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The Justification of a Music City: Handbooks, Intermediaries and Value Disputes in a Global Policy Assemblage

Abstract

The intermediary work of persuasion and justification is an important but often hidden aspect of urban cultural policy. Rather than the frictionless flow and 'transfer' of knowledge, the global assemblage of creative economy policy – especially novel, oppositional or more 'just' visions of creative cities – is an accomplishment. One such vision is the call to develop a hybrid cultural-industrial policy that would attend to the internal processes and dynamics of culture as a production system. Drawing from the pragmatic sociology of justification and critique, the paper focuses on the 'Music City' construct as a live example of this vision, and the best-practice 'handbook' as key justification device. Handbooks are used by intermediaries to spread ideas, signal expertise, convince and 'educate' those that might fund them, coordinate heterogeneous stakeholders, and to enthuse and achieve legitimacy among a broader public. In so doing, they present a repertoire of arguments, rooted in competing value formations, that respond to doubts and disputes with potentials for compromise and appeals to a 'common good'. Analysing the justificatory 'grammar' of a new Music City discourse suggests avenues for further research exploring how justification work takes place in situated contexts of urban cultural practice

INTRODUCTION

The work of persuasion and justification is an important but often hidden aspect of urban cultural policy. In developing new initiatives, the legitimacy to act, however provisional, is vital in order to secure finances or institutional backing, as well as to communicate and coordinate across the variety of stakeholders involved. Any idea of a "good" or "just" creative city – one which is more effective, more equitable, more sustainable; through which oppositional challenges to policy orthodoxies and alternative cultural visions might be launched (d'Ovidio and Morató 2017; O'Connor and Shaw 2014; Pratt and Hutton 2013) – must be justified. Justification involves processes of valuation: not simply in the sense of appraising and evidencing a quantifiable measure of *value* but in negotiating competing *values*. This paper understands such "justification work" (Jagd 2011) to be structured by multiple different principles of justice, value and reasoning, according to what Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) describe as "orders of worth". It applies this lens to proposals that culture in cities requires a situated industrial policy that would attend to the internal logics and dynamics of culture as a production system. Focusing on the 'Music City' construct (Ballico and Watson 2020) as one such recent example of this proposal, it highlights the 'toolkits' of intermediaries like local representatives and international consultants, through which strategic advice, indicators and evidence circulate as part of the "global assemblage" of culture and creativity (Prince 2015). It has been argued that "the cultural or creative city cannot be imagined without music" (Homan et al. 2015: 87) – at least in those cities of the global North and West with established industry presence (Baker 2019). A specifically production-oriented approach intersects with, but seeks to transcend, extant visions of music in urban strategising; in turn, the discourse of justification most move to catch up. This sets the stage for discursive value struggles to take place, in the form of critiques and compromises, at local and trans-local scales.

The paper proceeds in three stages. First it locates the Music City in ideas of culture and the creative city as a production system, demanding a hybrid cultural-industrial policy. It explores existing terrain and distinguishes this 'new' incarnation from historical precedents, closer to 'traditional' cultural policy (protecting culture from market failure) and local cultural and economic development (positioning culture as regenerative resource). Second it explores the role of handbooks as justificatory devices, authored and promoted by intermediary coalitions of industry actors, trade bodies, consultancies and local urban strategists, and which contain persuasive arguments that can move and become taken up in cities internationally. This leads to the adoption of a pragmatic approach, drawn from the sociology of justification and critique, in which appeals to the 'common good' are rooted in the private interests of a number of distinct conceptual 'cities'. Third, the paper develops a substantive thematic analysis of *The Mastering of a Music City: Key Elements, Effective Strategies and Why it's Worth Pursuing* (Terrill et al. 2015), as exemplar of the new policy agenda. Presenting an array of discursive justifications that seek to 'make the case' for a more production-oriented perspective, this document can then be analysed in terms of the various compromises and disputes that these justificatory orders bring into play.

MUSIC CITY AS CULTURAL PRODUCTION SYSTEM

Cities and the creative economy are broadly understood to be interdependent in a range of different, often contradictory initiatives and agendas. A useful taxonomy is given by Pratt and Hutton (2013: 90-92), who map five distinct (if overlapping) modalities in which the Creative City has come to practically manifest. First, creative industries in global cities, especially new media, design and advertising, are synergistically related to the activities and employment practices of finance and service industries. Second, the preservation of the 'city beautiful' is associated with the renovation and display of cultural heritage and traditional arts, especially for the purposes of tourism. Third, creativity is viewed as a hook for foreign investment and human capital mobility, especially that associated with the habitus of the 'creative class'. Fourth, community cohesion, social regeneration and urban redevelopment initiatives are emphasised. Overwhelmingly, they argue, the effect of these first four is to position creative cities as spaces of consumption and creative lifestyles – culture as "display effect" that would "draw extra visitors or migrants to the city" – while missing the organisation and "intrinsic value" of "the creative economy proper" (Pratt and Hutton 2013: 92-93). Elsewhere, Pratt (2011: 129) has located "a particular challenge" for urban cultural policy in the question of how to "move beyond the tourism, heritage and consumption focus of many initiatives and to embrace the full cycle of culture making that includes cultural production". Hence, a fifth approach, an industrial policy that supports the production, employment and competitiveness of creative and cultural firms and individuals. Echoing the work of Allen Scott (2006), among others, this is a push for renewed attention to production processes and local contingencies. Yet what this "call for a new vision of the creative economy" means by "intrinsic value" is not immediately obvious: not simply "art for art's sake", this is a vision positioned in "a sector whose salient characteristic is its production of cultural values, albeit ones outside the traditional frame of public policy" (O'Connor and Shaw 2014: 167). That is, there is a normative charge underpinning this call to hybridise the cultural with the industrial, which remains to be articulated.

