rationale of the report is described more cautiously and neutrally as focusing on the interrelations between public cultural funding and commercially oriented firms in the creative industries (e.g. 3, 7, 109-110 and, specifically on music, 46-49).

#### 5.4.5 SPATIAL SELECTIVITIES

Third, the strategic selectivity of these discourses also translates into *spatial* selectivities, which ‘on the ground’ create their own problems and tensions. Building on Martin Jones (1997, 1999) and Jessop’s strategic-relational approach (as discussed in chapter two), Brenner (2004) has suggested that state institutions are endowed with distinctive spatial selectivities, which leads them to privilege certain spaces at the expense of others and to channel socio-economic activities into these privileged areas. Necessarily articulated through a range of policy instruments, these spatial selectivities

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example: Creative London (2003, 17); GLA (2004a, 17); Stadtforum (2006, 10).

also show up in the creative industries policies on London and Berlin. Most of these spatial selectivities are mediated through the notion of clusters — a term I already discussed in chapter four. Here I will build on this discussion and concentrate in particular on the discursive dimensions of the cluster debate. Not surprisingly, the policy debate surrounding clusters — also called cultural quarters or creative hubs — is strongly driven by a spatial economic logic, as identified by Brenner. Thus, both in London and Berlin creative clusters are seen as “the focus for investment and support” (LDA 2006, 30), a “rationale for investment” (Creative London 2003, 33), a way of “strengthening the strengths” (Mundelius 2006, 201 fn. 185) or as “strategic spaces” on which to concentrate attention and resources (Stadtforum 2006, 10). Whereas in Berlin, this spatial strategy increasingly seems to take on a de facto ‘revanchist’ orientation (Smith 1996) — for example, through the use of highly problematic notions such as ‘spaces of conquest’ (*Eroberungsräume*) (Stadtforum 2006, 36)<sup>17</sup> — in London there is at least a more explicit acknowledgement of the need for a spatial redistribution of creative industries throughout the city and the problems caused by gentrification and displacement.<sup>18</sup> For example, the aim of the GLA seems to be one of achieving equalization and distribution *within* a framework of economic concentration. Ten creative hubs have been identified and in some cases are being developed throughout London (LDA 2006, 30). The assumption underpinning this approach is that every borough can in principle benefit from “having a full range of cultural facilities and identifying what industry clusters, however small, have the potential to grow” (GLA 2002a, 50). Although to an extent this is surely a case of mismatched rescaling — the devolution of responsibilities to local scales without an accompanied increase in resources in order to effectively meet these new responsibilities (Miller 2007, 235-236) — there is funding attached to this devolution and since 2003, more than £50 million has been approved in these areas, around 50 % of which derives from the Creative Industries budget (LDA 2006, 30). There is also a repeated acknowledgement that gentrification might lead to exclusion of existing residents and ideas have been advanced to create “more sustainable property arrangements” (GLA 2004a, 140), but so far these have largely remained paper plans incapable of making any

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17 See in particular the next point for a further discussion of this issue.

18 I realize, of course, that there is a substantial amount of discussion taking place in Berlin on the question of gentrification, but these debates tend to take place outside of the main regulatory institutions concerned with the creative industries. See, for example, issue 323 (Oct. 2007) of the *Mieter-echo*, the magazine of the association for tenants: <http://www.bmgev.de/mieterecho/mepdf/me324heft.pdf> (31.01.2008).

structuring impact, which seems directly related to the fact that the GLA lacks the power to implement radical policy shifts due to its reliance on the central state as well as local councils. Despite these 'counter'-utterances, however, there is a strong sense in the policy papers that the meta-narrative of economic development overrules all other concerns. This becomes particularly obvious in those cases where the priorities of economic development and local concerns with livability clash. Intertwined with the development of creative hubs throughout the city of London, for example, is the attempt to designate — through London's Spatial Development Strategy (for which the Mayor of London is officially responsible) — many of the areas in which these hubs are located as Entertainment Management Zones (EMZs). These zones would be partly financed through a 'Business Improvement District' (BID) model in which private sector organizations — funded by a compulsory charge on local property owners — manage the organization of public services in the designated area.<sup>19</sup> The designation of an urban area as EMZ would enable the Mayor to prioritize entertainment activities and discourage "potentially conflicting uses" such as housing, unless "special precautions are taken by those developing such uses to guard against the effects of the problems that might arise" (GLA 2002b, 42). Although couched in a technical language, the rationale for this is purely economic, which becomes clear in the case of Westminster City Council, which tried to limit the growth of late-night entertainment in response to residents' complaints. Although sympathizing with the residents of the area, according to a report on late-night entertainment in London, "the Mayor must make sure that London's World City status is not compromised, and that every effort is made to minimize bad behaviour and the nuisance it can cause, without cutting back what should be an important and valued industry for central London" (GLA 2002b, v). Later on in the report the position is spelled out even more clearly: "[...] if there is major conflict between the Mayor's view and local opinion on a matter that directly concerns the World City, the Mayor's view should prevail" (25). It is striking to see how such a reification of the 'World City' status effectively disarms all local opposition and imposes a 'general line' (Poulantzas 1978) on all lower-scale governmental institutions. Such an objectification — assuming an unavoidable logic to this status, while ignoring its socio-historical constru-

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19 Unfortunately there is no space to discuss the literature on Business Improvement Districts and to highlight the problematic implications of this development, such as increased policing, privatization of public space, and the exclusion of homeless people. See: Steel and Symes (2005) and Ward (2007).

ction — is typical and shows up both in the London and the Berlin policy documents.<sup>20</sup>

Related to this spatial dimension of strategic selectivity is the narrative on affordable or temporary spaces. Both in the Berlin and the London policy documents, there is a repeated acknowledgement of the importance of such spaces for creative entrepreneurs to be able to experiment.<sup>21</sup> However, whereas in London the concern for these spaces is driven by the awareness that creative producers are constantly in danger of being displaced due to a fully privatized and competitive property market, in Berlin these spaces are seen as potential spatial technologies for economic development. In other words: temporary or affordable spaces in London are seen as an antidote to highly-capitalized businesses and in Berlin as a stepping stone towards these businesses as well as one method of stabilizing urban areas. Thus, the *Strategies for Creative Spaces* report on London mentions that “affordable workspace is caught between the objectives of property-led regeneration (residential and commercial) and the gentrification impacts which ensue, and the demand for start-up and rentals at below market rates” (2006, 22). This is partly, but insufficiently countered by non-commercial studio providers as well as the so-called incubator programs funded by the London Development Agency (LDA). The latter not only offer business advice (as discussed above), but also try to provide access to working spaces below market rates. Berlin has in recent years seen an institutionalization of the much older and established practice of appropriating empty property. The Berlin Senate has become increasingly interested in regulating these practices, since there is the hope that these “interim spaces” (termed *Zwischennutzung* in the German debate) can offer important “developmental impulses” to the larger “transformation process” of Berlin (Stadtforum 2006, 8). Real estate owned by the city (and marketed through its own property agent, the Liegenschaftsfonds Berlin) and private investors, but where it is unlikely that this will be sold or rented out in the medium- to long-term, are now increasingly marketed to cultural and other entrepreneurs at low to running costs (gas, electricity, etc.). Publicly funded mediators such as the *Zwischennutzungsagentur* institutionalize the contact between real estate owners and cultural workers.<sup>22</sup> The extent to which, in this process of institutionalization, certain actors are excluded is an important question, but

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20 See: GLA (2004a, 76-77); Projekt Zukunft (2005, 9); Stadtforum (2006, 19, 28 and 39).

21 See, for example: Creative London (2003, 18 and 28); GLA (2003, 42 and 44); Respect (2004, 60-61); Projekt Zukunft (2005, 111); LDA (2006, 21-23 and 33); Mundelius (2006, 201); Stadtforum Berlin (2006, 8 and 42).

22 See: <http://www.zwischennutzungsagentur.de> (18.08.2007).

would involve in-depth ethnographic research beyond the scope of this book project.

#### 5.4.6 THE DISCOURSE OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

Fourth, there is a huge gap in the policy literature between the support of the creative industries as a strategy of urban regeneration and social inclusion and the actual role of the creative industries in reproducing and even exacerbating exclusions along the lines of class, race and gender. On the one hand, the policy documents emphasize the important role played by the creative industries in promoting cultural diversity and social inclusion. This is particularly the case in London and the UK where economic competitiveness and social inclusion have been understood as overlapping and mutually reinforcing strategies — after all, New Labour’s ‘third way’ politics was developed on the basis of this assumption (Oakley 2006b). One therefore repeatedly comes across statements that “[c]ultural diversity is at the heart of creativity and innovation” (GLA 2003, 1) and that the “Asian presence within London’s creative industries is a huge asset, with the potential to improve the competitiveness of the sector [...]” (v). At the same time, there is an increasing acknowledgement that the creative industries are actually highly exclusionary — and even more so than the broader economy in which it operates. Although racism and discrimination are never addressed as possible causes for these exclusions<sup>23</sup>, the London policy documents do highlight quite explicitly that there is a problem of under-representation in relation to ethnicity as well as gender. Although the participation of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) employees in the creative industries has risen from 11 to 15 per cent between 1995 and 2004, this is still below their participation in the broader London economy (which rose from 15 to 23 per cent). Female participation actually decreased during this period from 42 to 37 per cent, paralleling and intensifying a decrease in the broader workforce from 44 to 43 per cent (GLA 2007, 44-45). The situation in the music industries is even worse: although female employees constitute (in 2003/04) 41 per cent of the total, BAME employees only amount to six per cent (GLA 2007, 54). Keeping in mind that the history and aesthetics of music and contemporary music scenes are unthinkable without the influence and participation of ethnic minorities, this is a depressing score. Reluctant to address causes, the policy documents tend to refrain from clear policy proposals as to how to address this prob-

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23 A minor exception would be Respect (2003, 15). Here the phrase “embedded racism and open discrimination” is used once.



lem. Nevertheless, it is identified as a problem, which is more than can be said of the policy work that has been undertaken so far on Berlin. Here, the priority clearly lies with the economic development of the creative industries – the questions of cultural diversity and social inclusion to a large extent remain separated from the policy debate on the creative industries. A pragmatic separation in many ways, it simultaneously highlights the fundamental class politics at work in and through the creative industries. In the 2006 *Stadtforum Berlin* report, for example, Richard Florida's notion of the creative class takes central place in the argument and effectively inherits the hopes which in the early 1990s were invested in Berlin's role as a 'service metropolis' (Krätke 2001). With so much hope invested in one economic strategy, it is not unlikely that a similar disillusionment will take place within the next couple of years. Below the radar of these shallow transformation strategies, however, the class politics of the discourse become obvious in those moments when agency is thematized: who is supposed to deliver these creative dreams? In Berlin, the main answer seems to be to attract as many creative entrepreneurs as possible. This is because Berlin can only develop if it can survive the competition for 'creative heads' (*kreative Köpfe*) (Stadtforum 2006, 39). Following Florida, these creative entrepreneurs are of course highly mobile and always on the lookout for those cities in which they can live their modern lifestyle that appreciates urban diversity, authenticity, identity and tolerance (31). The target audience, therefore, to which Berlin needs to cater is this creative class, which is further differentiated into three groups: the urban middle-class; the urban avant-garde; and "generally older people". The urban middle-class includes "traditionally well-off singles and couples without children", families that have made a conscious decision to live in the city as well as older people who "appreciate the classic bourgeois ambience" (39).<sup>24</sup> The urban avant-garde, on the other hand, is much more experimental and radical and interested above all in those urban areas and forms of housing that are incomplete and open to multiple uses. The group of older people is categorized as no longer interested in a quiet retirement, but instead as oriented around a "post-familial and post-occupational life phase". Finally, it is emphasized that there needs to be a clear strategy in order to increase property ownership among these groups (40). Resonating with this imaginary is clearly an ideal of bourgeois creativity, strongly tied to an actor connoted as middle-class, individualistic, cosmopolitan and white. This contradicts the other line of argument — also visible in the report, but subordinated to the more dominant theme of creativity — that Berlin is a

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24 The original German is: "Sie schätzen das bürgerliche Ambiente".

city of solidarity (6). Two points speak against this claim. First, the notion of creativity prioritizes those actors that are already structurally advantaged: a particular fraction of the middle-class as analyzed above. Throughout the policy publications, cultural diversity and migration is usually not understood as an integral part of the creative industries. In all fairness, however, it must be acknowledged that the downplaying of ethnicity in public debates is not specific to Berlin, since the reference to ethnicity as part of identity politics and affirmative action is much less central in Germany than it is in the UK. This, however, does tend to obscure actually existing social exclusions (as investigated by various authors. See, for example, Murie and Musterd 2004 or Caglar 2001). A second point speaking against the solidarity claim is the fact that the solidarity propagated is very much in line with a neoliberal logic of activation. Instead of acknowledging the structural inequalities in which actors operate and compensating for this through a politics of transfer, it is argued that such a politics needs to be rejected in favor of a strategy that enables actors to seize their own chances (45-47).

## 5.5 Variety and the Problem of Retention

For these creative industries policies to have a strategically selective impact on the urban textures produced by music networks (as well as their form and dynamic), they need to be implemented through interventions in the economic and social spheres. Analyzing this necessitates a shift of attention away from the policy debates to the discourses produced by the music networks, while retaining a grasp of the wider determinations operating on these networks. Here it is important, however, to acknowledge that the mere existence of music discourses that do not conform to the logic of the creative industries discourses discussed above is not in itself an indication of the limited structuration by the latter of the former. Authors in the cultural studies tradition often adopt such a position — for example, when celebrating the multiplicity of voices and practices in resisting dominant cultural imaginaries — but this ignores that the regulation of an emergent accumulation regime does not involve the regulation of *all* economic and social activities in order to gain and/or retain dominance. Strategic selectivity does operate on a wide *variety* of discourses, but involves a *selection* of particular discourses for interpreting events and legitimizing actions (as we have seen in the previous section). If successful, this selection can lead to the *retention* of these discourses and their institutionalization in organizational rules, the habitus of actors and the built environment, eventually enrolling these organizations, actors and

buildings into broader accumulation regimes and state strategies (Jessop 2004c).

These strategies, in many ways, acknowledge the path-dependency of socio-spatial development and the unavoidability of a “layering process” (Brenner 2004, 107), in which state strategies need to be articulated with older social-spatial structures. This means that strategies will often focus on promoting those older and well-established regulatory techniques that enable the reproduction of the capital relation, while simultaneously attempting to realign these with the emergent meta-narrative of the KBE. Considering that the previous dynamic of accumulation and regulation will have partly generated the characteristic texture of the social fabric (Maderthaner and Musner 2002, 874), it is to be expected that social actors — or, more precisely, the social structures into which actors are born and in which they are socialized — are ‘pre-formed’ in ways that enables the reproduction of the value and political form.<sup>25</sup> Actors and their everyday lifeworld, in other words, are already ‘statized’ and ‘economized’ before the regulatory state even undertakes specific interventions. This is true at least on the most abstract level i.e. in relation to the systemic features of capitalism: wage labor, private ownership of the means of production, commodity exchange and competition. These systemic dimensions underpin all capitalist social formations and as such need to be understood as a *longue durée* temporality. Lower levels of abstraction introduce more concrete and substantive historical and sociological structures and processes and thus focus on medium-term and short-term time scales (Brenner 2004, 17-23). It is important to emphasize these multiple temporalities, since the discourse on the KBE is not a fully new occurrence, but needs to be related to the underlying nature of capitalist social formations.<sup>26</sup> In the context of the creative industries (including music networks), the following features central to the reproduction of the capital relation have gained a certain stability over a longer period of time — although not necessarily a *longue durée* temporality, they do pre-date the current post-Fordist era — and are currently re-articulated to fit new requirements. As one can observe, however, this re-articulation is a highly contested process.

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25 To an extent, we are full circle here: from structural selectivity to strategic selectivity to structural selectivity, but the structural dimension has now ‘incorporated’ the accumulated effect of earlier strategic decisions.

