Popular music in the city:

an examination of local music scenes, popular music practice and cultural policy in the city of Leicester.

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This thesis examines popular music in the city of Leicester. It looks at local popular music practice through the activities, values and structures of support associated with local music scenes and music industry. It explores the ways in which popular music contributes to city life through the activities of particular groups involved in the production and distribution of music in Leicester. It also considers how local governance structures influence and shape music practice through cultural policy and municipal government and regulation.

Using the concepts 'music scene' and 'music community' I consider how participation in popular music in the city is organised around particular sites, activities, coalitions and alliances. The production and localisation of identities, values and economies through popular music practice are considered via case study and through examination of the relationship between public sector supported initiatives and different social and music communities.

In particular, I focus on the ways in which popular music is thought to represent different social groups and how this representation is an important element of local cultural policy. The social function of popular music in marking and contributing to social and cultural identity (Frith 1987) is examined in the context of urban communities and identities, and in terms of its propensity to facilitate public celebration and display of diverse ethnicities in a multicultural city. I consider the history of provision for popular music and recent policy initiatives in Leicester in comparison to other examples of urban cultural policy, which are offered as a framework for considering different strategies for urban regeneration and animation through the popular music sector. In doing so, I question the relationship between cultural value and cultural policy and discuss issues associated with local music scenes and identities and the influences on local music policy and practice.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

I know what you do. I've seen you. I've heard you in the pubs and in the shops.
Complaining. Armchair critics that sit there and moan about the lack of
musical originality and foresight. About how Birmingham, Nottingham and
Manchester and wherever is better than Leicester. You know whose fault that
is, don't you? (*Hybrid*, Issue 1, February 1998)

This thesis is concerned with popular music in the city, and in particular the
relationship between the activities, meanings and values of popular music practice and
the social structures and conditions within which it is situated. It focuses on the way
some of these conditions are mediated and provided by the political agencies and
authorities which represent the city – the local public sector – and considers what
opportunities, problems and issues are presented through local cultural policy and
local government strategy, and how such approaches have emerged. It also considers
aspects of local popular music practice which comment on, resist and represent local
social, cultural, economic and political structures, and describes the musical activities
of different social groups and communities in relation to their context in the Midlands
city of Leicester.

The fieldwork for this research examined popular music practice, provision and policy
in one locality, although the thesis features comparative descriptions of activity and
policy in other cities and towns which come from other projects and studies and from
the popular press and media. It focuses on the activities of particular groups of people
involved in popular music production and distribution and in the support of popular
music activities in the public sector. These are regarded in terms of the relationship
between key sites and practices, individuals and organisations, which characterise the
city's musical profile. It also attempts to describe the facilities and conditions for
popular music production and consumption in Leicester and to comment on the city's
wider cultural profile.

Popular music and social function

In an argument for the aesthetic consideration of popular music, Frith (1987) comments that

> The question we should be asking is not what does popular music *reveal* about 'the people' but how does it *construct* them (Frith 1987:137).

His point is that looking at popular music is as much about understanding how this cultural form delivers aesthetic conventions and acts as a means of differentiation and taste, as it is an expression of the social forces and conditions that shape it. He goes on to describe what for him are the four social functions of popular music - the reasons we enjoy popular music and the ways by which we judge it as good and bad. Firstly, popular music is used as a way of answering questions of identity, of telling us who we are and where we stand in society. This is pleasure in identification, through association with the music, with the people who make it and with others who listen to it. Secondly, music gives us a way of expressing private emotions in public, so that intimate feelings, particularly in the realms of love and romance, can be declared in acceptable and coherent ways.

Thirdly, popular music acts as a way of organising our temporal experiences and memories, both in terms of reminding us of time passing and by association of songs and tunes with particular times. This is one of the reasons, Frith contends, that pop music is the music of youth as the intensity of 'real time' felt by the young is represented in the music, which in turn acts to define 'youthfulness' (Frith 1987: 143). Lastly, popular music is 'something possessed' (op cit.). The act of alignment through association and consumption, temporal experience and memory amounts to 'ownership', an intense relationship between the selection of musical preference and self which is found in few other cultural forms (Frith makes the exception of sports teams). Popular music is special because it helps us recognise ourselves, and in turn possesses us (Frith 1987: 145).

Although I would contend Frith's first social function is more closely related to his fourth than he argues, since placing, possession and belonging are part of the process of identity creation, this framework acts as rationalisation for my sociological interest in popular music. It points to the importance and power of popular music, particularly

for the young, whilst showing that the distinctions claimed in other cultural forms, such as transcendence, intimate and intricate expression and organisation of identity are also found in pop. It also explains why I felt compelled to look at popular music practice in this thesis: because I recognised these social functions in my own use of music, and wanted to see how they related to the people around me.