One such 'intrinsic' focus of an embedded production-systems approach would be an orientation towards the specifics of *what* culture is produced, *by whom*, *where, how* and crucially *why*. The terrain of 'culture' is vast: in the case presented here, we need to attend to the specific outputs, value chains, processes, practices and values associated with *commercial popular music* as a cultural and economic object. There is a genre distinction here: while 'high' art musics have commonly been a core object of cultural policy (including subsidy and training), in the UK and Europe at least, the key global players in the recorded, publishing and live sectors of the 'popular' music industries have historically operated at a distance from the state. At local levels, scholarship commonly registers the clustering of music's production chains, or networks, for generating recorded content (and intellectual property): studios, record companies, pressing plants, shops, and wider support activities (Brown et al. 2000; Leyshon 2001; Power and Janssen 2004; Scott 1999; Watson 2008); and, more recently, live performances (Behr et al. 2016). Yet it remains rare for this emphasis to drive policymaking. Some policy experimentation has occurred, as in the United Kingdom's municipal cultural industries in the 1980s, where an attempt to harness a local scene and build a distinctive "Sheffield music industry", for example, was justified on both economic

and political grounds (Brown et al. 2000). At city scale, the economic argument was bound up with assumed regeneration benefits, in terms of employment and productivity as well as an image that would attract tourism and inward investment; while, at national scale, it (unsuccessfully) competed against a 'mainstream' global corporate music industry (Frith 1993), concentrated (but hardly embedded) in one corner of the capital of London (Watson 2008). The political argument formed part of the terrain of cultural struggle by a Labour Party-led council against the deregulatory national programme of the then-incumbent Conservatives: subsequently remade in a 'pro-business' light, this would go on to inform early "creative industries" policy (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015).

While this set of debates has particular salience within the British context, it serves to illustrate how a production-oriented approach must operate across a complex of local, national and transnational agendas. Other visions are available. For instance, "Music City" language has been prominently associated with city-branding – particularly in the United States (Nashville in particular) – and contexts where a legacy of superstar acts and a buzzy music scene is understood to "reflect a place that is open to new ideas, new people, and creativity" (Florida 2012: 296). Elsewhere, the concept has inflected international development schemes, most notably the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Creative Cities network. A number of "Cities of Music" have been designated since 2006, requiring local authorities to demonstrate their support for local projects, community benefits and education, to celebrate their music heritage, and host national and international events. Such initiatives instrumentalise 'culture' for its image-making and regenerative potential, rather than for its 'intrinsic' properties and structural dynamics.

A more recent incarnation, however, has been occasioned by the disappearance of those venues (sometimes also rehearsal spaces and recording studios) considered to be part of a city's live music infrastructure and night-time economy, as well as national and transnational 'talent pipelines'. This presents a new strategic discourse of calculation and coordination between state and market forces, to support a coherent set of co-located industry actors (Ballico and Watson 2020). Such arguments have been successfully raised by activist and campaign groups, driving public awareness and new legislation (Homan 2016; Music Venues Taskforce 2015), and especially mobilised through intermediaries such as consultants. Here the title is not conferred on high by formal application or competition (as with UNESCO); instead, the new Music City status is declared from within (Behr et al. 2019: 16), commonly with a press release "outlining a vision" (Sound Diplomacy 2019: 12). Hybrid cultural-political-industrial intermediaries or external advisors are appointed to monitor, mediate and translate between 'stakeholders'. Following the example of Austin, Texas (Baker 2019: 145), Music Offices, or representative boards, became increasingly common to mediate between local authorities, businesses and the public. The concept of the Night Mayor, developed in European cities like Amsterdam and Berlin, fulfils a similar function and likewise transferred quickly to UK and US contexts (Seijas and Milan Gelders 2020). The next step is to commission an audit of the city's existing music infrastructure, often by outside consultants, underpinning a strategic plan to support and grow it. The Sound Diplomacy agency have notably established themselves as key actors in the field (Ballico and Watson

2020: 6-7): delivering strategic plans for London, Vancouver, New Orleans and Santiago de Cuba; producing regular reports, 'insights', comment pieces and handbooks (e.g. Sound Diplomacy 2019); and convening an international 'Music Cities Network' and touring events series that rivals UNESCO's in scope and, increasingly, influence.