26 This doesn’t necessarily relativize the regulation theoretical concern with different eras of capitalism, but merely emphasizes the underlying unity underpinning these eras.

### 5.5.1 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

First, intellectual property has for a long time played and still plays an important role in extracting value from music. As many authors have shown, copyright law — based on an understanding of a cultural object belonging to an individual author — has been central to the ownership of cultural commodities since the nineteenth century. The role of copyright law is to regulate a core ‘problem’ of public goods, namely its non-excludability and non-rivalry. Cultural commodities tend to act like public goods, since the act of consuming them does not decrease their value nor does it prevent consumption by other consumers (in contrast to food, for example). Copyright law responds to this problem by limiting the right to copy, thereby creating artificial scarcity (Hesmondhalgh 2002, 58) and, in effect, transforming public into private goods. Considering that one of the major objectives of creative industries policies is the continuation of capital accumulation, it is not surprising that these policy discourses emphasize the importance of intellectual property to creativity, even though this dimension is re-articulated in relation to the meta-narrative of the KBE. Thus, in a folder on the Berlin music industry, Peter Zombik, the director of the German federation of the phonographic industry, strongly argues for the prosecution of users of file sharing networks and ‘music piracy’ in general: “[i]n order to maintain the functional capability of the market, private duplications once again need to become a matter of exception” (Projekt Zukunft 2006, 6). The London policy documents adopt a similar line (e.g. Creative London 2003, 28), although it is simultaneously recognized that intellectual property is only relevant to those sectors “where origination feeds into a mass market in dissemination” and not to those based on “very short runs of product” (GLA 2004b, 15). In London, these discourses are institutionally implemented through an organization such as Own It, an ‘intellectual property advice service’ supported by the London Development Agency (LDA) and offering free advice on exploiting intellectual property through seminars, workshops and online information.<sup>27</sup> In Berlin, Projekt Zukunft has organized the conference Music Online Basics and published work on their website addressing this topic (Projekt Zukunft 2005 and 2006). As a local group of the nationally organized VUT (association for independent record companies, publishers and producers), the Label Commission is also involved in the organization of roundtables on questions of copyright and licensing among its members.<sup>28</sup>

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27 See: <http://www.own-it.org> (27.08.2007).

28 See: <http://labcom-berlin.net> (27.08.2007).

In many ways, these policy initiatives can be read as part of a discourse of crisis (Hay 1999), since they have emerged precisely at that moment in time in which capital accumulation through intellectual exploitation has become highly problematic and insecure due to processes associated with digitization (e.g. 'illegal' file sharing or sampling — see below). It needs to be recognized, however, that these policy initiatives do resonate with interests of actors within the various music networks. Many are interested in some form of intellectual property, since this is seen as virtually the only route to making a living with music. This is particularly the case for record label owners and distributors, since copyright, licensing and, in a wider sense, privatization are necessary for the financial sustainability of their business.

At the same time, the discourse on intellectual property remains a highly contested field and there are strong alternative narratives and practices produced by these music networks involving a much more open and public conception of music production, circulation and consumption. To a large extent, alternatives are developed through simply ignoring and avoiding copyright regimes. On a musical level, this involves the often-discussed practice of sampling (Bradby 1993; Schumacher 1995; Demers 2003), which is central to the sociality and historicity of many popular music genres, but problematic from the perspective of copyright law obsessed with attributing *individual* ownership to particular cultural commodities. A more recent phenomenon building on this tradition of sampling is the hybrid genre of mashups (or bastard pop), which combines samples of one piece of music with that of one or more other tracks from different genres in order to create something new (McLeod 2005). Although the genre gained its greatest popularity among an indierock and pop R&B audience in the early 2000s — producing hybrids such as The Freelance Hellraiser's "A Stroke of Genius" (combining the pop R&B of Christina Aguilera with the indierock of The Strokes) or Go Home Productions' "Ray of Gob" (mixing together Madonna and the Sex Pistols) — the widespread adoption of this technique would have been unthinkable without the broader shift towards a digitization of music (audio software as well as internet distribution). Genealogically, the genre can be interpreted as a further development of John Oswald's experimental compositions (termed 'plunderphonics' by Oswald<sup>29</sup>) and the more explicitly politi-

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29 Please note that Oswald's original use of the term plunderphonics referred to a composition based on sounds taken from the work of one single artist and nothing else. In later work, such as his album *Plexure*, which is based on around thousand short samples of various pieces of popular music, Oswald 'violates' his own definition, but the term plunderphonics is now

cal collage work by Negativland. The latter have always argued that their activities and the appropriation of music by other artists should fall under the fair use clause, which (in US copyright law) allows the limited use of copyrighted material without requiring the permission from the rights holders.<sup>30</sup> In Berlin and London, events such as Mash-Up Your Bootz (U5 Club), M.A.S.H. Up! (Mudd Club), Bastard (Asylum) and Uber (93 Feet East) present or have presented this music to a wider club audience.

Of more lasting importance, in my view, than these discussions concerning sampling and briefly fashionable genres is the broader fact that many actors operate outside centrally organized intellectual property regimes altogether. This applies, of course, to those artists that only perform in private contexts and limit the distribution of their music to friends and acquaintances, but it also includes those involved in the production and (free as well as commercial) distribution of mixtapes and white labels. Mixtapes (originally cassettes, but now usually CDs or MP3 playlists available online) contain a compilation of tracks, often mixed together by one artist. Not only does this enable DJs to show off their mixing skills, it is also a useful medium of connoisseurship: through the conscious selection of tracks and the juxtaposition of these tracks in a new order, an artistic signature is created. White labels are 12"-inch vinyl records with plain white label stickers that are used by DJs to test audience response in clubs before the official release. They are also used as promotional tools and sent to radio DJs and journalists in order to create a small hype surrounding the music. Both white labels and mixtapes often rely on tracks by other artists (as part of a mix and/or remixed) without having obtained legal permission, which makes these media officially illegal. Nevertheless, they can easily be bought or downloaded online and purchased at specialist record stores. Websites are too numerous to mention in any comprehensive sense, but can be oriented towards the global (such as Dogs on Acid or the Discogs forum), the national (such as the Future Music forum for Germany or the Drum & Bass Arena for the UK) or the regional and urban scale (such as Keepitrollin.de for Berlin or London Drum & Bass).<sup>31</sup> Most are focused on one genre or

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used in a much more encompassing sense to refer to music that is largely or completely based on samples.

30 See, for example, their book and CD *Fair Use: The Story of the Letter U and the Numeral 2* (Seeland 1995).

31 See: <http://www.dogsonacid.com>; <http://www.discogs.com>; <http://www.future-music.net>; <http://www.breakbeat.co.uk>; <http://www.keepitrollin.de>; <http://www.londondnb.com> (all last checked on 29.08.2007). Please note that the increasing role of internet distribution has made this distinction

closely related genres, such as drum and bass, breakbeat and jungle. The websites just mentioned focus on these types of music, but other genres actively represented with DJ mixes include dubstep, grime, house, trance, ambient, acid and techno. Stores such as Rotation Records or Hard Wax in Berlin and BM Soho or Phonica in London also sell white labels.

Those actors that explicitly engage with questions of intellectual property often exhibit a more politically reflexive understanding towards this issue. Two main lines of debate and practice (not mutually exclusive and often overlapping) have emerged over the last decade. First, actors have been enrolled in networks oriented towards the production of free or open source culture.<sup>32</sup> Activities so far have focused on: the development and use of open source software; the adoption of non-commercial licenses; and (to a minimal extent) the construction of open source hardware. These practices highlight the need for any critical theory to pay analytical attention to the materiality and 'objectness' of the social. Although Marxist theory (including the regulation approach) has always claimed for itself first place as *the materialist* theory, its reduction of objects to its function as commodities has tendentially led to a move away from the material dimensions of the social towards a non-materialist and even idealist form of theorizing (Pels, Hetherington and Vandenberghe 2002).<sup>33</sup> Its capacity to grasp the ways in which technological cultures are oriented towards, what Latour calls, ob-

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between mixtapes and white labels rather diffuse and these formats now increasingly overlap with other formats such as podcasts or online radio.

32 I am aware of the difference between 'free' and 'open source' in the context of new information and communication technologies. As Stallman (who is, of course, on the side of 'free' i.e. GNU) put it in one of his writings, "[o]pen source is a development methodology; free software is a social movement". See: <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/open-source-misses-the-point.html> (29.08.2007). For the purpose of the analysis presented in this chapter, however, this distinction is less important. I will therefore use 'free' and 'open source' as equivalents.

33 See, for example, Kirsch and Mitchell (2004). Although they offer a useful critique of actor-network theory (ANT), in developing their own position they fall back onto a Marxist discussion of 'dead labor' and the commodification of social life. The last thing I want to do is to argue against the important role played by commodification in social life — my analysis of the value form, of intellectual property (see above), the appearance of free choice as well as the institutionalization of capitalist relations in the built environment (see below) hopefully makes this clear. At the same time, in limiting their discussion of the materiality and objectness of the social to a discussion of dead labor, they dramatically impoverish their language and are therefore incapable of analyzing those object-centered actions not or only partially characterized by commodification.

jects as “matters of concern” (2004) is therefore very limited. Besides continuing the analysis of commodification processes, we also need to understand objects as channeling the “collective performativity of practices” (Mackenzie 2005, 77) that goes beyond their mere economization. As Adrian Mackenzie argues in his analysis of the free operating system Linux: “[...] Linux quite literally co-ordinates the circulation of specific social actions pertaining to information and communication networks. At the same time, co-ordinated actions centred on Linux constantly modulate it as an object in self-referential ways” (77). This is what we see happening within open source music networks in an analogous manner. Quite a number of actors, for example, program and use open source audio software. The basic assumption underlying open source software is that the source code is publicly available under a license that permits users to freely use, modify and distribute the software.<sup>34</sup> To take one example, a real-time programming environment such as PD (Pure Data) — based on the Max programming language and used for the creation of digital audio as well as audio/video projects — was originally developed by Miler Puckette, but is conceived as free software and is constantly extended by many other artists and developers. Similar to Linux, therefore, PD as a software object concentrates social action and acts as a matter of concern. For the purpose of the current analysis, the technical details of PD are less important than its social implications. Whereas copyright can be seen as a strategy of privatization through the control of objects, here we have a clear example of an object generating open communication textures through programming practices.<sup>35</sup> The resulting representative discourses, in many ways, challenge the language of individual achievement particularly prevalent within pro-copyright and creative industries policy circles: artists/developers constantly highlight the importance of PD as a ‘community effort’ and as collaborative work. Also important are the actual practices spawned by the existence of PD. Workshops focused on learning, collaboration and experimentation are regularly organized across the world. In London, this has been undertaken by networks such as GOTO10 and OpenLab. In Berlin, workshops on PD have been organized by xxxxx. Also, in 2007 the Technische Universität hosted the 5th

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34 Although it is still possible and allowed to make money from open source, this takes place through service revenue streams (e.g. packaging of software or customer support) rather than license revenue streams.

35 Ideally, of course, for in reality, these networks are still shot through with exclusions along the lines of gender and race. Also, the complexity of programming problematizes access to these networks. Nevertheless, in contrast to intellectual property, the intentionality behind these practices is one of opening up and not closing down communication flows.



International Linux Audio Conference, which included presentations on PD as well as other software.<sup>36</sup> Even on the level of actual programming, the social concerns structure practices. The aversion towards proprietary software has led programmers to emphasize PD as an open development model centered on the notion of extendibility: while the core of PD remains relatively stable, it is infinitely extendable by so-called abstractions, external objects or GUI (graphic user interface) enhancements.<sup>37</sup> Finally, PD is merely one of many free or open source software packages available. There are other programming languages (Csound or SuperCollider) as well as audio recorders/editors (such as Audacity or the more extensive Ardour), drum machines (Hydrogen), DJ mixing tools (Mixxxx), radio broadcasting (Campware) and other more specific software applications. Naturally, these are only a few examples and the rapidity of technological change will mean that software titles will disappear, whereas others will be developed in the near future.

The adoption of non-commercial licenses by those involved in music networks has been another important route towards the development of music textures more open to contemporary practices of exchange. Netlabels such as After Dinner, 4Four, Electronical or Essential Reload in London and Pentagonik, Pulsar Records, Yuki Yaki or Minlove in Berlin as well as hundreds of other netlabels worldwide release their music online on a non-commercial basis, often through the licensing scheme of Creative Commons (CC).<sup>38</sup> Festivals such as the Netaudio '06 in London and Netaudio Festival Berlin in 2007 bring together netlabel owners and artists, while simultaneously promoting their music to a wider audience.<sup>39</sup> It is striking, however, that the vast majority of netlabels operates with a CC license which — when it comes to the 'openness' of sound — falls back behind the achievements of mashups, mixtapes, white labels and most open source software. This is because the particular CC license adopted — captured with the phrase "Attribution-

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36 See, for more information: <http://www.pawfal.org/openlab>; <http://goto10.org>; <http://www.metamute.org/en/Give-It-All-Zero-For-Rules>; [http://1010.co.uk/xxxxx\\_research\\_institute.html](http://1010.co.uk/xxxxx_research_institute.html); <http://www.kgw.tu-berlin.de/~lac2007/index.shtml> (30.08.2007).

37 See the PD community site for more info: <http://www.puredata.org> (30.08.2007).

38 See: <http://after-dinner.net>; <http://netlabel.4four.org>; <http://electronical.org>; <http://www.essentialreload.co.uk>; <http://www.pentagonik.de>; <http://www.pulsar-records.de>; <http://www.yukiyaki.org>; <http://www.minlove.net>. The Numia Netlabel Yellowpages (<http://numia.scene.org>) list a total of 450 labels, but this is still incomplete (30.08.2007).

39 See: <http://www.netaudiolondon.cc> and <http://www.netaudioberlin.de> (30.08.2007).

NonCommercial-NoDerivs"<sup>40</sup> — promotes the non-commercial use and distribution of the music, but does not allow subsequent actors to sample or remix this music. It is not quite clear why most netlabels have selected such a conservative option (since more permissive CC licenses are available<sup>41</sup>), but it seems related to the continuing importance of a nineteenth-century notion of authorship that sees art as subjective expression. As we now know, this notion was intimately related to the institutionalization of copyright mechanisms that bestow to legal individuals the right to own and commodify cultural objects (Woodmansee 1994; Rose 1995; Marshall 2005). Even though this romantic notion of authorship is less relevant today, its long-established institutional mechanisms of ownership still permeate the contemporary social texture, even in those situations where restricted copyright laws do not play a role at all.

Finally, a third route oriented towards the production of free culture is the building of open source hardware. In the context of electronic music, this is certainly less developed than the first two routes, but of potential importance due to the technology-focus of many electronic music strands. In theory, the procedure is similar to the one adopted by open source software developers, but in practice there are some differences due to the specificities of hardware. Above all, there is a clearer distinction between 'documentation' and 'products' with the latter referring to the hardware and the first to instruction details such as circuit board layouts, mechanical drawings, diagrams and descriptive text.<sup>42</sup> Whereas open source software is in principle free (all one needs to invest is time) and fully within the digital realm, the components comprising the 'product'-section of open source hardware still need to be bought. Also, it is unlikely that each single component used will be open source due to the complexity of contemporary communication technologies, although work is being done on the design of open source CPUs (e.g. Freedom CPU or OpenSparc), graphic cards (Open Graphics Project) and complete computers (e.g. Simputer, OpenBook or ECB AT91). As Philip Torrone from *Make Magazine* points out, open source hard-

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40 See: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0> (30.08.2007).

41 The only netlabel I came across that did adopt a more permissive stance was After Dinner, which operates with an "Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike" license that enables the altering of open source pieces.