Why popular music? Why Leicester?

As I indicate above, my research interest started, rather narcissistically, with myself. However, my interest in the social functions of popular music in a particular site was awoken by observations whilst working in a local pub to supplement my student income. This pub, The Magazine, is part of Leicester's musical and social history, and my employment as bar tender there coincided with a period that saw the pub in its heyday as a small local venue[1]. It was also the site for a number of different political and social strands of Leicester's populace to meet. Customers, who were often loyal to the pub to the exclusion of others, were pooled from a wide range of different social groups and occupations: students, lecturers, artists, social workers, teachers, builders, musicians, accountants, lawyers and 'dolees' all came to socialise and sample the delights of Bass Worthington brews.

The mixture of clientele, socio-economically and in terms of age, gender and ethnicity, surprised me, but after some time I realised common ground existed in two areas: tendencies to variations of the political left and passion about popular music. The two licensees were socialists with combined experiences of youth work, playing in bands and running other Leicester venues; however the ethos they purposely injected into the pub was not divorced from its own history, as over time it had been a coaching inn, brothel, hippy hangout and art school venue, as attested to by many of the customers who continued to drink there. Structurally, like countless others the pub had three parts: a front bar, a back bar and an upstairs function room where live performances took place. Stark divisions in musical taste and preference existed between the two bars, which had separate sound systems and were characterised by

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1 The Magazine used to be situated on Newarke Street, on a valuable piece of land near De Montfort University and the Phoenix Arts complex. During my period of fieldwork and after leaving the pub, the Magazine changed hands. Trade declined, the building suffered from neglect and was eventually closed for business when the roof of the front bar fell in. The building, which had a Grade II listed front, was knocked down in the summer of 1999.

different collections of audio tapes. The front bar music profile was loosely organised around older music and back catalogues of rock, country and folk, whilst the back bar featured more recent recordings and styles, especially indie bands and 'crossover' dance music, as well as a specialist reggae and dub selection, which came from bar staffs' own collections. Vociferous arguments would occur if these sonic boundaries were transgressed, particularly if back bar staff attempted to sneak their own music past the front bar loyalists.

Upstairs however many different styles and genres were performed over the 3 years the pub was under this particular management, and many different events and gigs were promoted, often involving local political groups as well as diverse music communities in the city who used the venue for jam nights and to showcase new bands and releases. Several bands who have had chart success since played early gigs at the pub, including Reef and Shed Seven, and members of Cornershop played and drank there as well having a spell behind the bar. A typical week might see performances from two new college bands, an indie band from outside the city on its first tour, a night of Women in The Spotlight[2], an acoustic night, a private disco and a dub sound system.

The passion with which people not only aligned themselves according to musical taste but were brought together by involvement and appreciation of popular music practice, and the diversity of music, participants and practices involved raised questions about popular music practice in the city as a whole. If so many people and activities were brought together in one place what happened throughout Leicester? How did this practice work to create identity, to help people recognise themselves? How did it reflect and construct the city in which they were situated? How did popular music place Leicester in global culture? The achievements of this small pub also made me wonder about other facilities, resources and conditions in the city, and encouraged me to ask what the city made of popular music. The pub was also subject to regulation by local authorities and had fallen foul of noise regulation and licensing restrictions. How did the public sector support popular music and what values did it attribute to it? How did the processes of regulation and social organisation in the city effect its practice? What social *use* was made of this popular cultural activity?

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2 See Chapter 4.

Looking at localities

Cohen (1995b) outlines three overlapping ways in which 'locality' can be approached in popular music studies. She suggests that, following anthropology, it can be used to define discussion of social networks and relationships, practices and processes within a particular site (Cohen 1995b: 66). It can be used as a methodological bracket in which relationships between factors such space and time, individuals and groups, contexts and ideas are examined in a particular, rather than general, fashion. Looking at localities can also be a way of examining the production and interconnection of identities and identity issues such as sexuality and ethnicity (op cit.).

This project has used Leicester as a locality to raise such issues as well look at the relationship between popular music and the local state. It examines the functions and roles of popular music in a particular site and considers the values that are placed on this form of popular culture in relation to the social cohesion and organisation of the city. As such it places popular music as a facility rather than a text.