VALUE DISPUTES IN THE GLOBAL POLICY ASSEMBLAGE

The new Music City is a translocal construction, the emergence of which Baker (2019) has tracked across global cities in the UK, Western Europe, North America and Australia (London, Berlin, Austin, New York, Los Angeles, Melbourne). Rather than city strategies, therefore, the analytic focus of this article is the obligation to spread and 'scale' such ideas: it is not the city-wide audit or action plan that best express the Music City construct but the international consultant and 'best practices' handbook. Documents of the 'handbook', 'toolkit' or 'manual' genre are a trusted means of mobilising Creative City discourse (e.g. BOP Consulting 2010; Florida 2012; Landry 2000). These documents are not vehicles for the 'evidence' or 'accountability' required by technocratic public policy (Belfiore 2004) or competitiveness rankings;[1] more fundamentally, they supply arguments and conceptual frames for categorising, standardising and monitoring cultural activities, rendering them available as objects of knowledge. In so doing, they work to attach policy ideas to impersonal technical systems which, as part of the "global assemblage" of culture and creativity, afford mobility and imply universality (Prince 2015). Nonetheless, ideas are made in, move via, and are textured by specific places and people, commonly in the Anglophone or Eurocentric global North and West. Hence, rapid flows of ideas in cultural and creative economy contexts are criticised for favouring a "fast policy" approach to exporting 'best practice' (Peck 2005), in turn incentivising decontextualised "xerox policymaking" (Pratt 2009) or a reductive "toolkit mentality" (Belfiore and Bennett 2010). Thus, the assemblage and mobility of such policy practice appeals to a placeless, borderless, quasi-scientific status, inattentive to localised "anthropological problems" (Ong and Collier 2005).

The 'toolkit mentality' reinforces metaphors of policy 'flow' and 'transfer' which suggest a seamless, linear application of knowledge to practical problems. By contrast, this article emphasises these documents as sites of friction and persuasion, where value is constructed and contested. Hence a crucial aspect of handbooks is their pragmatic efficiency: their 'success' lies in the way they are produced, circulated, translated, acted on and talked about, in certain spaces and at particular moments, to assemble a new community of practice (Freeman and Maybin 2011). Such texts have been *written* – but the matter of *how they come into being* and *who writes* them is as important as what they say. Likewise, one peculiar property of policy documents is that whether they are actually *read* is relatively peripheral. Perhaps more importantly, they are also *launched* at (networking) events and *cited* in meetings and other documents. Consultants use texts to participate and compete in "economies of expertise" (Prince 2015) alongside public-funded intermediaries (Schlesinger et al. 2015) and academics (Gibson 2015). Handbooks and toolkits have their own "social

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[1] Although see Baker (2019: 16) for a quantitative "algorithm" to such effect.

life" alongside those of methods and measures (Campbell et al. 2017): for example, as a calling-card for their authors by signalling value-adding potential to possible clients; or in performing a customer research function by exchanging access to the document for the entry of contact details into a database. As one of a set of social practices that make up broader creative industries discourse, handbooks deploy stylistic and rhetorical techniques to perform authority and provide useful sets of scripts (Chiapello and Fairclough 2002). But, insofar as they perform the work of justification, their content ceases to hold value outside their function and associated 'social life'.

With the word "justification", I make reference to the pragmatic sociology of justification and critical capacity – an approach developed in organisational contexts (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006; Stark 2009) but equally relevant to both urban regeneration (Fuller 2012; Holden and Scerri 2014) and creative economy policy (Edwards et al. 2015). The key insight here is that coordination among complex collections of 'real-world' actors in liberal democratic contexts rests on a pluralist value framework, leading to critiques, disputes, and provisional compromises. In this model, the co-existence of multiple 'orders of worth' illuminate how modes of valuation are formed, institutionally sedimented, and 'tested', forcing justifications to be mounted in defence. These coalesce in what are referred to as (metaphorical) "cities", of which at least eight are enumerated: inspired; domestic; reputational; civic; commercial; industrial; projective; and ecological (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006; Chiapello 2013; Lafaye and Thévenot 2017).[2] Crucially, 'cities' in this model are ideal-typical analytic frames that refer to ways of organising values, which are not reducible to existing material arrangements. Multiple 'cities' typically occupy the same 'problem space', where the *work* of justification involves recognising, selecting, arranging and deploying particular orders of worth in empirical sites of dispute and uncertainty (Jagd 2011).