42 My distinction between products and documentation is derived from the TAPR Licenses. TAPR is a US organization supporting radio amateurs and radio art, but has recently developed a TAPR Open Hardware License (<http://www.tapr.org/OHL>) as well as a TAPR Noncommercial Hardware License (<http://www.tapr.org/NCL>) (30.08.2007) that can be adopted by the broader hardware developing community.

ware can be divided up into layers and each of these layers raises its own licensing concerns. These layers include the mentioned instruction details, a list of parts, the source code running on the microprocessor chip and the application programming interface (API — the source code that communicates with the electronics from a computer). In most cases, only some of these layers will be fully open source.<sup>43</sup> Open source audio hardware has been developed in a number of directions and one can now buy or construct open source MP3 players (Minty MP3, Daisy MP3, Sakura MP3, DSPdap), turntables that link up with Pure Data (Homemade MIDI Turntable), an open source reproduction of the Roland TB-303 synthesizer with built-in sequencer (x0xb0x) as well as an open source radio transmitter (OpenFM).<sup>44</sup> The concern among these developers with flexibility and extendibility of their hardware mirrors the interests expressed by open source software developers. At the same time, their experimental crafts-oriented focus overlaps with the underground tradition of circuit bending (involving the short-circuiting of low-voltage electronic audio devices) (van Heur 2005) and can be seen as part of a longer history of experimentation with media infrastructures, going all the way back to radio amateurs in the 1920s and 1930s (Haring 2007). In Berlin, open source instruments were discussed and performed at the mentioned Linux audio conference by the Spanish collective Recursive Dog, but other actors are of course also involved in the production of their own hardware, although not directly under the heading of 'open source hardware' (see, for example, Robert Henke's Monodeck I and II<sup>45</sup>). In London, a company such as Tinker.it organizes workshops on Arduino (a popular open source computing platform). Once again, others are involved in the building of hardware, but not directly (or not yet) linked explicitly to the open source label.

Next to these practices oriented towards the development of open source culture, a second more 'liberal' line of debate and practice does not so much advocate free culture, but aims for the development of alternative licensing models that reject outdated forms of copyright and licensing, but which still enable the payment of rights holders. The discourses here tend to cluster around glob-

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43 See: [http://www.makezine.com/blog/archive/2007/04/open\\_source\\_hardware\\_what.html](http://www.makezine.com/blog/archive/2007/04/open_source_hardware_what.html) (30.08.2007).

44 See: <http://www.ladyada.net/make/minty/index.html>; [http://www.teuthis.com/html/daisy\\_mp3.html](http://www.teuthis.com/html/daisy_mp3.html); [http://www.teuthis.com/html/mmc\\_mp3.html](http://www.teuthis.com/html/mmc_mp3.html); <http://dspdap.sourceforge.net>; <http://casainho.net/tiki-index.php?page=Homemade+MIDI+turntable>; <http://www.ladyada.net/make/x0xb0x/index.html>; [http://openfm.adaptedconsulting.com/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://openfm.adaptedconsulting.com/index.php/Main_Page) (30.08.2007).

45 <http://www.monolake.de/monodeck> (30.08.2007).

ally relevant themes as well as those that are partly specific to the countries (and the associated legal regimes) in which they take place. In Berlin, the monthly electronic music magazine *De:Bug* is an important source for journalistic information on copyright questions and articles as well as the blog posts are regularly devoted to open source culture, digital rights management and alternative licensing models. Contrary to the dominant policy position on copyright (see the Peter Zombik quote above), *De:Bug* has always been highly critical towards the criminalization of file sharing and the prosecution of its users, knowing very well that many of its readers belong to this group, while also being aware of the central role played by digitization processes in developing and transforming electronic music scenes, genres and aesthetics. Although digital rights management (DRM) — involving the use of technologies limiting access to the cultural object (such as encryption algorithms enabling the use on a limited amount of players or restricting the amount of possible copies) — occasionally received cautiously positive assessments<sup>46</sup>, the general line has been one of critique. The reason for this is that DRM is seen to obstruct the free transmission of music from one medium to another (i.e. from record to hard disk or from hard disk to mp3 player and CD), a practice central to contemporary music cultures.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, many of the contributing writers as well as readers do try to make a living from music and it is not surprising therefore that the magazine does not simply (or not only) advocate free culture, but also tries to think through the possibility of alternative licensing models. *De:Bug*, in other words, walks a thin line between opening up and closing down communication networks, which can largely be explained with reference to its structural position within these networks. Their position towards the GEMA (the German association for musicians' rights that collects licensing fees for music performance as well as reproduction) reflects this ambivalence. As Thaddeus Herrmann and Sascha Kösch succinctly put it: "the GEMA: in principle, a good

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46 See: Bunz, "Am Rande der Lizenzierung / Filesharing zwischen DRM & Pauschale", in: *De:Bug* 83, June 2004, 27; Herrmann and Kösch, "GEMA vs. IFPI / Musik soll sich wieder lohnen", in: *De:Bug* 83, June 2004, 28.

47 See some of the blog posts by Bleed that support the 2007 move away from DRM solutions among major music industry players: <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/drm-frei-im-preiskampf.html>; <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/internetradio-bald-nur-noch-fur-windows.html>; <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/drm-frei-apple-und-emi.html>; <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/drm-frei-yahoos-weihnachtsversprechen.html>; <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/steve-jobs-fordert-das-ende-von-drm.html>; <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/emusic-startet-in-europa.html> (31.08.2007).

thing"<sup>48</sup>. This does not, however, lead *De:Bug* to abstain from criticism and the problems identified are wide-ranging. The GEMA is seen as overly bureaucratic and as operating with an allocation formula that privileges the few well-known at the expense of the majority of small artists. It is also argued that it operates with an unrealistic notion of the internet: instead of acknowledging that the internet is an interlinked and fundamentally relational form, the GEMA pretends that "the net is a chain of firms that need to be held liable for breaching copyright law"<sup>49</sup>. Thus, it concentrates itself on prosecuting downloading sites, while simultaneously developing licenses for emerging technologies, such as podcasting, online radio and — somewhat obscurely — the presentation of one's own tracks on a personal website.<sup>50</sup> Bleed, in contrast, argues that the GEMA should consider copyright royalties on flatrate internet-connections. This still wouldn't solve the problematic allocation formula, but it would make superfluous the registration and control of thousands of sites and software solutions by focusing on the internet providers (a much smaller amount) based in Germany.<sup>51</sup> Although not mentioned by Bleed, such a shift in licensing practices would also make the copyright regime more public, since the impossibility of comprehensive registration (unless one opts for forms of control close to DRM, which raises highly problematic data protection and privacy issues) will necessitate the implementation of allocation formula that would either distribute the collected fees among all members of the GEMA or between different genres or categories of music. Important for the theoretical context of this book is that these examples show the need for Marxist theory and the regulation approach to engage with questions of intellectual property and copyright regimes on this level of concreteness, since a mere identification of copyright

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48 Herrmann and Kösch, "GEMA vs. IFPI / Musik soll sich wieder lohnen", in: *De:Bug* 83, June 2004, 28.

49 See: <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/tips-an-die-gema.html> (31.08.2007). The extent to which such a notion is unrealistic becomes clear the moment one takes a look at the actual flow of music on the internet. For example: an MP3-file can be stored on a blog, but through an RSS-feed a user can have this file automatically downloaded to his personal computer. Or: online radio stations such as Last.fm (accepting for the moment that this is a radio station) combine streaming music with music that can also be downloaded. One's personal profile at Last.fm can be linked to and automatically updated on other sites, such as the social networking site Facebook or on other websites.

50 See: <https://lizenzshop.gema.de/lipo/portal> (31.08.2007).

51 See: <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/tips-an-die-gema.html> (31.08.2007). There are similarities here with "culture flatrate" proposed by others, although differences are articulated as well. See: <http://www.de-bug.de/blog/archives/kulturflatrate-revisited.html> (31.08.2007).

as central to the reproduction of a capitalist economy is not enough. As this second 'liberal' line of debate shows, the current moment of crisis also opens up opportunities for shifting the logic of copyright *within* the system of copyright.

In London and the UK, there is no music magazine similar to *De:Bug* that addresses these questions in any depth. Although *Mute Magazine* reflects on intellectual property on a regular basis, it is only marginally connected to the analyzed music networks.<sup>52</sup> Discussion was generated, however, on a variety of websites and online forums concerning the implementation of the Digital DJ License. Developed by the Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL), a music industry organization involved in collecting airplay (incl. internet) and public performance royalties, the license 'allows' DJs to perform digital copies of tracks they might have legally bought as record, CD or download. Similar to the logic of the GEMA, a distinction is made between the media technologies on which the music is stored, enabling exploitation on a number of points in the creative process. In addition to the license fees already paid (by the venue) to be able to play recorded music in a public setting, an additional fee must now be paid by those DJs performing with a laptop or MP3 player. Even though it seems rather unlikely that this new license can be legally enforced, it generated discussion on a wide variety of websites with virtually all commentators expressing dismay at the implementation of this license.<sup>53</sup>

### 5.5.2 FREE CHOICE AND COMMODIFICATION

Second, the appearance of 'free choice' in consumption is central to liberal capitalism (Jessop and Sum 2006, 260), only to have been propagated more strongly with the current discourse on the KBE. Knowledge-based modes of production are embraced as the central route towards a future that reproduces the well-established belief in the formally free individual consumer in the marketplace. At the same time, it is further accentuated through the promotion of export-oriented production and a globally integrated economy.

In the case of the music networks under discussion, the central role played by monetary exchange relationships is hard to avoid, even on the basis of a cursory browsing of journalistic media such

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52 See: <http://www.metamute.org> (31.08.2007).

53 See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/4609378.stm>; <http://arstechnica.com/news.ars/post/20060116-5990.html>; <http://greatbearmd.livejournal.com/110625.html?#cutid1>; <http://www.pledgebank.com/djlicense>. For more information on the Digital DJ License, see the PPL website (<http://www.ppluk.com>) and the Digital DJ License website: [http://www.digitaldj.co.uk/paris/digitaldj\\_licence\\_popup.asp](http://www.digitaldj.co.uk/paris/digitaldj_licence_popup.asp) (31.08.2007).

as music magazines. Besides the obvious fact that electronic music producers (in the broad sense, i.e. musicians, but also record labels or distributors etc.) are central nodes in global commodity networks, these magazines communicate their commodities to a local, regional and global audience — in that respect, there is no difference between major conglomerates and so-called independents. Similar to other commercial publications, advertising revenues are next to subscription revenues an important source of income and music magazines in Berlin and London are therefore filled with adverts. Browsing through magazines such as *De:Bug*, *Groove*, *The Wire*, *ATM Magazine*, *DJ Mag*, *Knowledge Magazine* or *Straight No Chaser*, it becomes clear that around twenty to forty per cent of the contents are advertisements — related to music (music labels, events, record shops, distributors, technology) as well as the intended lifestyle (clothing, mobile phones and other gadgets). The differences between music magazines largely have to do with the selection of certain advertisers at the expense of others and not the acceptance or rejection of advertising as such.<sup>54</sup> Exceptions are explicitly non-commercial magazines such as *The Sound Projector* or online magazines such as *The Milk Factory*, in which advertisements are minimal or non-existent, but these are not as influential as the commercial magazines and (although certainly important for some) play quite a marginal role within the broader music textures of London and Berlin.

Besides actual advertisements, a second dimension of commodification becomes visible within the actual journalistic content: reviews of new music releases and music technology. A substantial part of all music magazines is devoted to reviewing the latest record releases; indeed, it could be argued that music networks are to a large extent unthinkable without this promotion and circulation of records (e.g. Straw 2002). If anything, these record reviews illustrate the by now inseparable intertwinement of aesthetics and commodification: although the discourse used is regulated by normative aesthetic conventions, reviews simultaneously — and through the use of aesthetic discourses — invoke the reader to buy the record. The review of new music software and hardware exhibits a similar intertwinement and, as Paul Théberge has argued, has led musicians to increasingly become “consumers of technology”, aligning

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54 Thus, *De:Bug* not only presents music-related advertisements, but also advertisements by clothing companies such as Carhartt, G-Star or Onitsuka Tiger, cigarette producers such as Gauloises or mobile phones from Sony Ericsson. *The Wire*, in contrast, focuses almost exclusively on music in their advertising. In both magazines, approximately twenty per cent is occupied by advertisements. This is much lower than the more ‘mainstream’ *DJ Mag*, which uses around forty per cent of its space for adverts.

“their musical practices with a kind of behavior akin to a type of consumer practice” (1997, 6). Wolfgang Fritz Haug has coined the term “commodity aesthetics” to describe this process of integrating aesthetics into the production, distribution and marketing of commodities (1986).

These processes of commodification, it must be added, are by no means merely regressive. On the contrary, it could be argued that the shift towards global forms of production has created opportunities for the development of a truly cosmopolitan culture that is no longer limited by local and national loyalties (Robotham 2005, 16). This is not a popular argument within many strands of leftist academic theory — bearing, as it does, too many similarities to liberal and even modernization analyses of global change — but the fact remains that contemporary individuality is constituted by a global sociality that has vastly expanded the range of experiences, practices and discourses available. The comment by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* concerning the ways in which the bourgeoisie has “rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life” while subjecting the countryside to the rule of the cities resonates — in all its ambivalence — with this argument.<sup>55</sup>

### 5.5.3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Third and more directly related to the urban is the regulation of capital accumulation through the built environment. Buildings such as bars and clubs are regulated through a variety of laws and controls, which potentially enrolls the built environment into the broader accumulation regime and state strategies associated with the KBE. In the previous chapter, I argued that the promotion of creative clusters is driven by this concern, but the regulation of the built environment also has consequences for the communicative textures of London and Berlin produced partly by the music networks.

It is on this level of analysis that actor-network theory (ANT) is very helpful, since it shows how the production and experience of music is a relational phenomenon: there is no such thing as an autonomous musical ‘text’ or an independent actor; both need to be seen as embedded within and a partial effect of various socio-technical networks. Changing one node within such a network will

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55 See: Marx and Engels (2002, 224). Please note, however, that there is a problem of translation. ‘Idiocy’ in the original 19<sup>th</sup>-century German (*Idiotismus*) not only had the current meaning, it also referred to a specific idiom as well as the original Greek word *idiotes* — a private person withdrawn from public life and isolated from the larger community.



have implications for and change (at least to an extent) other nodes. The concept of enrolment as developed by ANT (e.g. Callon 1986) captures this dynamic, referring as it does to the incremental coordination and alignment of (previously) separate entities with an emerging mode of regulation. Applying this heuristic concept to regulatory strategies of the local state, it becomes possible to analyze the regulation of buildings such as clubs, bars or galleries not as a neutral process, but instead as a highly political one in which these entities are aligned with the requirements of the emergent KBE.

This process of enrolment is particularly visible in the case of venues in Berlin, which is not surprising considering that Berlin has undergone dramatic socio-spatial change and a 're-introduction' of state regulation in the eastern parts of the city (such as Mitte or Prenzlauer Berg) since the fall of the wall. Many interviewees referred to (and perhaps idealized) this golden era of the early nineties in which everything was possible and where one could temporarily occupy a building and organize an event without permission from property owners or the local state. The increased regulation during the 1990s and continuing into the present is seen to revolve around two interrelated aspects: security and safety considerations and the shift from illegal to legal venues.