Chapter 2 offers a review of popular music studies in the context of the sociology of culture, and with particular reference to theoretical and empirical studies relevant to this project. These include attempts to extract and examine social meaning in popular music and to consider structural homology between popular music and different social groups. The review outlines studies which focus on popular music practice and policy in particular localities, and considers how some popular music academics have used the concepts of 'local music scene' and 'community' in relation to their research.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods and methodological approach I have undertaken in this study, and suggests that this research questions of this nature are best suited to the flexibility and 'realism' of an approach which encompassed theory building and theory testing, and consideration of both micro and macro levels of social activity and social structures. It also describes some of the relations, problems and issues I found in the field and the resources which I drew upon to facilitate field research.

Section II of the thesis is comprised of Chapter 4, which is the first empirical chapter and is split into segments. In the first segment, I describe the key sites and practices involved in popular music production, consumption and in the local music industry infrastructure in the city of Leicester. I suggest that local music scenes in Leicester are

clustered around activities situated in particular sites, for example local venues, clubs and bars and production-based facilities such as recording and rehearsal studios. These activities draw on the resources offered by local media, and involve the creation and maintenance of networks, clusters and alliances which operate to sustain local popular music practice.

The second segment offers three case studies: the first looks at musical activity situated in Irish theme pubs in the city, the second at pirate radio as a form of (illegal) local media, and the third at an organisation called Women In Music. These case studies are used to explore how local popular music practice works to define and represent local identity through the subcultural activity of different social groups. They raise questions about how local music scenes emerge and develop and how music scenes, music communities and social communities (in particular ethnic, national and gendered communities) interrelate and overlap around specific resources and activities.

Section III presents two further empirical chapters. The first, Chapter 5, describes the history of public provision for popular music in Leicester, and focuses the most recent form of local support for popular music in the city: the Popular Music Development Officer. The schemes and initiatives associated with the local authorities and regional arts board are considered in terms of the individuals and organisations involved, and the problems and opportunities that they present.

In Chapter 6, I consider recent British arts and cultural policy, outlining a brief history of the Arts Council and a description of recent developments which construct arts and cultural activities as 'arts and cultural industries'. I then turn to urban cultural policy and consider a number of different urban initiatives, which use cultural activity in strategic ways to encourage and facilitate local regeneration, animation, rejuvenation and economic development. I propose these examples as a form of framework to explore the underlying approaches and intentions of urban cultural policy, and consider how cultural policy and strategy in Leicester fits into such a framework. Finally, I suggest that the historical, social and economic conditions in the city act as the basis for the approach the local state has taken towards cultural activity.

These empirical chapters are based on my fieldwork in Leicester, but also include

empirical material from other cities in England and Ireland. This material comes from other academic studies and documentary sources and through the research conducted in Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield as part of the ESRC project 'Local music industry, music policy and economic development[3].

Chapter 7 offers some general conclusions and some suggestions for further research which are based around the theoretical and empirical issues raised by the study. These issues discussed include: the relationship between music scenes and subcultural activity; the links and boundaries between music communities and other sorts of community found in the city; the relationship between frameworks of cultural value and cultural policy, and consideration of how shifts in this latter relationship have effected public sector support for popular music. I question the suitability of public sector support for popular music, consider the influences on local music policy and practice I found in this research and offer a summary of the characteristics of popular music support and cultural policy in Leicester. Finally, I consider the relationship between local cultural policy, cultural activity and identity and local structural conditions, described by the term 'local structures of feeling' (Taylor, Evans and Fraser 1996), and end with a brief evaluation of local popular music policy.

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3 See Appendix I.

Chapter 2

Popular music studies: a literature and theoretical review

This literature and theoretical review critically examines some examples of recent popular music theory and research. Popular music has been one of the more popular subjects in the growth of studies of popular culture. As a topic of study in further and higher education, it is attractive to younger students and is included in many different degree and other courses in modular form, as well as constituting courses in itself (in terms of research funding, however, its ambiguous 'lay' appeal and anomalous position in hierarchies of cultural value have proved negative factors). As a discipline, it has incorporated elements from many others, producing a mongrel which includes cultural studies, musicology, linguistic theory, the sociology of deviance, biography, and more recently economics, politics and geography. As its history lengthens however the discipline has become more consolidated, although it can be argued that it remains polycentric and multiperspectival.

Often assumed the home of the study of popular music, cultural studies has been criticised for its concentration on the text and on the active consumption of popular culture to the neglect of empirical examination of production both in terms of its economic, technological and political dimensions and in terms of the lived experience of producers (Murdock 1989, McGuigan 1992). Recent changes to the discipline, encouraged by the proliferation of practitioners, the 'cultural turn' of other disciplines (for example sociology, politics and geography) and the growth of cultural studies in the global academy, have encouraged the critique of its first forays and the development of new emphases.