As for the *creative* city, O'Connor and Shaw (2014: 169) call for future imaginaries to integrate "intrinsic" matters of hybridised industrial-cultural policy with an understanding of "the good city", "urban citizenship" and "'community' as a value over and above the maximisation of profit". Implicitly, this suggests a need to marshal and negotiate the kinds of indignation that motivate "critiques" of the prevailing political-economic order: whether "conservative" outrage over degradation of faith, familial bonds and moral norms; "artistic" oppositions to limits on autonomy and authenticity; "social" demands for equity; or "ecological" concerns over existential risks to nature and humanity (Chiapello 2013). The strongest version of the new Music City discourse decisively shifts away from a welfare-oriented language of "support", which (it argues) paints musicians as "victims" in need of "charity", towards a rhetoric of strategic "investment" in music as "innovation" and "growth" (cf. Shapiro 2020). The problem with cities (empirical and metaphorical), however, is that actors must ensure that their actions and critiques are justified in the public sphere, according "not only to blatant private interest but to some established general interest or common social value" (Holden and Scerri 2014: 3): a "common good". That is, public policy

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[2] The differences between the cities are developed in discussion below.

contexts require that, "in legitimating economic arrangements actors appeal to general justificatory principles – about what is good, right and just – which involve a broader claim to public legitimacy"; as such, the possibility of testing, contesting and resolving these principles holds the promise of gaining such legitimacy, "or at least of beginning a more constructive dialogue" (Edwards et al. 2015: 61).

With this in mind, "handbooks" present ideal objects for pragmatic inquiry since they contain "practical modes of reasoning" intended "to guide action"; thus, they offer "operations of compromise" that "must contend with existing realities" and "confront the practical problem of shifting from one world to another" (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006: 17). In the global assemblage of creative economy policy, an argument must be made that a new model is worth paying attention to at all: the (production-oriented) Music City "can only exist as a model once it has enrolled an 'audience' of interlocutors and would-be emulators" (Peck and Theodore 2015: xxiv). It is in this sense that I read the influential *The Mastering of a Music City: Key Elements, Effective Strategies and Why it's Worth Pursuing* as a toolkit for persuasion (Terrill et al. 2015). As a handbook, it does not simply describe a 'typical' Music City; rather, it offers a repertoire of examples and reasonings through which various actors might find appropriate justification for leveraging resources (funding, access to decision-makers, institutional weight), in service of the very idea of investing in a music-centric urban production system. This report circulated widely and swiftly amongst city-based intermediary actors and agencies: strategic plans, music offices and advisory boards in Toronto, Sydney, London, Brighton and Aarhus, amongst others, cited and modelled themselves on the document in response. Hence, I take this as a key moment in the emergence of this global agenda. The following section describes the contexts from which the report emerged and elaborates its arguments. Its justificatory rhetoric is outlined according to the 'orders of worth' model – not as an *a priori* explanation but as a heuristic for exploring the underlying normative 'grammar' of the field.

JUSTIFYING THE MUSIC CITY
The making of a handbook
The Mastering of a Music City was produced in collaboration between the International Federation of Phonographic Industries (IFPI) and Music Canada, the national trade body. It followed a previous report for Music Canada authored by Titan Music Group, a Texas-based music industry consultancy, *Accelerating Toronto's Music Industry Growth – Leveraging Best Practices From Austin, Texas*. This report focused particularly on the work of the Austin Music Commission, founded in 1990, in the wake of the industry-facing conference and festival South By South West (SXSW) in 1987 and state-level Texan Music Office in 1989. Such initiatives consciously and successfully positioned Austin within the global music industry – leading to its branding in the early 1990s as "Live Music Capital of the World" (Baker, 2019). The Titan report expressed concerns that "Toronto has not embraced its music identity to drive decisions to allocate attention and resources to industry growth" to the same extent as Austin; consequently, it recommended "involving Toronto's music industry with the City government, increasing the profile of the commercial music industry

in Toronto's existing tourism efforts, and implementing sustainable cooperative public-private action items" (Rowling and Castle 2012: 1-2). Sutherland (2013: 377) notes the curiosity of this report's focus on "the local live music scene" given that Music Canada, formerly the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA), lobbies on behalf of "the Canadian sound recording industry, including Canadian divisions of the major multi-national labels" and hence, "although clearly involved in Canadian music industry policy, represents its most globalised and arguably least Canadian component". The more expansive and ambitious 2015 handbook likewise presents an overriding focus on *local live music*, again featuring the collaboration and emphatic endorsement of an *international* lobbying body representing *recording industries* (the IFPI).

The interests of these organisations are therefore not immediately apparent; yet perhaps explain how a 'policy transfer' from one end of North America to the other, itself became a global export, cited in most strategic Music City plans published since. Notably, 2015 was also the year that the IFPI reported physical sales being outstripped by revenue generated through digital sales and streaming subscriptions (IFPI 2015), announcing a period of relative stability for recorded music. The previous two decades' experience of digital 'disruption' (through emerging technologies and business models) had decentralised that subsector from being the primary economic powerhouse of music economies in the Global North; it also precipitated much closer working relationships between state and business actors. In the British context, this agenda had aligned with the intellectual property thrust of much "creative industries" policy discourse: government became far more interventionist in its approach to music (Cloonan 2007); while a range of music industry trade bodies consolidated their lobbying capacities, forming a new umbrella organisation, UK Music. Canada's much longer and more circuitous history of state involvement in popular music is founded in its exceptionalist approach to Francophone and indigenous cultural identity (in content quotas, for example) alongside economic imperatives driven by the competitive threat from its border with the United States (Goff and Jenkins 2006). This context was also the seedbed for international consultancy work: the Sound Diplomacy agency was founded by a former Music Canada employee with a doctorate on the history of Canadian music funding (Shapiro 2014). In other words, the new Music City 'package' was assembled and internationalised in a context of especially hybridised cultural and economic policymaking and benefited from a growth in intermediary institutions and informal networks between public and private sector. Equally, like much creative industries discourse (Pratt 2009), it is rooted in a conception of globality that is, more realistically, Anglo- and Eurocentric.