In relation to the first aspect, concern was expressed that the security and safety controls by local state institutions makes the continued reproduction of non-commercial and small-scale events difficult, since complying with these rules involves substantial financial investment. As Till Harter, owner of the 103 Club, acknowledged: "clubs naturally have to fulfill the security requirements like escape routes, fire control, fire alarm system, ventilation system, and smoke extractor, since no politician [...] wants to assume responsibility in case something happens. The requirements that stem from these security concerns are of course high and small club owners often cannot afford this" (interview, 26.01.2007). These (often understandable) security issues are not directly related to the regulation of capitalist social relations, but the financial costs that accompany its implementation do pressurize venue owners to increase income in order to recoup these costs. Also, there is a sense in which this institutional bias against non-regulated venues is further intensified by the (at least partially) adversarial relation between legal and illegal venues. Even though most venue owners acknowledged the value of informal and non-commercial initiatives that often take place in illegal venues, they simultaneously emphasized the need to legalize and regulate these venues, since simply condoning their further existence would involve a distortion of com-

petition. Olaf Kretschmar, press speaker for the Club Commission and owner of the Oxymoron club, expressed this most succinctly:

Having something like 50 or 100 people, that should be possible somehow. It isn't funny, however, to have an illegal club with 800 people inside. 800 people without an emergency exit is simply shit. That isn't funny anymore. It is also serious distortion of competition, since they don't pay taxes, no GEMA etc. – that makes no sense (*das ist halt Käse*). [...] The politics of the Club Commission is that these locations obtain a concession, that they try to do so, that these people register with the GEMA. (interview, 12.05.2007)

Such a stance means the Club Commission occupies a rather ambivalent position within the broader regulatory framework: although the commission can be understood as a 'bottom-up' initiative that represents large, medium-sized and small clubs — commercial as well as non-commercial — and with a wide variety of audiences, their support of legalization measures naturalizes this partial commercialization of clubs and overlaps with (or at least does not counter) the creative industries strategies of the Berlin senate oriented towards the economic development of cultural production. At the same time, it must be said, legalization does not simply cause the ecological dominance of capitalist relations; much remains possible, even within such a legal framework. In Berlin, the pressure to legalize has led many venues to apply for the status of association (*Verein*), which is a legal status indicating a non-profit orientation and membership-based audience. Although such a status does restrict the possible uses of venues, in practice it has enabled actors to continue many of their previously illegal activities within a legal context. An example would be the venue Zur Möbelfabrik (ZMF), located in the center of Mitte, which became a *Verein* after a few years of illegal activities. This was directly the result of pressure by the local state (on the level of the borough) and has led the ZMF to officially operate as a gallery space with membership lists and a social and non-commercial orientation. Within this legal framework, however, many of the earlier activities continue to take place. As Maarten de Jong of the ZMF points out: "the status of *Verein* is actually a form to enable things" (interview, 28.06.2007). Enrolment, in other words, of these venues in broader accumulation strategies remains precarious, even though the general trend is in the direction of increased state regulation.

Similar processes are visible in London, although illegal venues and events are less important (or, in any case, much less visible) than in Berlin. Interviews mostly focused on the impact of the Licensing Act 2003, which came into force in November 2005 and replaced previous separate licenses (largely on the supply of alcohol and entertainment) by one integrated license. One of the policy

rationales for this new license was to get rid of “red tape at a stroke”<sup>56</sup> and some venue owners indeed emphasized this reduction of bureaucracy as one of the main advantages of the new license. As Tammi Willis from the Ginglik venue in west London argued: [t]he main advantage is that what used to be lots of different licenses for alcohol and for entertainment have been combined in to one”. She also enjoyed the reduced costs (in comparison to earlier public entertainment licenses), the possibility to extend opening hours and the option of temporary event notices (TENs), which authorizes ad-hoc events without too much bureaucratic regulation (interview, 3.12.2007).

Others were more skeptical about the supposed benefits of this new license and emphasized the role of the license in promoting commercial entertainment at the expense of non-profit-oriented activities. As Jonathan Moberly from the Foundry venue in the Hoxton area argued: “[...] one of the things that annoys me about government legislation is that it just assumes that the only reason, the main motivation for making music is to make money. [...] It doesn't even enter into their frame of reference that people might do this not to make money”. Comparing the old regulations with the new license, he emphasized the increased regulation: “[...] the idea where there was a level below which you could simply get on with things was set into the law; under the new law there is no level, there is no minimum level of activity that you can do” (interview, 30.11.2007). Moberly refers here to the ‘two-in-a-bar rule’, which enabled event organizers to put on a performance with a maximum of two musicians without a Public Entertainment License (PEL). As a result, small venues merely had to pay for an alcohol license of around £30 for three years and could organize concerts without paying expensive fees (set by individual councils). Under the new license, however, this ‘two-in-a-bar’ rule has been abolished. As a result, the opportunities for non-profit activities to operate outside a licensing scheme (designed for commercial businesses) has been greatly constrained.<sup>57</sup> The only organizations exempted from the entertainment fees of the new licensing regime are places of religious worship, village and parish halls, community buildings as well

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56 [http://www.culture.gov.uk/what\\_we\\_do/Alcohol\\_entertainment/licensing\\_a\\_act\\_2003\\_explained](http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/Alcohol_entertainment/licensing_a_act_2003_explained) (5.12.2007).

57 There are still exceptions to the rule, but these have become less easy to identify: thus, ‘incidental’ music — i.e. music that is not central to the main event (for example, a band playing at an exhibition opening) — is allowed without licensing. Similarly, ‘spontaneous’ music — i.e. an audience member that suddenly starts singing — is also allowed. Both instances, however, cannot be advertised, since this would make the music either less incidental or less spontaneous than it is allowed to be.

as schools and colleges. This, of course, completely ignores the high level of non-commercial cultural activities within the broader cultural sector.

And indeed, there is a sense in which the license institutionalizes relative freedom and flexibility for event organizers, while simultaneously embedding this freedom within a framework that grants state institutions increased powers to intervene. Thus, the Licensing Act has a fourfold objective: to prevent crime and disorder; to ensure public safety; to prevent public nuisance; and to protect children from harm.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, however, it also propagates a compliance with copyright law and the payment of Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) and Performing Rights Society (PRS) licenses, even though this is in no sense directly related to the objectives of the Act. Apparently, the non-payment of copyright licenses is understood as a danger to public safety and a criminal offense. As described by the 'Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003'<sup>59</sup>:

Copyright law is intended to safeguard the livelihood of authors, composers, arrangers, playwrights, film-makers, publishers and makers of recordings and is extremely important and offences relating to copyright are made "relevant offences" by the 2003 Act. Conditions attached to premises licences should not require adherence to requirements in the general law that the use of copyright material must be authorised. Licensing authorities should however strongly remind applicants of the need to obtain Performing Right Society (PRS) licences and Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) licences and to observe other copyright arrangements; and that failure to observe the law in this area could lead to an application for the review of the premises licence or the club premises certificate on grounds of the crime prevention objective. (75)

There is a certain flexibility in relation to this enforcement of copyright law, in the sense that it is understood as an imposed condition — i.e. a condition that needs to be imposed only in those cases where the four licensing objectives are in danger of not being achieved — and not a mandatory condition. But it seems likely that the categorization of copyright infringement as a 'relevant offence' — which juristically links it to the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 — and the advice to licensing authorities to 'strongly remind applicants' to obtain PRS and PPL licenses will influence the licensing review process.

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58 <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/20030017.htm>, part 2, 4(2) (06.12.2007).

59 <http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/597B72E2-61BC-44AD-98D2-6BC7208FD740/0/RevisedGuidanceJune2007.pdf>, revised version 28.06.2007 (06.12.2007).

The integration and rationalization of various licenses into one overarching license, in other words, increases the possibility of state regulation. This integrative function is further pursued in the Licensing Act by linking the regulation of particular venues to the regulation of complete urban areas. This is achieved, first of all, by extending the amount of local authorities that need to approve licensing applications: from the police to the fire and rescue authority, the enforcement agency for health and safety at work, the authority for environmental health, the planning authority, the authority responsible for protection of children to the weights and measures authority (dealing with trading standards).<sup>60</sup> Each of these authorities can, in principle, question certain aspects of the application in relation to the four core objectives of the Licensing Act. This potentially increases the opportunity to exclude venues that do not 'fit' the envisioned function of particular urban areas on the grounds that they constitute a 'public nuisance', a central term that is left deliberately undefined in the Act, since it is argued that the existence of public nuisance needs to be judged by the local authorities. Second and within this regulatory framework, part eight of the Act significantly extends the powers of the police to close down venues that are causing disorder (i.e. that are obstructing the achievement of the four core objectives), are likely to do so "imminently" or that are a partial cause of disorder "in the vicinity" of the premise.<sup>61</sup> This temporal as well as geographical expansion of police intervention is further consolidated in the Act by enabling the police to actually close down venues merely for being "situated at or near the place of the disorder or expected disorder"<sup>62</sup>. In other words, this enables the police to close down all venues within a particular area that is seen to cause disorder. This amounts to a spatialization of 'danger' (Belina 2007) that abstracts from individual cases and that tries to regulate by collectivizing control. That said, it is important to remain aware of the limits set to this strategy. First of all, in order to close licensed premises in a geographical area, the police needs to get a court order. Second, the duration of the closure (both of individual venues and of multiple venues within geographical areas) cannot exceed 24 hours. Third, the identification of a disorder as "in the vicinity of" and related to the premise can always be

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60 <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/20030017.htm>, part 3, 13(4) (06.12.2007).

61 <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/20030017.htm>, part 8, 161(1) (06.12.2007).

62 <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/20030017.htm>, part 8, 160(1) (06.12.2007).

contested in the courts.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the powers of the police are increased — no matter how contested — and the Licensing Act 2003 makes it clear that it sees an important role for police regulation, not only concerning direct intervention (involving closures), but also in relation to the promotion of CCTV in venues, their participation in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).<sup>64</sup> Pushed to its extremes, this might ultimately lead to what Adam Krims has termed “integrated aestheticized space” in which music production becomes merely one moment embedded in highly regulated urban environments (2007, xxxi).

#### 5.5.4 THE DISCOURSE OF FLEXIBILITY AND CHANGE

Finally, the flexibility and constant change that is promoted as part of the KBE also emerges in the many discourses produced by the music networks. This temporal dynamic is one of the few dimensions that can be considered relatively new and not merely a re-articulation of older regulatory strategies.<sup>65</sup> The extent to which electronic and experimental music networks have adopted this understanding of temporality is — on the surface at least — striking and becomes visible in relation to: 1) the discourses surrounding the use of buildings (this constitutes in many ways the other side of the coin of the regulation of the built environment discussed above); and 2) the rapidity of genre change in the case of electronic music.

Most interviewees addressed the problem of temporary usage and the pressure to move out once more lucrative options for the owners of the buildings emerged, but the vast majority of them adopted a highly relativist and pragmatic position. Thus, one reason for working in a certain area was simply that the particular space was already used for a different job, thus enabling actors to cut costs. As one of the organizers/owners of the Delete Yourself events and Alt<Recordings label in London pointed out, “I didn’t choose to move here, but was offered free desk space in another organization as part of a consultancy deal” (interview, 20.09.2006). Others made clear that they did not even use a separate working space, but sim-

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63 <http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/1F29E260-DF43-4D98-BB92-86890846F505/0/Policeclosurepowersguidance.pdf> (06.12.07).

64 <http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/597B72E2-61BC-44AD-98D2-6BC7208FD740/0/RevisedGuidanceJune2007.pdf>, revised version 28.06.2007 (06.12.2007).

65 Of course, on a deeper level, capitalist development as such is characterized by temporal change, but I would argue that the discourse of change was very much subdued during the high era of Fordism - in which a relative stable social form was constructed.

ply coordinated their activities from home: “It’s not meaningful to think of *BM Bemused* as a location. I run the magazine from my home. ‘*BM Bemused*’ is just a mailbox” (interview, 13.12.2006). Both these comments came from actors based in London and not from actors in Berlin, which might reflect the stronger need to cut down costs in London due to high property prices.

Irrespective of the city, however, interviewees mentioned the importance of finding interesting spaces in guiding their locational decisions. In explaining this, however, they exhibited the extent to which they had internalized and naturalized the logic of processes associated with gentrification and urban change. Thus, in an interview with the Best Kept Secret agency in London, manager Nick Matthews adopted a narrative of aesthetic innovation to explain locational choice, thereby aestheticizing processes of urban change:

[o]ur residency and club nights have been focused in Shoreditch, which is the scene in London right now; where everything happens and cross-fertilizes and, I guess, sets the tone for so many other places to follow. It has been like that for a while and it feels a little bit that people have spread further into surrounding areas as well, like Hackney, Dalston, Clerkenwell, Islington and also Kings Cross, which was strong in the acid house days [...] (interview, 21.09.2006)

Others were more explicit about underlying causal mechanisms, but still accepted these developments, since their position allows them to profit from these changes. As I already pointed out in chapter four, venues and stores are likely to benefit from urban economic development due to the increase in visitors and residents with money to spend. Matthias Gordon, owner of the Leila M record store on the Rosa Luxemburgstrasse in Berlin Mitte, addressed this most clearly:

I mean, that this will become an expensive neighborhood is clear. [...] The property owner (*Hausverwaltung*), since they own half this street, can conduct serious neighborhood management (*Quartiersmanagement*). [...] That is, well, the usual method of gentrification. It is no secret how one starts gentrification. [...] For us, this is good. In the last years, we have ... we do better and better because of this development [...] since, first of all, there are more people here that have some money to spend (*die nicht jedem Euro umdrehen müssen*), since buying music isn’t cheap — 15 euro for a CD; they who haven’t got any money will download from the internet or burn a CD from a friend or something like that. (interview, 29.03.2007)

Whereas in London, interviewees regularly mentioned the importance of affordable spaces — for example, “I can afford it as it’s relatively cheap (Skull Disco interview, 12.12.2006) or “[...] by London standards, the rent isn’t extortionate” (Tirk Records, interview,

6.12.2006) — in Berlin, the comparatively low rents have led to a highly pragmatic stance towards urban space and a general feeling that it will always be possible to find affordable spaces, despite increasing rents in certain areas of the city. According to Till Harter (103 Club): “I believe that good clubs will always find a space. One could observe, when Prenzlauer Berg and Mitte became relatively closed, then clubs of course left; but here in Kreuzberg and Friedrichshain, where there are so many industrial wastelands [...]. There is so much space in the city, I don't believe that shortage of space will become a problem” (interview, 26.01.2007). Others did mention their reluctance to move to a different space, but mainly because this involved a lot of organizational effort and not because they feared they would not find a new space: “I don't see that there are no alternatives any more. But it isn't as fun as in the past. I don't like to move, in contrast to others; for that, I have too much stuff” (Ben Biel, Maria am Ostbahnhof, interview, 23.01.2007).

Second, on the level of aesthetics, it could be argued that the discourse of flexibility and change has left its marks on the practical engagement with the genre-system and has resulted in a ‘speeding-up’ of genre change. As other authors have pointed out, the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism has led to a more central role for forms of production oriented towards niche markets. Within the literature on flexible specialization, this has led to claims that we are seeing a move away from mass production towards crafts production, the products of which are efficiently distributed throughout the world as a result of new technologies enabling just-in-time responses to global shifts in demand (Piore and Sabel 1984). Others have rightly criticized this account on the grounds that it does not acknowledge the continuing importance of oligopolies and large-scale conglomerations (e.g. Hesmondhalgh (1996) and Krims (2007) for music). At the same time, when it comes to the music available, hardly anyone denies that we are witnessing niche marketing and a diversification of music genres. As Krims points out: “[i]n]ow, unlike twenty years ago, one can locate dozens, if not hundreds, of constantly mutating dance genres in specialized urban shops [...]” (2007, 98). Other authors have come to similar observations. Alexei Monroe, for example, argues that the experimental and minimal electronic music label Mille Plateaux needs to be understood as a “rhizomatic network” enabling progressive deterritorialization (2001). In an earlier article, Will Straw highlighted how the development of early electronic dance music involved a continuous shift and transformation in genres (while defending simultaneously a certain kind of coherence and collective purpose): electronic acid house of 1987/88 gave way to the garage house of 1988/89, which received competition from Italian house in 1990. Although briefly



displaced within popular music circles by the slowed-down Soul II Soul sound, Italian house re-emerged early 1991 (1991: 382). These genre shifts have remained central to electronic music networks up to this day, although it has become clear that the sense of collective purpose precariously fabricated in this earlier phase is now no longer existent.