In a paper delivered at large international, multidisciplinary conference in 1990, Frith briefly articulated the different materialisations of theories of culture, using the example of popular music, as explored by social anthropology and cultural studies. In a discussion which also claims that popular music is in some senses the saviour of intellectuals, since it has offered them a pleasurable site in which to practice their skills (Frith 1992:179), Frith points out that different disciplines take (and hence construct) cultural forms as different objects from their academic neighbours. For example, social anthropology and sociology treat popular music as an *ordered* kind

of social and symbolic structure' whereas cultural studies is beholden to a more *'disruptive* kind of myth' (ibid., original italics). The context of this generalisation, a conference aiming to examine cultural studies' successes and potentials, is of course political; however it emphasises the connections between the backgrounds and origins, aims, methods and politics of different disciplines and the theories they produce.

The 'mongrel' state of popular music studies simultaneously reflects the integration of and debate between different disciplines. This literature review attempts to introduce some of these debates whilst at the same time arguing for the inductive and ethnographic research approach taken in this thesis. Firstly it examines theories of popular music which attempt to explore the relationship between music and social life in a number of ways and according to different academic priorities. These theories include: the critical theory of Adorno; the work of the subculturalists in 1970s and beyond (in part a response to the structural determination of Adorno); the implications of combining musicological approaches with the sociology of music, and the search for social meaning in popular music.

Critical review of these studies is followed by examination of other studies of popular music which focus on local music practice and music scenes, and which form a movement away from text-based analysis towards an emphasis on production and on 'thicker' ethnography. Such ethnographies comment on the day-to-day activities involved in cultural practice in the context of social, economic and political relations. They inform the debate of the relationship between social location and popular music practice and have led to the emergence of concepts such as music scene and musical pathways as ways of describing the alliances, trajectories and networks found in situated musical activity.

In the context of this thesis local popular music studies are considered in terms of what opportunities they offer for the consideration of the social and political structures which affect this practice, and how they might contribute to the recent attention to music policy. As this thesis shows, popular music practice involves a wide range of sites, activities and facilities and its study begs consideration of the influences, resources and constraints offered by the policies of the local and national state. The last section is therefore concerned with the relationship between popular music and

local power structures.

The study of popular music

The sociology of music and Theodor Adorno

Theodor Adorno is very often a starting point in any textbook on popular music studies. As one of the earliest and most polemic writers on the subject, Adorno has been picked up and picked upon for his position on popular music and the sociology of music, which derives from the left-wing cultural theory originating in the Frankfurt School. This position is outlined in the essay 'On Popular Music' (written in 1941, but more widely disseminated in Frith & Goodwin, 1990) and extended in the 'Introduction to the Sociology of Music' (1962; English translation 1972). It is based upon an analysis of popular music as a product of the culture industry which examines cultural production in relation to its role in maintaining capitalist relations. To this effect culture is considered in terms of mass production, commercialism and technologies of production. Any analysis of music must take into account the relations of its production, and hence popular music was closely connected, at the time of writing for Adorno, to practices of standardisation and reproducibility associated with the mass production of this era.

Music is viewed as reflecting and sustaining its socio-economic base, and Adorno considered the different modes of production for different genres of music to be crucial to its meaning and also its status within a hierarchy of cultural forms. Classical music, or 'serious music', is thus constituted as more sophisticated, more complex and ultimately more hermeneutically satisfying, since it is produced in a climate unhindered by commodification or the pressures of mass commercialism, and consequently has autonomy from its material base. The main claim for classical music is that it has its own structural autonomy, it must be taken as a whole piece, which can only be understood in relation to itself and cannot be broken into component parts. Serious music continues to reflect the historic and social conditions of its composition - Beethoven, for Adorno, reveals the philosophical nuances of his time within the schemata of his music - but unlike entertainment music, the category under which popular music falls, is not subsumed by its use-value or the technologies of its reproduction (Adorno 1976).

Adorno's theory outlines the main tenets of popular music: 'standardisation', 'interchangeability' and 'pseudo-individualisation'. Since popular music production is rooted in a mass commercial industry, it is standardised in that its essential qualities and elements are the same across this musical category, reflected in popular music's simplistic and repetitive forms. All music must be considered standardised to some degree, since it would not otherwise be recognisable as music. Adorno, however, had a particular conceptualisation of standardisation concerning popular music involving the notion of interchangeability, in that component parts of the musical unit can be exchanged for other similar if not virtually indistinguishable parts, and pseudo-individualisation, in that each musical unit or text is given qualities that are constructed to make it seem different from its neighbour. These two latter tenets complement each other and work to reproduce the capitalist order - part interchangeability allows production to be cheaper, since each part can be produced in virtually the same way, and pseudo-individualisation increases the marketability of product by appealing to consumer preference and creating the illusion that there is a varied and changing market.