Navigating the orders of worth

The Mastering of a Music City "has been prepared principally with the commercial music sector in mind", although reportedly "classical, choral and non-commercial music [...] will also benefit" [11].[3] It outlines what it considers the "essential elements" of any Music City: artists, musicians, a music scene, accessible spaces, a receptive audience, music-related support businesses. Multilevel government support, sector-relevant infrastructure (such as

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[3] Page numbers in square brackets in this section refer to Terrill et al. (2015).

transport and policing), and music education are identified as supplementary mechanisms. In order to make the case for these elements to be taken seriously, it presents a "hit parade of benefits" that draw on, and aim to appeal to, a range of stakeholders, in different places at different times. The possibility of legitimating any vision of a Music City, however, is not only dependent on the capacity to appeal to private interests (based on e.g. principles of efficiency, genius, reputation, tradition, or civic value). It must connect these to an idea of the **common good**, that transcends these interests, found in music's apparently exceptional culture-making capacities. "There is nothing like music as a means to connect people, bridge linguistic and cultural divides and provide an avenue for identity and expression" [13]. *Mastering a Music City* "deal[s] most directly with live music", using the notion of a broader "music community" to refer to those who participate "at every step in the music value chain", or "music ecosystem" [61]. Community is also linked to the development of a "receptive and engaged audience" [76], suggesting a form of creative co-production with a 'user community' (Power and Janson 2005: 435-436). In this sense, the strategy is also attuned to enrolling those outside industry and policy circles. Beyond broad public legitimacy, this is about (as in crowdfunding models) producing and leveraging the affective investments of a more focused fan community (Leyshon et al. 2016) for the Music City project. With this in mind, I now turn to the orders of worth themselves.

The **inspired city** is a quasi-religious mode of elevation, where notions of genius, vision and creativity are valued highly. This is a normative language for popular music, in the currency of renowned artists and their devoted fans, where the Music City is viewed as a gallery of stars: a space defined by an emerging stream, or established heritage, of homegrown artistic talent. Important venues – from "shabby basements where budding artists get a start" to "massive concert halls filled to capacity by international superstars" [48] – are churches that create positive externalities for the city, where they find compromise with the orders of fame and the market. A crucial justification here is the perceived capacity to generate self-reinforcing momentum. "'There are artists that are currently rising up out of Australia – that's not a bad starting point for our music strategies,' says Ian James, Managing Director of Mushroom Music Publishing. 'But the important thing is what they inspire in the next generation'" [27].

The **domestic city** emphasises communal bonds and loyalty, and values tradition. We see this in assertions that music "builds bridges between cultures and languages, connecting people within a city, a region and across borders"' [28]. Connecting citizens with a storied music heritage is important in the domestic Music City; so too is the nurture of young people. A number of youth development projects in areas of poverty or conflict are cited as important evidence, such as the *El Sistema* orchestral programme in Venezuela, with founder José Antonio Abreu as its charismatic father-figure [29]. It also seeks to create intergenerational bonds: one measure of success, says David Grice, Director of a music tech cluster in Adelaide, Australia, would be "a child telling their mom and dad that they want to be in the music industry and parents not saying, 'you need to get a real job'" [10].

In the **reputational city**, recognition by others is the overriding measure of worth. This order is aligned quite simply with place-branding initiatives that construes the Music City as a site

of renown: "Think 'Liverpool,' and most people think 'The Beatles.' Think 'Memphis,' and music icons like Elvis and Johnny Cash come to mind" [25]. A city's heightened national or global esteem is a spillover effect of those stars that were born there (or passed through) and can be leveraged for attracting talent and tourism.

The **civic city** speaks the language of the public sphere: of shared culture, liveability and democratic collective decision-making. As Emmanualle Hébert, of the Montreal Department of Culture puts it: "What is going to make the difference between two cities? Quality of life for your employees. We believe that a thriving cultural scene, including music, is a key factor" [27]. Moreover, it can be "especially impactful in places where the social fabric is frayed due to income disparity and other factors", such as the legacy of apartheid in Johannesburg [28]. In Toronto, 'music landmarks' have been erected to "tell the story of the city's evolution" [39], leveraging iconic cultural moments as sites of local symbolic investment. In a more regulatory mode, San Francisco passed legislation to protect clubs and venues from incoming developers: "As we build more housing for everyone who wants to live here", says legislator London Breed, "we have to protect the reasons why they want to live here in the first place" [42]. Here civic justifications navigate a familiar dynamic between spaces of domestic privacy and those of a marketized public renown.