In London, drum and bass — as one genre within the broader category of electronic music — has been highly popular, evolving out of the breakbeat hardcore and acid house and rave scenes in the late 1980s. In the course of the 1990s, dub, reggae and dancehall influences played an important role in the further development of drum and bass (sometimes under the heading of ragga jungle), although other experiments were pushing for styles less influenced by reggae, linking up with ambient music and including samples derived from soul and jazz music. From the mid-1990s on, techstep increasingly left a mark on drum and bass networks, drawing on earlier industrial and techno music and moving to more minimal and darker sounds. Its commercial position was overtaken by the emergence of UK garage, a genre also influenced by early jungle and drum and bass music, but one which had included more house and R&B elements along the way. More recent lines of influence can be drawn to genres such as speed garage, 2-step, breakstep, grime and dubstep. Berlin is often associated with being a techno city, but this ignores the high amount of differentiation and development within this genre. The transatlantic link between techno producers in Detroit and the Berlin Tresor club with its relatively harsh and minimal techno sounds as well as the impact of the Berlin Love Parade are often mentioned and celebrated, but behind these signature sounds many other genre developments have been taking place. Minimal techno — often substituting the harshness of Detroit techno for much more 'sophisticated' and stylish sounds — has played a central role in Berlin, branching off into various directions and linking up with other developments such as microhouse, glitch, clicks and cuts, lowercase, electronica and electro-acoustic music. These are merely two examples and other genre developments in these cities could have been discussed. But the main point has not been to participate in the often highly parochial scene discussions concerning the status and value of a particular sub-genre, but to illustrate the mere fact of the proliferation and constant transformation of electronic music genres. There are clear parallels here with the emphasis in policy discourses on the necessity of brief temporalities, flexibility and constant change, even though it remains impossible to detect one-to-one causal links between accumulation, regulation and networks.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has tried to analyze the semiotic dimensions of accumulation, regulation and networks as well as the interrelations between these processes. Similar to chapter four, it has been shown that a regulationist analysis needs to attend to the partial decoupling between regulation and accumulation as well as the emergent dynamics of networks if it is to be developed into a cultural political economy of contemporary socio-spatial change. Section 5.2 offered some first theoretical thoughts on how to contribute to this development by arguing that the notion of texture is a key term for research on communication geographies, since it directs our analytical attention to multiple, interacting and overlapping networks that need to be articulated with capital accumulation and regulation. Successful articulation or enrolment is by no means certain. In order to analyze, however, how these networks are selectively appropriated, section 5.3 focused on the role of strategic selectivity, in particular its discursive dimensions. Section 5.4 analyzed in detail the main creative industries discourses in London and Berlin and identified the most important narrative themes as well as its biases. Section 5.5 directed attention towards the actual music networks in order to analyze the strategically selective impact of these policies on the music textures. This selectivity is implemented – if at all – through particular interventions, largely by promoting well-established regulatory techniques that enable the reproduction of the capital relation, while simultaneously attempting to realign these with the emergent meta-narrative of the KBE. The following interventions were analyzed: intellectual property; the appearance of free choice and commodification; the built environment; and the discourse of flexibility and change. Although regulation does take place, this section also showed the highly contested nature of these interventions, which makes the enrolment of music networks into broader accumulation regimes and state strategies rather uncertain.

## 6. LABOR

### 6.1 Introduction

This third and final empirical chapter analyzes the role of labor dynamics in music networks in London and Berlin. Networks of aesthetic production are characterized by highly flexible and informal labor markets. Of particular interest here is how these networked labor arrangements are related to processes of accumulation and regulation. Following the main thesis, this chapter will argue that these processes indeed structure networked labor to an extent, but that one can only understand creative labor in depth by acknowledging the important role played by free labor. Once again, therefore, I want to emphasize the organizational specificity of networks of aesthetic production and the ways in which this contributes to the emergent dynamics of these networks that cannot be explained with recourse to accumulation regimes and modes of regulation.

The outline of the chapter is as follows. Section 6.2 complements the analysis of creative industries policy discourses as discussed in chapter five with a brief discussion of the representation of creative labor in these policies. It also offers a preliminary critique of this discourse on the basis of the argument developed so far. At the same time, it is clear that the realities of creative labor do partly match the imaginaries of creative industries policies. In order to address these similarities, section 6.3 highlights entrepreneurial logics — that can be interpreted as typical for the shift towards a KBE — among music workers. Section 6.4 analyzes the constitutive role of free labor in reproducing music networks and emphasizes the double-edged nature of this reservoir of non-remunerated labor: on the one hand, it directs creative industries labor towards precarization and exploitation; on the other hand, it is the inclusion of free labor that ensures the reproduction and emergence of non-capitalist relations. Section 6.5 further reflects on the implications of free labor for the theorization of the creative industries by drawing on debates within the tradition of (post-) operaism, since it is this tradition that has produced the most exciting analyses of free

labor. At the same time, this closing section points to a number of fundamental problems in these analyses through a critique of the real subsumption thesis.

## 6.2 Policy Discourses

In chapter five, I already analyzed in-depth the creative industries policies in Berlin and London with the conscious exception of the debates on creative labor — this is discussed in this section. The promotion of creative labor is central to the policy discourses and in line with the broader focus on the creative industries: it can be understood as a fifth meso-theme (next to ‘quantitative data and mapping’, ‘ambivalence of public funding’, ‘spatial selectivities’ and ‘the discourse of social inclusion’) within the broader meta-narrative on the emergence of the KBE. The promotion of creative industries labor needs to be understood as emanating from the centrality of entrepreneurs in the economic imaginary of the KBE and thus reproduces many of its core features. This can be exemplified by the following two quotes. In London, according to a 2002 Greater London Authority (GLA) report, “[c]reativity is synonymous with experimentation. To innovate constantly, the Creative Industries must take constant risks; they must try out new products, new styles, and new ideas” (GLA 2002a, 32). In a 2006 report on the Berlin music industry, Bastian Lange comes to similar conclusions. According to him, the practice of “culturepreneurs” is not oriented towards a certain schema, but “only unfolds within constantly changing conditions”: “[t]heir entrepreneurial, biographical as well as socio-cultural actions represent a new style not underlied by a predefined script” (Projekt Zukunft 2006, 19).<sup>1</sup> Both documents adopt a fundamentally Schumpeterian understanding of entrepreneurialism as oriented towards risk and innovation and, in doing so, reposition the creative worker as the role model for the envisioned knowledge society. These and other similar writings, as Ulrich Bröckling has shown, are governed by a “semantic of total mobilization” in which the entrepreneur always aims for one step beyond the status quo (2007, 117).

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1 Even though Lange also emphasizes the important role of networks, this does not undermine the centrality of the free-floating entrepreneur in his narrative. In his argument, networks are not coherently related to accumulation and regulation, which leads to a somewhat ‘flat’ discussion of networks and, in the end, a methodological individualism in line with Schumpeter’s celebration of the entrepreneur. This limitation of Lange’s argument is less visible in his more academic work (see Lange 2007).

There are many problems with such an argument — both theoretical as well as empirical — and its deficiencies can be highlighted by relating it back to my own argument as developed in the previous chapters. First of all, it is problematic to implicitly conflate descriptive and prescriptive dimensions of creative entrepreneurs. This happens most obviously in the GLA quote above: from arguing that creativity is synonymous with experimentation, the authors quickly move to the argument that entrepreneurs *must* risk everything, turning experimentation into a social or even natural necessity. Second, it is one-sided to argue that cultural actors do not follow a predefined script.<sup>2</sup> As Lange acknowledges himself in his academic work, the individualization of society and the increasing importance of ‘creativity’ in social processes is not simply the result of the retreat of social structures, but can also be understood as an effect of political-economic restructuring: with cultural entrepreneurs seen as central to the economic reproduction of capitalist societies, creativity has now become a societal leitmotif (2007, 66-73). This more critical perspective re-places the free-floating entrepreneur in broader social processes and, by doing so, questions superficial accounts of creative labor. I discussed these broader social transformations in chapter three. Even on a more grounded meso-level, however — and this is the third point — the argument of script-less action, constant change and experimental conditions is problematic. As I have shown in chapter four, the embeddedness of actors in networks and clusters limits the flexibility of creativity in the sense that creativity needs to be understood as socially mediated through a variety of horizontal and vertical linkages and knowledge communities. Although this can contribute to economic innovation, it can also obstruct innovation due to the relative closure of these interactive spaces: the constant interaction between the same actors can also lead to so-called lock-in (Visser and Boschma 2004), involving a (conscious or unconscious) exclusion of other, possibly more innovative, actors and as a result a foregoing of economically relevant knowledge. Fourth and finally, the notion of the creative entrepreneur is too generalizing, lumping together under one label many heterogeneous cultural practices. It abstracts economic action from the socio-cultural processes from which it emerges, thereby ignoring the institutional specificities of the various creative industries sectors (and actors’ positions within each sector). In chapter four, I discussed some of these institutional specificities by highlighting the different positionalities of nodes such as record labels, venues, distributors or record shops in relation to the broader urban political economy. It is only by acknowledging these institutional

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2 Even though much depends on what one means by the notion of script and the extent to which a social phenomenon is predefined.

dimensions that one can come to grips with questions of power and in- and exclusion.

### 6.3 The Institutional Logic of Entrepreneurialism

It would be misleading, however, to argue that this is the only narrative on creative labor in the policy documents. Even though the strand on entrepreneurialism is clearly dominant, attention is also paid to the difficulties of making a living in the creative industries. Both the Berlin and London policy documents, for example, mention the volatile nature of the creative industries and its highly flexibilized labor conditions characterized by short-term contracts, high levels of self-employment and often low pay (despite high educational qualifications) (GLA 2007, 22, 28, 30; GLA 2004a, 167-168; Mundelius 2006, 42, 193). In many cases, payment is so low or infrequent that other sources of income constitute a necessary compensatory mechanism. According to a policy publication on the Berlin borough Pankow, only two third of all creative industries firms in the borough produce living wages for its employees. Many actors have second jobs (often in the service sector), but the continued existence of firms is also supported by family members, personal loans, patrons or bursaries. In the case of the music industries, bursaries are irrelevant, but supplementary income is derived from patrons (app. 4 %), personal loans (app. 32 %) and above all family support (app. 64 %) (Mundelius 2006, 52-53). Similar conclusions emerge from the London policy documents, in which it is not only mentioned that creative workers have seen a decline in relative earnings since the early 1990s (GLA 2004a, 167-168), but also that at any one time approximately two thirds of these unionized actors are unemployed (GLA 2004a, 167).

The problem with these policy doubts concerning the viability of creative labor is that they are not integrated into the broader narrative on the emergence of the creative industries and the KBE, but instead are identified as contingent phenomena that can be solved, either through individual effort and luck (e.g. Projekt Zukunft 2006, 15) or through the inclusion of unions and professional organizations in further developing the creative industries project (GLA 2004a, 171). More critical research, however, has argued that the precarity of labor in this project is not so much a contingent, but a structural effect of the shift towards the KBE and its associated mode of regulation. In the regulation theoretical literature, this has been identified as a shift from welfare to workfare (e.g. Peck 1996). Here, I want to focus on its more micro-political consequences and

analyze the shift towards workfare in relation to processes of subjectification. The following dimensions are important in this regard.

### 6.3.1 NATURALIZATION OF THE MARKET

First, on a general level, grounding the existence of and a priori to the activities of cultural entrepreneurs is a naturalization of the market. As Bröckling, arguing along Foucauldian lines, points out: “[o]nly when and insofar the market functions as the privileged space of societal integration i.e. insofar this is postulated, can the entrepreneurial self become the hegemonic figure of subjectification” (2007, 76). I have already shown this rationality to be central to the creative industries policy documents, but a similar naturalization of the market is visible among actors active in the many music networks. Naturally, this doesn’t mean that market interactions are the only mode of exchange used by these actors (as I have repeatedly shown), but there is a widespread belief in the relative neutrality of the market: it is seen as merely one mode among other modes of interaction. Even though journalistic writings and some of my interviewees divided markets into the well-established subcultural scheme of mainstream vs. underground (or well-trodden genres vs. more experimental genres) as a way of positioning themselves on the ‘good’ side of production, there is hardly an articulated adversarial attitude towards the market as such.

### 6.3.2 MARKET-MEDIATED INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY

Second, it is on this (often implicit) basis<sup>3</sup> that actors develop strategies closely matching neoliberal forms of subjectification. Complementing the naturalization of the market, for example, is an understanding of the self that is oriented towards individual autonomy achieved through the market. Often, this is communicated in aesthetic terms, in the sense that actors want to express their creativity and present this to a particular audience. Nicolas Chevreux from Ad Noiseam in Berlin expresses this most explicitly: “[...] it’s definitely aestheticist. [...] it doesn’t market to a niche and it doesn’t market to a country or to a style and whatever and it’s really, it’s really the label for the music I enjoy. [...] (interview, 26.01.2007). This, of course, does not contradict the involvement in various networks — on the contrary, networks are used as a way of achieving

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3 A basis that remains relatively uncontested, but not completely. My analysis of copyright practices in the previous chapter makes this clear. The next section on free labor also questions the completed nature of this process.

individual autonomy in the realm of aesthetics. Networks, therefore, play a double role. On the one hand, they enable the construction of a niche identity based on aesthetic preferences. On the other hand, they can be used by actors to mediate these tastes as a way of branding themselves or their organization. This becomes clear in the following quote, taken from an interview with one of the organizers of Alt<Recordings/Delete Yourself in London: “[...] we have close association with and appreciation for other people running labels on a similar level. We can pass each other tips about bands, we might find something great that isn’t suitable for Alt< but would work on e.g. Angular Records, plus recommend producers, engineers, studios, PR companies, etc” (interview, 20.09.2006). This quote subtly shows the simultaneity of building social networks (through contacting and recommending people) as well as developing an aesthetic identity (through excluding music that doesn’t really fit the profile of Alt<) that can in principle be marketed.

In that respect, the discussed music networks do not seem to be different from other cultural industries sectors, nor does the geographic location seem to play any decisive role in this regard. In the case of new media labor in Berlin, for example, Alexandra Manske (2006) has argued that workers hope to achieve a higher level of self-determination as well as compensation for societal instabilities through their market-mediated social position. Similarly, Gina Neff *et al.* (2005) have shown that a primary attraction of new media as well as fashion modeling work in New York City is the promise of “artistic creativity and self-expression — albeit in a commercial way” (315). And Angela McRobbie (2002) even goes so far as to argue that cultural workers have submitted to an ideal of individual achievement, in line with the meritocratic discourse of New Labour on the talent-led economy. It is important, however, to keep in mind that this process of market-mediated individualization is by no means complete or uncontested. As I have shown in the previous chapters, actors are embedded in social networks for more than economic reasons and many of their practices counteract or at least inhibit a dominance of entrepreneurial forms of subjectification.

### 6.3.3 INDIVIDUALIZATION OF RISK

The third point can be understood as the other side of the coin of the market-mediated promise of individual autonomy. As some authors have pointed out, the ideal of individual autonomy as propagated by governmental institutions is intimately related to high levels of labor flexibility. Pierre-Michel Menger has given the most concise summary of this intertwinement. As he argues:



The required flexibility of a project-oriented organizational form leads [...] to high frictional unemployment. At any point in time, the amount of available artists, managers, technicians and workers has to lie considerably above the amount of those actually employed in ongoing projects, so that the employees can unproblematically switch back and forth between projects that are highly diverse in content. In the light of this structural flexibility component, periods of employment and unemployment with or without social benefits entitlements alternate with phases in which those involved look for a new job, activate their networks and perform multiple activities in- and/or outside the cultural sector parallel to each other. (2006, 64-65)<sup>4</sup>

In the case of creative labor, there is evidence that this combination of individual autonomy and flexible labor arrangements has caused an individualization of risk among cultural workers. With this I mean that workers accept these conditions in which they operate and use individualistic explanations for their own performance within such a flexible environment. It is this interdependence that Foucault tried to grasp in his research on the genealogy of the modern subject in which “techniques of the self” interact with “techniques of domination”. The governance of people, in his view, is not simply based on domination, but instead is always composed of techniques that “assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself” (1993, 203-04, qtd. in Lemke 2001, 204). Actors, in other words, participate in their own subjection and subjectification. To illustrate this with an example from another study: in her research on new media workers in Austria, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK, Rosalind Gill (2002, 85) was struck by the dominance of individualistic and meritocratic discourses — even though workers knew they operated in an unequal reality, there was a profound reluctance to relate their own individual experiences (and their failures and successes) to this broader social environment.