The main implications from Adorno's theory are that firstly, music always structurally and qualitatively reflects its socio-economic base, and secondly that, in relation to serious music, popular music is of lesser value socially, intellectually, culturally and emotionally:

> The higher music's relation to its historical form is dialectical. It catches fire on those forms, melts them down, makes them vanish and return in vanishing. Popular music, on the other hand, uses the types as empty cans into which the material is pressed without interacting with the forms. Unrelated to the forms, the substance withers and at the same time belies the forms, which no longer serve for compositional organisation. The *effect* of song hits - more precisely put, perhaps: their social role - might be circumscribed as that of patterns of identification. It is comparable to the effect of movie stars, of magazine cover girls, and of the beauties of hosiery and toothpaste ads. The hits not only appeal to a "lonely crowd" of the atomized: they reckon with the immature, with those who cannot express their emotions and experiences, who either never had the power of expression or were crippled by cultural taboos (Adorno

Thus Adorno recognises that consumers use popular music for emotive reasons, but delegates such consumers to the category of emotionally retarded. For Adorno, popular music offers no revolutionary potential but in fact manipulates audiences into listening to it passively, and it cannot be considered as art. It condemns listeners as consumers, whose emotions are manipulated in a synthetic way to ensure rapid and repetitive consumption of near identical product.

Gendron (1986) critiques Adorno's analogy between industrial and cultural production by assessing its adequacy when applied to mass production typical to North America in mid-twentieth century, the motor industry, and the popular music borne of this time, rock and roll. He finds that there is a degree of standardisation between 'doo-wop' songs of this era, both synchronically in terms of the style, and diachronically in terms of the similarity in structure to preceding styles, such as the Tin Pan Alley format and blues progressions. However Adorno's theory highly exaggerates standardisation, particularly between different music styles, and there is a serious flaw in his understanding of the differences between cultural production (of texts) and industrial production (of functional goods) in terms of their relation to technologies of production. The technology used to make different, interchangeable parts in the car industry is crucial to how these cars turn out and how similar they are to one another: different makes of car may look different but there is likely to be a convergence on production techniques that produce cars more cheaply and efficiently, and their internal structures are likely to be very similar. In the music industry, recording formats (the functional product) will follow this pattern - records, CDs and tapes - look the same and fulfil the same function, but recording technologies do not put the same constraints on the music that is recorded and the technologies of production (instruments, techniques, bodies) similarly offer more variety and opportunity for innovation not less (Gendron 1986: 25-6).

Gendron also discusses problems with the analogy in terms of the organisation of the music industry, and points to differences between production and consumption and across time, style and genre for which Adorno's industrial model cannot allow. He does however emphasise the importance of Adorno's work, particularly with respect to the links it draws between political economy and the meanings produced in and

derived from music:

> Meanwhile no one is addressing directly the question of the industry's role in the creation of meaning, perhaps because of the difficulties involved. The music industry is really an elaborate complex of many industries - radio, TV, records, publishing, publicity - whose integration is difficult to conceptualise. It is considerably more difficult to articulate theoretically how this convoluted system contributes to the creation of rock'n'roll meaning - one must combine political economy and semiotics and there is no established way of doing so...This is where Adorno's work can be of service (Gendron 1986: 34).

Adorno's work thus introduces important notions which are built on as well as railed against by subsequent theorists. The work of subcultural theorists of popular music, style and resistance presents a direction reaction to Adorno, taking up the semiotic strand in his work but concentrating on consumption to redress the imbalance resulting from Adorno's neglect. By taking up hegemonic theory, subcultural theory introduces a more sophisticated analysis of how consumers use pop music, and how it might present otherwise unrealised opportunities for political action.

Other theorists have worked to get closer to musical meaning, to see how social life might be represented in musical structure, through syntheses of musicology and sociology. This can be seen as the development of 'soft' scientific techniques with which to unpack the meanings presumed to be hidden in music. The call issued by Gendron - an instruction to attend to the many industries which mediate popular music - has also been taken up in research into the political economy of popular music practice and in research which examines the micro conditions surrounding this practice through situated case study. Examples of these research and analytical approaches are considered below.

Subcultural theory: activity, ritual and resistance

Subcultural theory originated from sociological studies of deviance, which aimed to explain the emergence of alternative value systems developed by social actors involved in 'deviant' behaviour. Studies include those by Howard Becker, who looked at drug users and jazz musicians in terms of the social rules and agreements these groups operated by and the careers which they embarked upon (Becker 1973).