The **commercial city** is viewed as a space of competition and exchange, commonly (though not always) mediated by prices and the profit-motive. This is home territory for global players in an industry that has long been antithetical to state oversight (Cloonan 2007). Competition between places is emphasised where music can be enrolled in a creative-class strategy to distinguish cities in "an environment of intense global competition" where "the world's top talent is highly mobile" [27]. Internal competition is perhaps more significant. Rhetoric characterises artists in entrepreneurial language and venues as "hubs and accelerators" [72]. Music Cities must "overcome bureaucratic inertia" [90] often by opposing licensing and regulatory compliance – as in New South Wales, Australia, lauded for scrapping live music licenses which "significantly reduced red tape" [19]. The concept of a "venue ladder" – in a hierarchy of low to high capacity – is introduced to capture the "development potential" of local "talent" [69]. The overriding goal is enabling artists to professionalise and 'scale up' to compete in global markets and develop local export capacity [27].

The **industrial city** values efficiency, productivity and rational planning. Here, the Music City is a creative factory and, as such, is all about producing profitable outputs at scale. But, the handbook acknowledges, as with "any arts industry, especially one with a youth orientation, [music] can be viewed in a different paradigm to those such as automobile manufacturing or real estate development" [30]. While this order is aligned most closely with corporate and capital-intensive firms, given the predominance of small and micro enterprises in music, this lens values the spatially-distributed but effectively integrated clustering effects, such that they appear as unities in their own right: "in advanced Music Cities, estimated aggregate revenue and employment in the music industry can be significant" (30). Nashville, for instance, bills itself as "a 'self-sustaining music centre' where it 'is entirely possible to write,

produce, record, release and promote an album without looking outside the Nashville region'" [19].

Central to capitalism's 'New Spirit' is the **projective city**, in which entrepreneurial networks enable heterogeneous teams to form over short-term projects (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). Arguably, this was always a dominant paradigm in music (and other forms of creative production). Accordingly, the projective city centres the artist's capacity to find gigs, collaborators and opportunities: it is the job of "a successful Music City" to provide and support "[a]ccess to the various supporting professionals, and the training to improve their craft and knowledge of the business", which "enables more artist entrepreneurs to advance from hobby to career" [25]. This might include "support programs and events that focus on networking or education", such as the Music Industry Collaborative in Austin, Texas, which "fast-tracks the resources that busy music entrepreneurs most urgently need" and "encourages peer-to-peer assistance" [52].

A final order of justification is found in the **ecological city** (Lafaye and Thévenot 2017). It highlights a more expansive claim to humanity's embeddedness in the natural world as common good and an "ecological critique" founded on a sense of responsibility towards systemic environmental fragility (Chiapello 2013). The report does not mobilise this discursive frame at all, however, other than in popular metaphors where an "organic" and "complex music ecosystem" [68] is made 'sustainable' by responding to the urban and regulatory 'environment' in which it is embedded (cf. Behr et al. 2016).

Compromises, disputes, critiques
The above analysis outlines a plethora of different possible 'cities' coexisting within the same document. Rather than a sign of incoherence, it presents a toolkit of possible arguments that can be judiciously selected and combined, depending on the circumstances, in order to build a persuasive case for municipal support and coordinated action in service of the Music City idea. Indeed, it is common for actors to bridge different cities using provisional compromises and associations between different orders of justification. Three such compromise formations are immediately visible.[4] The more production-oriented Music City is essentially a compromise formation between **industrial**, **projective** and **commercial** cities. Calls to audit, monitor and invest in available music infrastructure are hallmarks of the rationally planned industrial city; the formation of music offices, tasked with overseeing policy development and mediating creative, business and government networks, moves this into a more projective modality; in conversation with appeals to ensure a competitive and deregulated business environment. A second compromise, between the orders of **commerce**, **inspiration** and **renown**, emphasises the consumption dimension. Standard 'heritage' and 'tourism' narratives wed together past and present fan economies –

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[4] Baker's (2019: 16) "algorithm to assess music activity in an urban context" seeks to quantify and standardise Music Cities across fourteen indicators, drawing on three categories that are similar to the compromises I highlight here: "economics" (i.e. financial impacts, employment etc); Richard Florida's "Creative Cities" index; and cultural heritage.

pilgrimages to historic sites and serendipitous encounters with night-time scenes – in order to capture the enthusiasms of a city's outsiders (tourists, employees, artists, property investors) in a valuable market for experiences (cf. Leyshon et al. 2016). A third compromise, between **domestic** and **civic** orders of worth highlights non-market justifications: the effects of gentrification dynamics on city cultures, and music's (positive) impact on communities and young people, as well as, increasingly, health and wellbeing (Oman and Taylor 2018). Nonetheless, the various justifications on offer may conflict with or undermine one another in practice. Some examples will suffice – not to apply the model to a case but to illustrate how the handbook's legitimation strategies might be put to the critical 'test' in different situations.