Similar discourses are visible within the music networks I analyzed. For example, during an interview with Heiko Laux, the owner of the Kanzleramt label, he acknowledged that making a living with selling records had become increasingly difficult due to free downloading and the enormous increase in record labels, but the solution he offered to overcome this problem was highly individualistic:

I have quasi redefined the function of the label. This resulted in new rules. The brand is, in principle, indestructible, even when the hard copies would cease to

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4 Menger’s book originally appeared in French in 2002. My English translation is based on the German translation of the original, which was published in 2006.

exist, the name is still there, and I would still try to bundle the music and get to the point. Thus, the transition to this digital business can in principle be mastered. [...] One simply has to accept the permanently changing rules of the game and adapt. One has to be capable of adapting. (interview, 08.05.2007)

Although such a strong statement was rare, many actors adopted a comparable position, with statements such as “[w]hen you love what you do, you find a way!” (Possible Music, interview, 23.03.2007) not being out of the ordinary.

### 6.3.4 ACTIVITY AS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL IDEAL

And fourth, the shift towards workfare and more entrepreneurial forms of labor is accompanied by a normative shift in which activity as such becomes the new ideal: in the more extreme calls for more entrepreneurial engagement, the content of labor no longer matters; what matters is the dynamic moment of constant activity as the central route to economic development (Bröckling 2007, 125). In the case of the discussed music networks, this translates into long working hours, the blurring of the work-life boundaries and constant networking.

Long working hours are the norm within the music networks and interviewees regularly referred to their activities taking up more than forty hours per week. Thus, 93 Feet East, a venue in east London, is coordinated by two promoters and one online press officer, all of whom work “45+ hours a week” (interview, 22.11.2006). In another interview, the owner of Possible Music distribution in Berlin mentions he spends “most of the time here in the office from 9.30 a.m. to 9 p.m., not all days but most days” (interview, 23.03.2007). Not surprisingly, these long working hours tend to blur the distinction between work and life, with the demands of work colonizing the private sphere. At the same time, actors try to reshape their work to such an extent that it becomes more like recreation. This is closely related to the fact that most of these jobs emerge from previously established networks of friends and acquaintances and the job in that respect becomes a continuation of social interactions, but under the sign of capital. The following quote exemplifies this ambivalence:

[...] the reality that I spend most my life talking, consuming and reading about music; my girlfriend reminds me of this fact. The thing is you work in it but it's also your hobby and your escape, but in reality you are always kind of working, where the boundaries lie completely blur, you are always working, or never working depending which way you see it, and no doubt the reason why so many people want to work in the industry — it beats stacking shelves or factory work. But it can feel quite sad because the substance can be very little, in the

scheme of things, but exciting because we all love it so much. (interview with Sean Brosnan, Azuli record label, 22.11.2006)

## 6.4 Free Labor

Despite this high amount of working hours and the compulsive networking, many actors do not manage to make a living with work in music networks and need to search for other sources of income. This problematic points to the constitutive role of free, unremunerated labor in networks of aesthetic production. The following dimensions of free labor are central in this regard:

First of all, many actors simply combine their free labor within music networks with paid labor in other fields. One of the main biographical solutions to the structural problem of underpayment in the creative industries is — besides family support, loans and unemployment benefits, as discussed above — working in sectors that are more secure and stable. Thus, Sam Shackleton of the Skull Disco label works as a primary school teacher for twenty-five hours per week (interview, 12.12.2006). The two owners of the Seed Records label work for a satellite broadcaster (twenty-five hours per week) and an architectural firm (full-time), respectively (interview, 19.12.2006). Typically, these quotes are from people based in London and not in Berlin, which might confirm the suspicion that it is easier to make a living in Berlin as a music worker than it is in London due to the low living costs. With music production being such a precarious existence, however, many interviewees point out that earning enough income necessarily involves the combination of multiple jobs or projects with one job or project subsidizing another. This will not necessarily show in the statistics, but it is central to the organization of creative labor. Examples are numerous. Thus, next to working on Alt<Recordings/Delete Yourself, one of the owners also has two positions as an A&R consultant (interview, 20.09.2006). Thorsten Sideboard, the owner of the Highpoint Low-life record label, spends a few hours each day on label work, but works full-time at the music-oriented social networking website Last.fm as IT specialist (interview, 19.09.2006). Eric Namour from the experimental music event organizer [no.signal] mentions this project probably earned around 1500 pounds in 2006, but simultaneously emphasized that all income — if any — is re-invested in the production costs for forthcoming events. His main income is derived from a position within online music distribution (interview, 21.09.2006). According to the owner of the distributor Possible Music in Berlin, “I think the only way to survive is to have your fingers in a few different pies and don’t really focus on just one

thing" (interview, 23.03.2007). Label owners in particular address the enormous difficulty of making a living on the basis of selling records only: very often, the record release functions as a 'business card' through which more profitable ventures — mostly live performances — can be attained: "without the gigs the label wouldn't pay off; I am always happy when I have covered the costs" (Kanzleramt, interview, 08.05.2007). On this precarious level, free labor is central even to the reproduction of the commodity chains of album releases.

Second, free labor is also central to the structure of each organization or firm. Besides the cross-subsidizing of activities, an important role is played by free labor *within* each organization. On the one hand, this includes the acceptance that the work involves more hours than can be paid. An example of this would be the Vinyl Junkies Records store in London, which employs five people. In the interview, James K. Powell mentioned: "the revenue is shrinking, so we had to be more competitive and cut costs. Moreover, many costs are rising, such as rents, services and licenses." The result of this is that the five people each work between forty and seventy hours per week, only half of which is paid (interview, 12.12.2006). On the other hand, this refers to the inclusion of free labor through un- or underpaid workers such as interns or volunteers. Even many of the small organizations I interviewed mentioned the important role played by this category of workers in the functioning of the organization. Thus, Possible Music employs the owner, one part-time seller and two trainees, who tend to work from eleven am to six pm (interview, 23.03.2007). Tirk Records has one director, one part-time label manager and one unpaid intern, as well as a DJ agency with one full-time employee (interview, 6.12.2006). [no.signal] does not make any money for the coordinator and operates with volunteers on a project-to-project basis (interview, 21.09.2006). The *Sound Projector* magazine also operates as non-profit undertaking and is supported by a handful of contributing volunteer writers (13.12.2006). Similarly, the Zur Möbelfabrik in Berlin is run as a members club (*Verein*) and, although it does enable the main coordinator to make a living from the activities in the venue, most other workers work as volunteers. Venues that are larger and more commercially-oriented do tend to pay their staff, but most of these jobs are part-time and need to be combined with other jobs, financial support from parents or student loans.

## 6.5 Questioning the Real Subsumption Thesis

Other authors have also noticed this structural inclusion of free labor in creative labor markets. As Gillian Ursell (2000) has shown in the case of television production in the UK, the financial pressures as a result of the lowering of production costs and increased competition have largely been offloaded onto workers at the “entry points to the industry”: students working for free as part of their learning experience; young people working for low or no pay after graduation. Although some workers achieve a more stable and profitable situation, many do not and as a result there is a high churn rate as well as high levels of frustration among workers over-45 (2000, 814-816). The fact that music networks are, by and large, populated by actors in their twenties and thirties offers support to the speculation that a similar process of exclusion is at work in these networks as well. In the case of new media and fashion, Neff *et al.* come to a comparable conclusion and highlight the fact that “[a]spirating new entrants to the workforce spend ‘free’ time learning new skills for no pay in new media [...] and spend time getting their bodies ready for work in fashion modeling [...]” (2005, 318). And, in an earlier classic analysis of the cultural industries, Bernard Miège already argued that a “reservoir of workers” that are “ready to work without the need to pay them wages” (1989, 30) are central to the cultural industries and related to highly uncertain market conditions. Menger, in principle, continues, but radicalizes this line of argument, when he argues that these precarious conditions of employment are the precondition for a “complete competitive market” (2006, 64).

This explanation, however, cannot explain everything. It tends to ignore, above all, that the high amount of free labor investment constitutes not only a mechanism through which workers can be and are exploited, but also labor that is — as Tiziana Terranova has argued most persuasively — “willingly given” (2004, 94), since it offers actors the opportunity to participate in networks of pleasure, affect and collaboration. Not being paid (enough), in other words, also reflects a fundamental refusal on the part of actors to approach creative labor as a ‘normal’ job characterized by the sale of labor power. The regulation theoretical analyses of workfare are of enormous importance, but to understand the dynamics of creative labor in its full depth and complexity, one needs to integrate this account with an analysis of these normative practices of free labor. This, however, raises the following question: what is the status of free labor in relation to accumulation and regulation and how should one understand its normative claims?

### 6.5.1 REAL SUBSUMPTION AND THE GENERAL INTELLECT

Terranova positions her argument within the broader autonomist Marxist tradition (in particular the Italian strand of *operaismo* ('workerism')) and it is this tradition that has given the most interesting answer to this question. At the same time, it is characterized by a number of central conceptual flaws that limit the extent to which it can offer a coherent analysis of labor dynamics. In this last section, therefore, I want to critically discuss this tradition, relate it back to the empirical data on music and engage in an immanent critique of this theoretical framework in order to better understand the actual role of free labor in contemporary networks of aesthetic production. It is certainly useful and important to collect further empirical data in order to gain a better understanding of networked labor dynamics, but so is theoretical development. Also, this strand of autonomist Marxism has become quite popular as an analytical perspective from which to analyze the creative industries in general (Lazzarato 1996; Neilson and Rossiter 2005; Hardt 2005) as well as more specific sectors such as gaming (de Peuter and Dyer-Witheford 2005), advertising (Arvidsson 2007), the arts and curatorial work (Krysa 2006) or fashion (Wissinger 2007). Although I am sympathetic to these kinds of analyses of creative labor, they are hampered by conceptual difficulties. The focus will be on the strengths and weaknesses of this strand of autonomist Marxism when applied to empirical research and less on the evaluation of their exegesis of the writings of Marx, even though this is clearly central to this body of work.

For (post-)operaists<sup>5</sup>, labor is 'free' to the extent that it is through labor that workers can escape the dependence on the wage, their subjugation to commodity production and to capitalism as such. This argument is developed through an idiosyncratic re-reading of the writings of Marx. Interestingly, this re-reading is based on some of the more 'totalizing' as well as speculative dimensions of Marx's thought, namely the shift from formal to real subsumption and the emergence of the general intellect. Thus, in his writings, one can observe an historical narrative that posits a tendential shift away from formal to real subsumption. This shift is directly related to the expansionary and colonizing nature of capitalism, involving the increasing submission of social and cultural processes under the logic of capital. Formal subsumption, however,

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5 In using the term '(post-)operaists' or '(post-)operaismo', I follow Nunes (2007) and highlight the continuity as well as transformation between the original hypotheses of the Italian Operaismo movement in the 1960s and the later work (from the 1970s onwards), which both reflects on this earlier work and continues the theorization of labor in a politicized context.

is still characterized by a central ambivalence that is the result of the continuing structuring role of earlier traditions of labor process. This leads Marx to argue that the formal subsumption of labor under capital “is the *general* form of any capitalist production process; but at the same time it is a *particular* form alongside the developed *mode of production which is specifically capitalist* because the second involves the first, but the first by no means necessarily involves the second” (Marx and Engels 1993, 469).<sup>6</sup> By arguing along these lines, Marx wants to show that, on the one hand, the laborer becomes a mere “factor in the production process”, dependent on “the capitalist as a money owner” (470). On the other hand, however, capital can only appropriate and subsume under itself an already “existing labour process, which was there before its subsumption under capital, and was formed on the basis of various earlier processes of production and other conditions of production” (470). At this stage of development, in other words, the capitalist mode of production still needs to articulate itself with other non-capitalist labor processes, even though it is increasingly dominant. All this changes, however, with the emergence of real subsumption. The increased employment of machinery, the division of labor within the workshop, and the application of science to the production process lead to a “transformation of the direct production process itself, and the development of the social productive powers of labour” (472). The first part of this quote is clear: labor processes are no longer relatively autonomous from the capitalist mode of production, but instead completely subsumed under capital. In contrast to formal subsumption, labor has lost its particularity and is now merely a general form of the capitalist production process. The second part of the quote is more complex and pitched — as so many arguments in this debate — on a highly abstract level, but it broadly refers to the application of “*general* products of human development, such as mathematics, etc., to the *direct* production process” (472). Capital, in other words, integrates these general products — besides mathematics, also knowledge, the bodies and social skills of workers, technologies as well as other means of labor — into the capitalist production process, thereby reifying human cooperation as an achievement of capitalism.

The notion of general intellect is derived from this historical-theoretical analysis and is central to the (post-)operaist analysis of labor. Marx briefly discusses this notion in a section of the *Grundrisse* (1973), often referred to as the ‘Fragment on Machines’. In reality, however, this is not a delineated section in the manuscript,

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6 I did not have direct access to volume 34 of the *Collected Works*. Instead, I relied on the Marx & Engels Internet Archive. See: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/ch02a.htm#469> (12.02.2008).

but refers to the last pages of a section called 'Surplus value. Production time. Circulation time. Turnover time' and the first pages of the following section called 'Fixed capital & continuity of the production process. Machinery & living labour'. To complicate matters, exact page references in the secondary literatures tend to differ, increasing or decreasing the total length of this imagined section.<sup>7</sup> However, irrespective of these philological issues, in this speculative section Marx tries to describe a generalization of production that further dramatizes his real subsumption thesis. Discussing the position of the means of labor — as one of the three basic factors of production (the other two being 'living labor' and the 'material of labor') — within the shift from formal to real subsumption, Marx argues as follows:

[...] once adopted into the production process of capital, the means of labour passes through different metamorphoses, whose culmination is the machine, or rather, an automatic system of machinery [...], set in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself; this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages. (692)

This horrific image of technological control presents the activities of workers as fully determined by the machinery of capital, a complete appropriation of living labor by objectified labor: “[w]hat was the living worker’s activity becomes the activity of the machine” (704). This machine, however, might no longer be dependent on direct labor input and time in the production process, but it is dependent on socialized labor on a more general level, since the reproduction of this complex machine depends on “the general state of science and on the process of technology” with the human being now cast in the role of a “watchman and regulator to the production process” (705). It is this level to which Marx refers when he mentions — only once — the notion of the general intellect (706). It is also at this point of the argument that Marx minimally ‘re-opens’ his totalizing framework to human intervention by emphasizing the economic consequences of this shift: the decreased need for labor time involved in direct production will subvert the capital-labor relation and “set free” (706) the superfluous workers (also see Dyer-Witheford 1999, 4). At the same time, the socialized labor needed to reproduce the machine subverts the machine from within, since this labor can now no longer be controlled by the exchange relation-

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7 The weblog ‘What in the hell...’ mentions references to pages 692-706, 693-706, 690-706, 690-712, based on the pagination of the 1973 English-language Penguin edition. See: <http://whatinthehell.blogspot.com/2006/05/23/is-the-fragment-on-machines> (26.11.2007).



ship. Instead, according to Marx, the reduction in labor time will lead to an increase in free time — understood as “both idle time and time for higher activity” — which in turn will lead to the transformation of “its possessor into a different subject”, who can then enter “into the direct production process as this different subject” (712). This way of describing social change is, of course, highly speculative and a sign of Marx’s idealism. Most problematically, it is symptomatic of an idealism that is profoundly non-sociological (and maybe even ‘non-Marxist’), since it no longer enables the analyst to identify the specificity of the capital relation and its structuration of socio-cultural and political processes. It is, however, precisely this moment within the work of Marx that is amplified through the writings of the (post-)operaists, with problematic consequences for their analysis of labor. The following dimensions are important in this regard.