Developed in the 1960s and 1970s as a way of looking at the activities of youth and in particular by a group of theorists at the then Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, subcultural theory has become an important approach in the examination of social experience and hence cultural activity (Negus 1996). First used to describe 'anti-social' behaviour but then adopted to consider the different styles and rituals belonging to the behaviour of subordinate groups in society, it is intimately tied to the exploration of class relations, particularly those surrounding working class youth.

The Marxian base to subcultural theory sought to explain processes of political resistance through commitment to styles and modes of behaviour. Using the key concepts of homology and bricolage, examples of subcultural theory in relation to popular music include Hebdige (1979), who examined the ways young people brought different elements of cultural activity (dress, movement and sound) to use against the institutional environments surrounding them. Taking music styles such as Reggae and Punk, Hebdige exposed the fallacy of considering culture as monolithic or as a juxtaposition of majority and minority, showing how groups of people took up visual and sonic codes actively and creatively to contest the social order proscribed by factors such as class, gender, ethnicity and age (Negus 1996). Other accounts looked at mods, teds, skinheads, rudeboys and bikers and found a proliferation of differentiated subcultures aligned with particular practices of signification and patterns of consumption which they suggested resisted the relations of 'parent' culture, dominant culture and mass culture (Willis 1990; Hall & Jefferson 1976).

The presence of concept of homology within this work is used to signify the relations between different elements of subcultures, their styles and codes and the experiences they are based upon; for Hebdige *et al* it expresses the cohesiveness of these subcultures revealing an internal order to their activities and values. Rather than a random collection of mannerisms, dress and music styles, the signification of subcultures involves the choosing of artefacts and sounds that are imbued with intended meanings within the subcultural context. Hebdige, for example, talks of the swastika, the safety pin and the 'soul-less' harsh sounds of punk as expressing a parody of the 'spiritual paucity of everyday life' (Hebdige 1990:57) and representing the material and existential poverty he felt early punk to be protesting against.

Homology has come to mean the 'fit' between such symbolic orders and their material and ideological positions, and has been taken up by others examining the relationship between music and society (Shepherd 1990, see below).

There was critical response to these early workings of subcultural theory as McRobbie (1990) questioned the focus on male subcultures at the risk of neglecting female cultural practice. Similarly the emphasis on radical culture prompted Gary Clarke to ask 'what about mainstream?'. He contested that this reading of subcultures as innovative and magical resistance to the 'normal' recreated the duality between mainstream and subordinate that the theorists were attempting to avoid, and argued that equally valid subjects for research lay in the less glamorous activities of all youth cultures, such as the 'ski-jumper' wearing 'townies' of his article (Clarke 1990).

A contemporary example of the development in subculture theory is Sarah Thornton's work on club culture. Thornton examines 'clubbing' and 'raving' that began in Britain around 1988, in relation to recording technologies, youth subcultures and the media (Thornton 1995). She returns to the Chicago School, and in particular Becker's definition of subcultures in opposition to other social groups' behaviour in her work, since she wants to examine how, through distinctions of behaviour and taste, the formation of subcultural ideologies offer youth and other social groups their own visible entry into power relations:

> distinctions are never just assertions of equal difference; they usually entail some claim to authority and presume the inferiority of *others* (Thornton 1995: 201).

She also draws on Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital to develop her own term 'subcultural capital'. Subcultural capital relies on the same processes as cultural capital: the importance of particular forms of social knowledge and its use at appropriate times and locations; its location within (non-linear) hierarchies or webs of social groups; the reliance of subcultural groups on networks of association, affiliation and distribution of information, in particular the media, for their definition. Subcultural capital is however less class-based, according to Thornton, in line with the changing stratifications of post-industrialism, so that differences are expressed more in terms of socio-spatial reference (for example, mainstream versus underground) than

in terms of dominant and subordinate classes. This is at once paradoxical however, since

> classlessness is a strategy for transcending being classed. It is a means of obfuscating the dominant structure in order to set up an alternative (Thornton 1995:209)

Thus Thornton echoes and continues the development of subcultural theory, to reveal one social function of music consumption as political practice, as resistance to dominant cultures and the creation of different social space. Crucially, however, her account emphasises the role of institutions and individuals outside of but intimately involved with the subcultural audience. For example, she points to the commercial interests of club owners in creating space and appeal for subcultural activity and the media in naming subcultures and hence helping them define their activity as resistance. It is this distinction - the interdependencies between the mainstream and the underground and the important role of these relations in the consequent meanings - which elevates this analysis and shows the continued relevance of subcultural theory is contingent on examination of the complex relations surrounding musical activity.