A central aspect of Music City discourse is that of protecting music spaces: this is typically explained in terms of a dispute between the **inspired industrial city** (as spaces of innovation and identity expression) and **commercial** development logics, in a well-recognised gentrification narrative. While residential developments increase land value, both of the site itself and the surrounding area, they are also "the single most incompatible use with independent subcultural activities" (Shaw 2013: 350). Noise complaints from those investing in 'up-and-coming' areas are cited as a key threat, such that one "unintended consequence of the 'Music Cities' movement" may be "*further* gentrification and loss of music venues" (Behr et al. 2019: 5). The "agent of change" principle – a regulatory change of planning law where those responsible for a change to the area are also responsible for mitigating negative impacts (e.g. paying for sound-proofing or street-lighting) – is praised as a concrete mechanism to mediate this issue (Terrill et al. 2015: 42). However, a focus on defending venues obscures a number of other orders of worth. Given that noise from clubs, venues and their customers can be impossible to escape, even to the point of psychological and physiological illness (Johnson and Cloonan 2009), complaints also reflect the **domestic** and **civic** aspects of cities: many residents are not property investors but longterm inhabitants. While venues are defended on **industrial** grounds (as spaces that nurture upcoming 'talent'), the cost of renting and living in a professed Music City such as London is often prohibitive for (young) workers themselves (Oakley et al. 2017). Elsewhere, the **civic** city is confronted by music's own **commercial** logics: the popularity of festivals and ticketed events provides ample justification for councils (especially those seeking new income streams in the face of dwindling government funding) to effectively privatise public spaces for large periods of time (Hancox 2019; Smith 2018). Complaints about litter and pollution after such events also alert us to the relative absence of attention to the **ecological** order of worth in Music City discourse – a surprising lacuna considering the importance of green credentials to earlier municipal visions of urban music economies, as much as more contemporary instances (e.g. Julie's Bicycle 2009).

Despite the emphasis on an **industrial** order of worth, there are critical questions about the quality of work on offer, especially in the **projective city**: labour market access, working conditions, social protections and rights (d'Ovidio and Morato 2017). As the sociologist of work Ursula Huws (2015) noted about her home of Dalston, East London, while many jobs in the late-night service sector afford those who work in them a deep personal investment in a 'scene'-based identity, they would score poorly on indicators of "decent work". The **inspired**

occupational "passion for music" that sustains much of this work (Bennett 2018) can seemingly 'elevate' it above similar forms of service work outside the creative economy – catering, cleaning, security or transport staff – where similar tasks are performed under similar (poor) conditions. Equally, it is striking that the past appears only as a **marketable** site of **reputation** for the Music City. Music heritage, memory and archives are understood to be increasingly important for cities – but not always celebrated, for example, where a reputation for danger or debauchery might be viewed as a burden to **civic** and **commercial** goals (e.g. Spence 2019). Also missing from policy justifications, therefore, is much in the way of compromise between **inspired**, **domestic** and **industrial** orders: wherein music histories not only inform a sense of tradition or collective symbolic identity but are put to productive re-use as a shared cultural and economic resource in recombinant forms of "dissonant" innovation (cf. Stark 2009).

The stage is set, therefore, for numerous critiques to play out. This last point returns us to notions of music as a **common good**, at the more abstract level wherein cities are conceived as spaces of democratic accountability: citizens' must directly or indirectly assent to resources being mobilised. Arguably music presents particularly fertile material for mediating moral and political tensions (Born 2010). While popular music surely matters profoundly to people, and can certainly fuel positive private and collective experiences, it does not matter to everyone equally and is valued in hugely different ways (Hesmondhalgh 2013). Yet the world imagined by the Music City handbook is not a critical space: it does not seem to consider the possibility of music that is bad, difficult, racialised or even 'violent' (Frith 1996; Johnson and Cloonan 2009). Rather, music appears rather naïvely as a cultural palliative, curing social ills or unifying 'communities'; meanwhile the under-interrogated notion of a generalised 'music community' occludes tensions between market and nonmarket justifications. *Live* music is 'ideologically' significant here, where experiential performances are often attributed unique powers of generating community, immediacy and co-presence (Auslander 2008; Cloonan 2012). Yet little evidence is offered to support claims that "performing music and playing instruments […] may get fewer people feeling angry, disillusioned and disenfranchised", as a South African respondent hypothesises (Terrill et al. 2015: 28-29); or elsewhere, in a comment that may surprise participants in many music scenes and night-time economies, that "when one is learning music, one is not joining a gang, or experimenting with illicit substances" (Sound Diplomacy 2019: 37). Equally, common endorsements of Venezuela's *El Sistema* programme fail to engage criticisms of either its efficacy on its own terms, or its reliance on strict, Eurocentric cultural values (cf. Bull 2016). In abstraction, the appeal to an apparently 'universal' common good conceals a civilising mission, rooted in a conservative moral order.