### 6.5.2 INVERSION OF THE LABOR/CAPITAL RELATION

First of all, the (post-)operaismo literature builds on Marx’s ‘positive’ narrative by prioritizing labor over capital, thus inverting the classical Marxist labor/capital relation in which the latter is seen to impact on the former. Instead of analyzing labor as an object of capital, the worker i.e. the working class is now understood in a more active sense, namely as a subject struggling against capital. The reason for this shift of emphasis is political and activist. By shifting attention from capital to labor, (post-)operaist theorists hope to link up with workers’ struggles by offering a more ‘grounded’ perspective that starts from the contestation of capital and not its reproduction. Arguing from a (post-)operaist perspective, Nick Dyer-Witheford, in following Julie Graham (1991), criticizes regulation theory for downplaying conflict within capitalist society by taking as “its focus and ‘point of entry’ the requirements for capital’s successful organization of society, not the contestation of its rule” (1999, 59).<sup>8</sup> To an extent, I think this criticism is justified and it seems clear that the claims of the (post-)operaismo literature

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8 Please note that Dyer-Witheford regularly confuses regulation theory (or what he calls the ‘Regulation School’) with the much broader field of literature that analyses post-Fordism. Although at certain points of his argument, he does make this distinction (e.g. on p. 56), at other points of his argument these distinct strands are collapsed into each other by offering a rather generalizing and unfair critique. For example, Dyer-Witheford argues that post-Fordist analyses hardly pay attention to casualization and flexibilization of the labor force (p. 57-58). However, directing attention to this dimension of labor restructuring has been one of the main goals of regulation theoretical analyses of workfare (e.g. Peck 1996).

resonate more strongly with the normative practices of cultural labor, including music, than does regulation theory. Regulation theoretical analyses do start from the notion of capital and there is indeed a tendency within this literature to highlight the successful regulation of the capitalist economy within a variety of socio-spatial environments. At the same time, this is not inherent in the theory as such and much recent work (including this book) emphasizes the contingency of successful reproduction. Indeed, the central conceptual starting point of the regulation approach is that the reproduction of the capital relation cannot be secured solely through market-mediated exchange, but needs to be stabilized through institutional interventions. These interventions are not structurally determined by some logic of capital, but mediated through social conflicts.

The inversion of the labor/capital dynamic as undertaken by (post-)operaist theory, however, does create a number of problems of its own with negative side-effects for their analyses of free labor. One problem is that this inversion in many (post-)operaist approaches tends to lead to an 'externalization' of capital from the realm of labor (and this despite the simultaneous insistence on the reality of real subsumption, which is something I will discuss below). (Post-)operaismo identifies "two dominant modes of organization" within capitalism: capital itself, which tries to structure the working class according to its own image; and the working class, which tries to struggle against capital and develop its own forms of organization (Mandarini 2005, 195). Although an important drawback of such a line of argumentation is that it does not grasp the state as a third dominant mode of organization, it does at least acknowledge the mutual imbrication of capital and labor. The central notion of class composition further emphasizes this imbrication by including two aspects: technical class composition, which is related to what Marx called the organic composition of capital and which is best described here as the objective conditions set by capital; and political class composition, which refers to the ways in which workers turn the technical composition against capital by establishing cooperative relations among themselves (Mandarini 2005, 195). In actual analysis, however, this type of argument often leads to an 'externalization' of capital from labor — something that reaches its culmination in the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, 2004) with their promotion of immaterial labor and the multitude. As Nicholas Thoburn, referring to and quoting Negri, has argued: [...] insofar as the multitude tends towards autonomy, exploitation becomes increasingly 'external' and 'empty' [...]: 'capitalist power dramatically controls the new configurations of living labour, but it can only control them from the outside because it is not al-

lowed to invade them in a disciplinary way' [...]. It thus becomes increasingly unclear what exactly exploitation is (2001, 88).<sup>9</sup>

This creates many difficulties in actual analysis. On the one hand, it is surely correct to argue that labor — in the broad sense adopted by (post-)operaismo — is social to such an extent that it 'overflows' the exchange-oriented production process. On the other hand, however, one cannot ignore the simultaneous structuration of labor dynamics by capital accumulation as well as state regulation. Although Hardt and Negri might argue that the cooperative and communicative qualities of immaterial labor are "internal to labor and thus external to capital" (2004, 147; qtd. in Camfield 2007, 27), this completely ignores the extent to which accumulation and regulation inform the ways in which cooperation and communication takes place. Thus, the clustering of network nodes in certain areas of Berlin and London (as discussed in chapter four) is shaped by economic rationales as well as policy interventions (however contested). The organizational structure of these networks is characterized by vertical and horizontal linkages (also discussed in chapter four), the existence of which needs to be part of any coherent analysis, since they regulate the distribution of capital within the music networks. And as I have shown in this chapter, the music networks are shot through with entrepreneurial logics, exemplified by a naturalization of the market, a market-mediated ideal of individual autonomy, the individualization of risk and the blurring of work-life boundaries. The importance of free labor in these networks needs to be taken seriously, but it also needs to be put in relation to the market economy and its regulation, since these partly constitute the institutional context in which free labor operates and which regularly obstructs the actualization of its normative claims.<sup>10</sup>

Another problem produced by the inversion of the labor/capital relation is the dramatic enlargement of the class category. Within the (post-)operaist literature, class and class struggle, in effect, become a signifier for any moment in production that cannot be fully controlled by capital. This indeed overcomes the problem of distinguishing between a relatively coherent group of actors (i.e. "the working class") and other actors (as Dyer-Witheford (1999, 65) casually remarks) and has the important advantage that it enables an acknowledgement of the multitude of struggles existent across

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9 The references are to Negri (1994), 238 and 235.

10 This is also acknowledged by Terranova, when she argues: "[...] the existence of immaterial labour as a diffuse, collective quality of postindustrial labour in its entirety does not deny the existence of hierarchies of knowledge (both technical and cultural) which prestructure (but do not determine) the nature of such activities. These hierarchies shape the degree to which such virtualities become actualities [...]" (2004, 84).

the globe.<sup>11</sup> It raises the question, however, why one would one to call all these conflicts 'working class struggles' at all. There seems to be no particular reason for this, other than a celebration of one's Marxist credentials. In the end, the reality behind this notion is simply too heterogeneous and its use therefore almost inevitably leads to a denial of context specificity.<sup>12</sup>

### 6.5.3 IMMANENT TO CAPITAL, OR THE LIMITS TO CAPITAL?<sup>13</sup>

Second, the (post-)operaismo literature radicalizes Marx's notion of real subsumption by emphasizing the extension of the factory over society as a whole. As has been discussed above, Marx identified an increasing subsumption of labor processes under capital, leading to a situation in which society would be subsumed under an 'automatic system of machinery'. At the same time, direct labor time would now be displaced by labor on a more general level with the reproduction of the automaton being dependent on science and technology and social interaction — the emergence of the general intellect. Continuing this line of thought, Mario Tronti has argued that "[t]he social character of production has been extended to such a point that the entire society now functions as a *moment* of production. The sociality of capitalist production can now lead to a *particular form of socialization of capital* — the social organization of capitalist production" (1973, 105). By emphasizing the total infusion of social relations by capital<sup>14</sup>, Tronti and other (post-)operaists were able to criticize a neo-Gramscian perspective that emphasized the relative autonomy of the political (Thoburn 2001, 78). Capital, it is argued, has expanded to such an extent that all social action needs to be understood as immanent to capital. From a regulation theoretical perspective, this is clearly false (since the capital relation always needs extra-economic stabilizing mechanisms) and it can be criticized by focusing on the following points.

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- 11 As such, (post-)operaist theory needs to be seen as part of the broader shift in theory that has led to a greater sensibility to micro-political conflicts that cannot be subsumed under one singular logic or meta-narrative. This becomes most clear in Hardt and Negri's reliance on the work of Foucault and Deleuze.
  - 12 More could be said about this issue of class. Since, however, this book builds on a regulation theoretical account that focuses on capital accumulation – and not on class dynamics – this will not be further discussed here.
  - 13 The use of the phrase 'Limits to Capital' is, of course, a reference to Harvey (1982).
  - 14 But simultaneously emphasizing the social organization of capitalist production. This is the double-edged nature of (post-)operaist thought which continues Marx's original concern with real subsumption.

The double-edged dimension of capital — in which capitalist production is both seen as encompassing society as well as social in the first place — enables (post-) operaist writers to argue that the working class is both the “*internal component* of development and, at the same time, its *internal contradiction*” (Tronti 1971, 57, qtd. in Mandarinini 2005, 194; Italics in original). To an important extent, this makes sense and other writers have put forward similar claims. Karl Polanyi (1944), for example, has made very clear that labor needs to be understood as a fictitious commodity: it can be exchanged (which makes it a commodity), but it is simultaneously and a priori to this process of exchange a general capability of human beings. According to Polanyi, the tendency to treat labor *as if* it is merely a commodity is an important source of conflict and crisis within capitalist societies. (Post-)operaist writers would agree with this analysis of labor as a central point of conflict, but their totalization of the apparent immanence and ‘internality’ of these conflicts to capital falls into the trap of a reductionism that can understand labor only in relation to capital — and nothing else. This makes it nearly impossible to develop an empirically grounded analysis that can understand the actually existing differences between cultural practices, the ways in which these practices are part of — what I called in this book — alternative forms of regulation and how these alternative forms interact with more dominant modes of regulation and accumulation regimes.

Acknowledging these alternative forms of regulation would also allow the (post-)operaist tradition to escape the quagmire in which it now finds itself by emphasizing, on the one hand, the total immanence of all social relations within capitalism (i.e. real subsumption), but, on the other hand, the potential (and possibly even increasing) autonomy of workers. This has been central to the theoretical apparatus of (post-)operaismo from the very beginning — most obviously with their propagation of a refusal of work — but it has been emphasized more strongly by Negri (1991) in positing the ‘self-valorization’ of workers against the valorization of capital.<sup>15</sup> According to Negri, self-valorization is based on “the strength to withdraw from exchange value and the capacity to base itself on use values” (2005, 241). Although Negri is (mostly) careful enough to posit this as a tendency and not an achieved historical fact, it re-

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15 In contrast to Thoburn (2001), therefore, I am not so sure if Negri continues as well as “radically departs from operaismo’s project” (87). It seems to me that the tension between an analysis founded on the premise of real subsumption and an analysis founded on the potential autonomy of the working class is central to (post-)operaist thought, creating a whole host of analytical problems that cannot simply be attributed to the deviant development of Negri.

mains unclear, as David Camfield (2007, 35) has also pointed out, how this can be achieved within an era of complete real subsumption. Dyer-Witheford (1999) even goes so far as to argue that “labor does not need capital” and that it “can dispense with the wage” (68), but this is clearly wrong. Labor has become dependent on capital for its own reproduction — this is precisely the point of the argument that we live in a period of real subsumption: social relations have been restructured to such an extent that they are unthinkable without capitalism.

I would be very careful, however, to simply posit this existence of real subsumption as a general condition for contemporary societies. Clearly, the dependence of workers on capital does exist and this situation is unlikely to disappear any time soon. As my research on music networks has shown, many actors are dependent for their income on the sale of their labor power and/or the production and exchange of commodities. Also, the commodification of and naturalization of the market within these networks is hard to overlook. At the same time, sources of income outside of market-mediated exchange are of enormous importance. Without the structural support of parents, the cross-subsidy of cultural production by work outside the creative industries and the inclusion of free labor within cultural organizations, these music networks would not exist as such. The dynamic this generates, however, can only be understood by analyzing the relative importance of these different sources of income — capitalist as well as non-capitalist — on the actual practices of the various networked actors. In order to do so, however, one needs to acknowledge the often limited role of real subsumption in processes of production.<sup>16</sup>

## 6.6 Conclusion

This final substantive chapter has analyzed networked labor dynamics in relation to accumulation and regulation. Complementing the analysis of creative industries policies in chapter five, section 6.2 briefly discussed policy representations of creative labor. Section 6.3 analyzed the extent to which these representations matched the realities of labor in networks of aesthetic production, focusing on four dimensions of its entrepreneurial logic: the naturalization of the market; the belief in market-mediated individual autonomy; the

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16 In that respect, Vercellone’s (2007) recent argument that we are currently observing a shift away from real subsumption to a new form of formal subsumption is more convincing. Even this argument, however, runs the risk of totalizing the apparent reality of real subsumption under Fordism, whereas I would argue that real subsumption can never be complete.

individualization of risk; and activity as the entrepreneurial ideal. After this analysis of the relations between the three core concepts of this book, I then concentrated on the irreducibility of networks of aesthetic production to accumulation and regulation through a focus on the role of free and unremunerated labor. Section 6.4 highlighted the importance of free labor for the very existence of music networks. Not only do many actors combine their free labor investments in music networks with paid labor in other sectors, free labor is also central to the organizational structure of these networks due to the inclusion of unpaid overtime as well as non- or underpaid workers and volunteers. The regulation approach and other political economic theories have usually understood this in the broader context of a shift from welfare to workfare, involving the individualization of risk and the increased exploitation of the worker. This, however, ignores the extent to which this labor is often willingly given for a whole host of non-economic reasons. Section 6.5 tried to think through these more normative questions by relating the regulationist framework to (post-)operaist debates on labor.





## 7. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

### 7.1 Research Questions Revisited

This book has tried to offer a critical contribution to the growing literature on the creative industries and the KBE by focusing on the relations between accumulation, regulation and networks. In doing so, the overarching theoretical goal has been to further develop a cultural political economy of the KBE that takes seriously the cultural turn in social analysis, while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of capital accumulation and state regulation. Four research questions guided this book from the very beginning: to what extent, and in what ways, are network dynamics related to processes of capital accumulation and state regulation? If there are significant relationships, what are the forms of these relationships? Why do these relationships between accumulation, regulation and networks exist? And why can these relationships also be non-existent?

All four questions were addressed and answered in the previous chapters. After a discussion in *chapter two* of basic methodological questions, *chapter three* introduced the three main concepts of this book: accumulation, regulation and networks. Building on the regulation approach, I argued that each historical era is characterized by a particular accumulation regime, which needs to be understood as a complementary pattern of production and consumption that remains stable for an extended period of time. In order to stabilize these accumulation regimes, however, they need to be regulated through the support of a large number of rules, social norms, institutions, laws and policies, collectively referred to as the mode of regulation. During Fordism, the dominant patterns of accumulation and regulation could be understood as coupled on the national scale, but the crisis of Fordism has radically questioned this coupling, leading to a disjuncture between the spatio-temporalities of regulation and the spatio-temporalities of accumulation. The guiding narrative of the KBE offers a way of imagining and implementing new forms of regulation that can stabilize contemporary processes of accumulation and is therefore understandably embraced by state

institutions, even though it remains highly uncertain if this regulation will (or even can) be successful. Within this (post-)regulationist framework, networks occupy a rather paradoxical position, since they are understood both as producing crisis — since the proliferation of networks has provoked the crisis of Fordism — and as solutions to this crisis — since networks are seen as hybrid phenomena that connect states and markets, hierarchies and civil society in innovative ways. Retracing the process of theoretical model-building in the regulation approach, I argued that the notion of network tends to appear in the explanatory vocabulary in those moments when socio-spatial phenomena or changes cannot or can no longer be grasped by the adopted theoretical framework. Networks, according to this interpretation, are identified in order to investigate those processes that circumvent and transform older forms of accumulation and regulation. In that sense, networks are not only related to (and caused by) but also emergent from (and thus irreducible to) established accumulation regimes and modes of regulation. This necessitates, as I have argued, the development of a cultural political economy interested not only in causal mechanisms and structures, but also in the multiplicity of emergence.

Chapters four to six grounded these theoretical debates by concentrating on the case of music networks in London and Berlin. *Chapter four* focused on the dimension of location, investigating the relations between the spatiality of networks and the spatialities of capital accumulation as well as state regulation. By comparing the spatial assumptions of cluster theory with the spatial realities of music networks, it was shown that network dynamics are indeed related to accumulation and regulation, but that these relations are highly partial and uneven. Some nodes — venues and, to an extent, artists — are reliant on physical proximity for their economic survival, but this does not apply to most other nodes — such as distributors, record labels or booking agencies. Many actors embedded in these networks of aesthetic production are based in urban areas with concentrations of cultural producers, but their actual interactions are often highly flexible and transscalar and only partially take place within specific clusters. This questions the viability of regulatory attempts at promoting creative clusters, since the spaces of accumulation are, in this particular case, much more networked than clustered.