Musical meaning: music as a social text

Another criticism of subcultural theory lies in relation to its inadequacy to deal with music's specificities. Subcultural theory objectifies signifying practice as cultural texts, which can be examined and read to reveal the intentions and construction of meaning in the actions of the individuals and groups involved, and relates these texts to structural elements found in social life. It originates in part from semiotic and linguistic theory and as such has been criticised as lacking the conceptual tackle for sonic analysis. To examine pop music as a social text implies slightly different parameters than those of other forms of textual analysis. Putting lyrical analysis temporarily aside, it explicitly supposes that the music itself has a material form than can be read, that can tell a story about social life, presumably the social life that surrounds its production and consumption.

John Shepherd (1990) observes the problematical nature of interpreting meaning in music and attempts to ascertain the largest obstacles to analysing the process of musical representation of the social. Music is a form of communication and therefore

is inherently social and symbolic. The symbols that it uses however (apart from lyrics) are internally referential - they belong to their own internal language of sound that does not have direct relation to the outer concepts or things that make up our social world. As collection of unconsummated symbols, music therefore cannot rely on external or extra-mental concepts for its interpretation.

Shepherd rejects psychologistic or psychological theories of meaning in music however, because of his first observation - that music is inherently social. This language is conceived of and practised by humans as social beings and it relies on symbolic exchange. Trying to contain its interpretation to psychological theories does not allow us to step outside of the inner mental realm, except to say that music works symbolically because we recognise what it is saying - because it has structural conformity, we are familiar with the certain devices that it uses and thus can derive meaning and pleasure. This notion of familiarity with musical structures suggests that music works as a form of cultural learning - we learn from socialisation to recognise what gives us pleasure - but, although this relates individual use of music to socially derived meaning, it does not go far enough in explaining how the recognisable symbols are initially socially created. The 'rules' and hence the meanings of music are still locked within the relationship between human mind and musical structure (Martin 1995; Shepherd 1991).

However, Shepherd intends to decipher the 'social' in music by looking for 'structural homologies' between musical and social structure. These are revealed by the correspondence of different music to different ontological conditions; the ways that these conditions differ are dependent on criteria such as perceptions of time and space, industrialisation, professionalisation of music, and configurations of power. With regard to popular music, Shepherd continues the same form of analysis, contextualised in industrial capitalist relations. He attempts to show the homological fit between different material elements of music (melody, harmony, rhythm and timbre) and the producers' location within the material and historical conditions of society and maintains that these homologies are principally organised around class and race.

He concentrates particularly on the influence of Afro-American history on musical structure and on the tensions between the roots of Afro-American music in cross-fertilisation of African harmonic-rhythmic structures and the structures of functional

tonality of Western culture in slavery days. For example, he contends that the marginal position of black people in American society is revealed in their use and abuse of the dominant framework of contemporaneous popular music:

> With the move of blacks to urban areas, their relative increase in political power and their increasingly overt aggressiveness towards white culture, the framework drawn from functional tonality became closer and more oppressive...In order to contest the framework, it was necessary to take on some of its elements. That is why those blacks who could see little point in contesting the predominant social system, and who were resigned to living within it, had a music that was 'dirtier', 'less structured' and more symptomatic of an emotionally rich relationship to the here and now (Shepherd 1991:142).

Shepherd's attempt to explicate the relationship between social location and musical structure is problematical not least because of the scale of the subject he addresses. His project is primarily musicological, overlain with sociological implications, but fails to offer much insight into the other elements of popular music practice – organisation of musicians and music groups, access to technology and instruments, the political economy of recording and marketing – which may 'thicken' this account. The account essentialises black (and white) music, and is confused by the use of blanket terms such as 'dirty', 'cool' and 'laid back' to describe important distinctions between different musics and by its position following his assertion that meaning in music is so hard to reach.

Music and meaning: music as social organisation

With reference to the relationship between music and the social world, Blacking (1987) makes an weighty if largely unsubstantiated claim, when he attempts to reverse the focus of analysis. He states that:

> social life can be organised musically...as art can reflect and challenge society, so social life can be modelled on art. Musical symbols need not always be secondary, and the reality of social life can be constructed with musical intelligence (Blacking 1987:259).