The idea that music heals, and the Music City as an instrument for governing personal health and social cohesion, aligns with the pragmatic fate of 'traditional' cultural policy in times of 'creative industries' (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015); yet may give rise to indignation from the bohemian dispositions of many commercial popular musicians, demanding an "artistic critique" founded in more 'exciting' or transgressive cultural freedom (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). Of course, the dynamics of critique and compromise will play out differently whether in Berlin, San Francisco, Singapore or Shanghai – the latter's (Confucian)

values and more authoritarian government founded on upholding respect for social and familial hierarchies, for instance (O'Connor and Gu 2006). In policy discourse, as Turner (2015: 540) notes, the notion of "community" typically acts "as a proxy for the social or cultural content" occluded by terms such as "nation" or "economy", and "proposed as among the outcomes of policy initiatives". That is, appeals to the 'music community' at urban or even global scales are not simply directed towards existing social groupings but actively work to assemble and convene them. Who is addressed by such discourse – which values and disputes count more – is thus of vital importance. Despite the tendencies of intermediaries to present themselves as non-partisan consensus-builders who steer clear of value disputes, such critiques and ethical tensions are profound for those who participate in 'music communities', demanding policy engagement and negotiation (Born 2010: 199).

CONCLUSION

While the transfer and assemblage of urban cultural policies globally can appear 'fast' and frictionless, the spread and take-up of ideas, visions and consultative services must be actively *accomplished* through specific intermediaries (consultants, trade bodies) and devices (handbooks, indicators). The handbook considered in detail here, like others, furnishes (potential) strategic actors with justifications for pursuing music as cultural-industrial policy. That is, it is not an inert container of 'evidence' or 'best practice'. Rather, creative intermediaries use handbooks to intervene in policy debates: to disseminate ideas, signal expertise, convince and 'educate' those that might fund them, coordinate heterogeneous stakeholders, and achieve legitimacy among the broader public. In so doing, they present a range of arguments, such that theoretically antagonistic modes of valuation coalesce in hybrid compromise formations. Situated in the middle of competing interests and logics, intermediaries' justification work consists in their adeptness at effectively recognising, articulating, deploying and hybridising from among multiple (at least seven) orders of worth, in particular circumstances. This article has presented a "synchronic" view of justification (Jagd 2011: 348) by seeking to articulate the underlying normative 'grammar' of the new Music City; the "diachronic" view of specific processes of critique, justification, testing and compromise in empirical action (that is, the 'work'), has only been signalled. I conclude by briefly summarising the former and then highlighting the need to attend to justification practices in specific mechanisms, institutions and urban contexts.

From the synchronic perspective, the Music City frame, as currently articulated, contains and obscures a number of internal tensions. Not least among these is whose interests are represented and whose obscured in the global assemblage of this idea and the 'community' that clusters around it. It is possible to see three hybrid compromises in action for the Music City: a production-oriented formation, based on a compromise between the **industrial**, **commercial** and **projective** cities; a consumption-oriented formation, in the compromise of **commercial**, **inspired** and **reputational** cities; and a nonmarket formation, around **civic** and **domestic** (and, in part, **ecological**) cities. Drawing on all three, handbooks and 'thought leadership' for the new field of Music City discourse place clear emphasis on the first; indeed, doing so to launch critiques of place-branding led 'gentrification' and the welfare-

based 'victim narrative' of traditional arts policy. Other compromises might still arise – exploring the common interests of industrial, civic and domestic orders, for instance. Conflicts over "artistic" and "social" forms of critique – defences, respectively, of a quasi-libertarian freedom of expression and of the right to participate and be equally represented in collective life (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005) – are replayed; while an ecological attentiveness to care and dignity across species, habitats and generations (Chiapello 2013), is glaringly absent at present. Disputes of this nature are not necessarily debilitating or unwelcome: conflicts between different orders of worth can highlight opportunities for relationship brokerage and generate innovation (Stark 2009). However the possibility of alternative compromises and openness to critical debate do not seem to be available. Hence, any concept of 'intrinsic' cultural value is obscure and it is unclear whether such a vision might yet be articulated through the Music City frame.

The diachronic aspect attends to the work of justification, in deliberative consultations or the translation of moral arguments into quantitative indicators. This aspect is driven by perhaps a more immediate, and restrictive, limitation: the fact that intermediaries are themselves financially and politically precarious project-oriented enterprises. A private-sector consultancy needs to secure new contracts; a music office, dependent on local authorities or membership funding, relies on the continued consent of internal resourcing (Prince 2015; Schlesinger et al. 2015). The idea of a Music City as industrial policy is novel and strange enough – outside those global European and Anglosphere cities with long-established industry presence – to oblige intermediaries to mount the public argument while also 'following the money': explaining the value of viewing the city through the lens of music and the music economy. Actors invested in the Music City must make an ongoing persuasive effort, simply to remain afloat. Hence moral projects are entwined with technical goals and financial incentives. Such projects will play out differently – demanding different arrangements of critique and compromise, embedded in different cultural histories, values, institutional and regulatory systems – whether one is in London, Seoul or Port of Spain (to take three important nodes for contemporary global music industries). Attending to these issues through orders of worth, and an emphasis on valuation, negotiation, compromise and justification, may provide a basis for future attempts to coordinate action among heterogeneous actors, while also remaining alive to normative questions of moral, social, political and aesthetic value.

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