*Chapter five* further analyzed the relations between networks, accumulation and regulation by highlighting the dimension of communication. After a discussion of the notions of texture and strategic selectivity, I analyzed policy discourses on the creative industries in Berlin and London. These discourses were interpreted as the semiotic dimension of a strategic selectivity aimed at the

promotion and regulation of the KBE. In order for these policy discourses to have any selective impact on the communicative textures of music networks, however, they need to be implemented through interventions in the economic and social spheres. Four fields of intervention were investigated: intellectual property; free choice and commodification; the built environment; and the discourse of flexibility and change. Once again, the impact of capital accumulation and state regulation on actual networked music practices was shown to be highly partial and uneven. Although assumptions of free choice and processes of commodification characterized both the policy debates as well as the music networks, its importance is central to liberal capitalism as such and thus needs to be analyzed as pre-dating the current policy interest in commodifying creative production. Similarly, intellectual property has been defended by state institutions as well as capitalist businesses for over a century, but its current centrality to the regulation of the creative industries emerges precisely at that moment in time in which capital accumulation through intellectual exploitation has become highly uncertain due to processes associated with digitization. The built environment offers a slightly more successful method of regulatory intervention: both in the case of Berlin and London, it was shown that music venues were partly enrolled into broader accumulation regimes through processes of legalization, professionalization and securitization. At the same time, this enrolment remains precarious due to the organizational complexity of the regulated objects (the venues) and the emergent dimensions of the music networks. Also, the flexibility and constant change that is promoted as part of the KBE resonates with many of the discourses produced by the music networks. At the same time, it would be wrong to argue — as the policy debate on the creative industries tends to do — that this proves the entrepreneurial dynamics of networks of aesthetic production. Doing so amounts to a misattribution of causality (Sayer 1992) by attributing to capital accumulation what is, to an important extent, the effect of aesthetic debates and shifts immanent to the music networks.

*Chapter six*, finally, investigated the relations between accumulation, regulation and networks by focusing on the dimension of labor. After a brief discussion of the representation of creative labor in policy documents, I analyzed the extent to which music network dynamics are related to and shaped by accumulation and regulation. Four substantial dimensions were identified: a naturalization of the market; an understanding of the self as oriented towards market-mediated individual autonomy; an individualization of risk; and activity as the entrepreneurial ideal. These dimensions clearly showed the important extent to which music networks fit within the

broader shift from welfare to workfare, as theorized by regulationist authors. At the same time, however, such an analysis ignores the non-existent relations between accumulation, regulation and networks. In the case of labor, I argued, this is mediated above all through the particular instance of free and unremunerated labor. To an extent, free labor intensifies the pressures associated with creative labor. One of the main biographical solutions to the structural problem of underpayment in the music networks is the reliance on family support, loans and unemployment benefits or second (paid) jobs. Also, unpaid labor is central to the organization of music production through the important role played by interns, volunteers and overwork. This tends to lead to a downward pressure on income levels and a strong competition for the minority of paid work available. At the same time, however — and this is where the non-existence of relations between networks, accumulation and regulation becomes important — this economic account of free labor tends to ignore the fact that labor by most actors in these music networks is “willingly given” (Terranova 2004, 94), reflecting a refusal on the part of these actors to approach creative labor as an ordinary job characterized by the sale of labor power. Drawing on as well as criticizing (post-)operaist accounts of free labor, I showed the extent to which free labor is central to music production and needs to be incorporated into a sophisticated version of a cultural political economy of the KBE. Creative labor is not merely labor, after all.

## 7.2 Further Research Directions

Having started with a number of research questions, this book ends with a further round of questions, since the answers produced in the previous chapters raise a whole host of new questions that need to be addressed at some point. Four theoretical problematics seem particularly important:

First of all, this book has shown the need to further develop a cultural political economy that can do justice to the complexity of the KBE. Jessop’s post-regulationist approach is of enormous value and has provided the underlying theoretical structure of this publication, but his heavy reliance on the core concepts of accumulation and regulation is by no means unproblematic. Above all, by locating capital and the state on the root stratum (as discussed in chapter two and three), but all other social processes on higher levels of reality, it can only understand these processes in relation to capital and the state. This is a reductionist move that might be acceptable for a traditional political economy, but a *cultural* political economy will have to add other causal mechanisms next to capital and the

state on this root stratum of reality. Theoretically, this is a difficult task and I cannot predict how this project will develop in practice, but most likely it will have to involve a stronger recognition than is currently the case in the regulationist literature that the identification of levels of reality and associated causal mechanisms is dependent on the object of research. In this book, I made a case for integrating the debate on accumulation and regulation with the third core concept of network, since this sensitized the analysis to those dimensions of music production irreducible to capital accumulation and state regulation. Future research will have to investigate if this sensitizing concept can be usefully developed into one or more stronger explanatory concepts.<sup>1</sup>

Second, the version of cultural political economy as presented here grants much greater importance to the semiotic dimensions of social life than is common in (marxist and non-marxist) political economic theories. Although accumulation and regulation are theorized as core concepts, they can only be sociologically understood through an investigation of their mediation through particular discourses and institutions. These, in turn, constitutively shape and direct accumulation and regulation towards particular projects and strategies. If this is a useful way of thinking about capital and the state, then this does raise the question where these discourses come from. Neither the regulation approach nor its latest incarnation as cultural political economy have the tools to analyze these discourses, since they cannot understand how these discourses emerge and with what logics these operate until appropriated by particular accumulation regimes and modes of regulation. This skews the analysis, since a cultural political economy approach will tend to concentrate on those discourses that are involved in the reproduction of the value form and political form (or, at the most, in inhibiting the reproduction).<sup>2</sup> A more sophisticated cultural political economy, therefore, should be able to tell us how these discourses — in their irreducibility to capital and the state — emerge. This necessitates, in my view, a stronger acknowledgement of the sub-

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- 1 Although there are many possible 'explanatory concepts', in the case of music networks I would propose thinking through the role of 'aesthetic objects' in structuring music dynamics. Examples from other fields could include religious rituals, social events, ethical imperatives, the role of bureaucracy, etc.
  - 2 This bias is also visible in my own analysis of creative industries policies on London and Berlin in the previous chapters. My conceptualization of London and Berlin highlights underlying causal mechanisms and thus tends to reduce both cities to cases of accumulation and regulation. This seems acceptable from a regulationist point of view, but would need to be addressed in future analyses.

stantial extent to which actually existing as well as imagined political economies are socio-cultural phenomena that need to be analyzed as such.

Third, the concept of regulation is central to regulation theories as well as the current version of the cultural political economy approach, but its role in explanation is more slippery than one might expect at first glance. According to the Parisian regulationists, *régulation* refers to the processing and moderation of social relations in order to contain the inherent contradictions of capital. This is a macro-societal focus that directs attention towards core forms of regulation, such as the wage-labor nexus, competition and state intervention. Jessop's own account of regulation follows this regulationist approach, but translates it into a more consciously state theoretical framework: as a result, his empirical discussions of regulation tend to concentrate on state action oriented towards certain objects of regulation in the economic and social spheres. My own argument has largely followed Jessop's account, but has also tried to acknowledge more strongly the plurality of the social by referring to networks as alternative forms of regulation (that are not directly related to the state). After all the empirical research for this book, however, my own feeling is that this all-encompassing use of regulation too easily ignores important manifestations of disunity, decoupling and translation. Jessop, it must be emphasized, does address this issue by relying on theories of self-organization and the Luhmannian notion of autopoiesis, but his overarching argument is directed towards the ecological dominance of capitalism (Jessop 2002a, 24-28). At the same time, he consistently highlights the limits of capital accumulation and state regulation due to their interaction with a wide range of self-organizing systems, characterized by their own operational codes and institutional dynamics.<sup>3</sup>

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3 Thus, as Jessop (2002, 7-8) explains: "[...] in exploring the institutional and social interconnections between the economic and the political, I draw on theories of self-organization. My initial source of inspiration here was Marx's analysis of the self-valorization of capital, that is, capital's capacity to reproduce itself through the profitable reinvestment of past profits as it moves repeatedly through the successive stages of what Marx termed the circuit of capital. However, while Marx confined his analysis of self-organization mainly to the capitalist mode of production, it is worth considering several other potentially self-organizing (or autopoietic) systems with major significance for social order in modern societies. These include the legal system, the political system, science, the educational system, religion and art. Each has its own operational code, organizational principles, institutional dynamics, instrumental rationalities and logics of appropriateness. Together they form a self-organizing ecology of instituted systems

This creates a tension in his work that is in need of further investigation. Recent work in the field of complexity theory (e.g. Byrne 1998, Ch. 8; Healey 2006; Doak and Karadimitriou 2007; Martin and Sunley 2007) seems to offer useful perspectives in this regard, particularly in relation to its interest in the limits of governance and its understanding of urban spaces as complex adaptive environments.

Fourth, I already indicated the need to develop the regulation approach into a cultural political economy of emergence, but this aspect deserves more attention. Clearly, the regulation approach as well as the current version of cultural political economy are already attentive to the emergent dimensions of social life. Most importantly, in theorizing the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism regulationists understand the latter to be emergent from the former. Also, Jessop's strategic-relational approach and his interpretation of state institutions as strategically selective integrates action and emergence with his broader argument concerning the tendencies of social structures and underlying causal mechanisms. Once again, however, the proposed models cannot deal with the world as the "unobserved wilderness of what happens simultaneously" (Luhmann 2000, qtd. in Nowotny 2005) or what critical realists describe as the potentially infinite totality of reality. Many processes elude its grasp. A transdisciplinary move, in this regard, is often useful, since it integrates new and different knowledges with the already-established knowledge domain (transforming both in the process) and enables the production of a more encompassing and coherent account of social dynamics. It is this move that also enables critiques to be formulated, since the introduction of new knowledges can be used to point to the limits of the previous body of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> As we have seen in this book in the case of networks, this sensitizes analysts to those phenomena that cannot be categorized, but that point to something else 'outside' of the adopted theoretical framework. Transdisciplinarity, however, is clearly not a final solution, since the shifting of knowledge boundaries simultaneously directs attention to new emergent objects that need to be explained.

The consequence of this argument is that emergent phenomena are simultaneously in- and outside of established theories and posited causal mechanisms and social structures. This leads to an interesting side-effect of emergence. I speculated earlier that networks parallel the methodological moment of abduction within retroduction: they are characterized by a moving 'away from' estab-

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that develops through the interaction between their respective operational autonomies and material interdependencies".

4 In that respect, maybe my discussion of explanatory critique in 2.2.3 should actually be rephrased and understood as comparative critique.

lished causal mechanisms, but can simultaneously only be explained in relation to (if certainly not reduced to) these mechanisms. This remains a speculation and would deserve more research on the relation between methodology and substantive theory as well as ontology and epistemology, but if this is indeed the case, it dramatically increases the status of description and empirical research in social science and in the development of theory. In contrast to critical realism and regulation theory with its dominant focus on the explanation and the discovery of underlying causal mechanisms, the acknowledgement of emergence as an important dimension of reality seems to necessitate a much stronger orientation towards empirical, descriptive research than is currently the case, since this is the only way of finding out more about the characteristics of these emergent phenomena.<sup>5</sup>

This last comment offers an opportunity to move on to the more empirical consequences of this book. First of all, the research has shown that electronic music networks are best understood as an extreme case of networks of aesthetic production due to its high levels of change, its strong intertwinement with non-capitalist social relations and its relative openness to new actors for social as well as technological reasons (there is no strong policing of aesthetic boundaries and access to these networks is easy due to the use of affordable technologies). It might very well be possible that other music genres or different fields of aesthetic production are more usefully analyzed as critical cases where the non-existence of relations between networks of aesthetic production and accumulation and regulation is less pronounced. Adam Krims, for example, has clearly shown the linkages between urban accumulation and regulation and music genres such as hip-hop, classical music, or tumba on the island of Curaçao (e.g. Krims 2001, 2002, 2003, 2007). Indeed, his conclusions were my starting point for this book, but it turned out that similar conclusions could simply not be made in the case of electronic music. There is virtually no other work in this field, but one can imagine a number of exciting research projects that investigate the reasons for these differences and similarities between music genres. Also, other fields of aesthetic production are likely to exhibit different logics and, as a result, will interact with processes of accumulation and regulation in different ways. There is a well-established tradition of research on cultural production in

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5 Indeed, this is why the strategy of abduction is usually associated with interpretivist approaches to social enquiry, such as hermeneutics, phenomenology, social constructivism, symbolic interactionism, etc. See Blaikie (2000) for a useful discussion. Also see the excellent defense by William H. Sewell Jr. of interpretivist approaches as part of his larger aim to develop an historical sociology of events. See: Sewell Jr. (2005).



the sociology of arts as well as cultural and media studies (e.g. Ryan 1992; Bourdieu 1993; Hesmondhalgh 2002; Tanner 2003) that could be appropriated in this regard, but it would have to be re-analyzed through the lens of a renewed cultural political economy.

Second, my selection of the cities of London and Berlin was based on the assumption that these cities could be usefully understood through the lens of post-Fordism and the KBE. This assumption still seems reasonable, but the unexpected emergent dynamics of electronic music networks complicated my other assumption that it would be possible to identify clear-cut relations of variation between the urban environment in which these networks operate and the character of these networks. Two research directions seem possible to address this problem. On the one hand, a more encompassing focus that includes multiple fields of aesthetic production might not only enable us to identify the similarities and differences between these fields, but also the extent to which these fields are differentially shaped by accumulation and regulation in urban environments. On the other hand, the inclusion of cities as cases that cannot reasonably be understood in the context of the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism and the establishment of a KBE (for example, cities outside the OECD core) might enable us to learn more about the relations as well as non-relations between urban spaces and actual aesthetic production practices. It is very well possible, for example, that we will come across cases of aesthetic production that are highly similar, but based in rather different cities (say, for the sake of illustration, Havana in Cuba and London in the UK) or different times (for example, East Berlin in the 1960s and the eastern parts of Berlin in the 1990s). This, however, cannot easily be theorized by the regulation approach and the current version of cultural political economy, since its logic of analysis almost necessarily ties specific social instances to the broader 'blocks' of timespace in which they are seen to operate.

Third and finally, the question concerning the actual impact of state regulation in the case of the creative industries deserves more attention. Over the last decade, there has been a dramatic increase in policy-oriented publications on the supposedly important role played by the creative industries as tools for the economic development of particular cities, regions or states. More recently (particularly in the UK, but less so in Germany), researchers have criticized these policy-debates for ignoring the realities of cultural work and for operating on the basis of a neoliberal notion of creativity (for a recent useful overview of these debates, see Lovink and Rossiter 2007). Although my book broadly fits within this critical agenda, I think there is a tendency in these debates to overestimate the actual impact of state regulation. This often leads to a situation in

which the critics adopt a similar worldview (only inverted) to the one they aim to criticize, which can easily lead to a reproduction of the creative industries hype. Not only are most of the institutions assigned with implementing creative industries policies rather weak, it remains unclear how and if policy mechanisms can intervene in any substantial sense in the highly complex aesthetic production networks. More attention should therefore be paid to the limits of creative industries policy implementation. The consequences of this observation, however, are rather ambivalent. On the one hand, it acknowledges the relative autonomy of creative production and the immanent limits set to its enrolment into broader accumulation strategies. On the other hand, the strong decoupling of networks of aesthetic production and state regulatory institutions also means that potential feedback from actually existing networks of aesthetic production to policy circles is obstructed, thus limiting the opportunities to transform the “economic imaginaries” (Jessop 2004a) produced by state institutions. This limits the extent to which cultural producers can expect to play a role in shaping broader processes of accumulation and regulation, despite their supposedly central position within the KBE.

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