Defining musical intelligence as

the cognitive and affective equipment with which people make *musical* sense of the world (Blacking 1987.:260)

Blacking argues that musical behaviour, or indeed any aesthetic behaviour might be considered endemic to humanity, and thus should be studied to understand its contribution to the structure of social organisation. Although Blacking recognises cultural differences in what he calls 'musical thought' - the specific musical practices taken up in societies, he indicates a universal process, where music-making can be socially transformative, the source of social change, and where the musical intelligence acts as the model for social organisation. He suggests that by examining these processes sociologically we might reveal important relationships between aesthetic activity and production and cognitive and affective structures.

Thus, Blacking in some senses prioritises musical structures over social action, but offers no empirical evidence to support this claim. Ultimately, this is a political statement aimed at introducing a research agenda which highlights the sociology of music, but little else, in terms of the complexities of cultural and social organisation revealed by sociological and musicological research at the time Blacking was writing and since.

Popular musicology and popular music sociology

> In the sociological perspective, music assumes social meaning and significance first in relation to external factors. This is not to say that music can be reduced to social data; a sociology of music without music is, of course, inconceivable (Trondman 1990: 75).

Musicology of popular music attempts to discover social influences on musical structure and focuses on pieces of music as texts to be deconstructed, through methodologies borne of classical musicology. Some theorists have argued however that popular music must be treated as a special case not least because these methodologies are not sufficiently developed to understand the particular problems popular music poses. Indeed they find that classical musicology creates a division which mirrors Adorno's distinction between 'serious music' and 'popular music' where the former is considered infinitely more sophisticated and aesthetically valuable and hence more worthwhile of study than the latter. They argue that whilst there has been

a growth in popular music studies that examine its social and cultural implications, popular musicology is equally as important but severely unresourced (McClary & Walser 1990).

Philip Tagg's work, primarily in the area of popular and film music musicology and semiotics points to some of the questions suggested by Blacking, Mclary and Walser, offering a scientific way of decoding social meanings in musical structures and musical reflections of social life. Tagg is also deeply concerned to ensure that these forms of analysis are directed at neglected areas of study: for Tagg the more populist forms of music - popular music and film music

> All cultures have music, but many see no reason for distinguishing what we (in modern "Western" culture) mean by "music" from other forms of ritual or symbolic action. Such confusion about whether music is or is not and, if it is, what it might or might not communicate and so on is just one symptom of alienation in our culture. It is also an anthropological warning signal that our tradition of knowledge may contain some basic flaws. The notion and position of music in the public conscious and unconscious constitute at any rate an epistemological mess affecting and infecting the relationship of humans as subjects to the social and physical environments in which they are also objects (Tagg 1990: 103).

He stresses that music is prolific and pervasive in almost all aspects of social life and should be respected as such in educational curricula, which currently reveal a lack of awareness of the levels of musical competence held by humans. Popular music in particular gets a raw deal according to Tagg, who stresses the need to build new theories and conceptual skills and tools to deal with this as well knock down 'a few holy cows', an allusion to an exaggerated reverence of classical musicology and its inappropriate application to popular music.

Tagg's methods feature the development of ways of talking about the missing links in popular musicology - these are for example the relationship between musical structure and phenomenology (meaning) and between phenomenology and findings of macro theory, culture theory and media studies (social structures) (Tagg 1990: 106). An elaborate system of semiotics is required to probe how music is full of reference to the

social environment in which it is produced (and consumed). Once this has been adequately devised, to cope with elements as disparate as the implications of snare drum sound in rock'n'roll songs to the use of a particular minor chord in a drum'n'bass track, and relate either to the social structures within which they are produced in and the ways in which they are reproduced and received, then popular music studies may be getting closer to reaching and verifying the musical meanings incorporated in their topic of study (Tagg 1993).

McClary and Walser similarly berate the main problem of popular musicology, the lack of tradition, cohesive conceptual and theoretical framework in which to produce analysis. They point out however that although, as Tagg (1982) has shown, to begin a relatively simple musicological analysis of popular music an awkward journey of marking the theoretical ground and building conceptual frameworks must be embarked upon, popular music studies have benefited in contrast to classical musicology by wealthy sociological input and a short but full tradition of examining these forms of music in very close relation to society (McClary & Walser 1990:284).

Middleton (1990) has attempted to redress musicology's shortcomings: he understands them to be due to the misreading of popular music by traditional musicology, which misses the sonic elements specific to the pleasures of pop and undervalued in its judgement. Musicology is thus ideological in that it prescribes a scientific method which purports to offer objective study but only for particular types of music. Middleton also is concerned that other missing elements of popular music's analysis are not neglected - chiefly the importance of performance and the influence of different contexts of reception. Cultural practice and context must be premised in musicology; social factors cannot be divorced from musical ones (Street 1993:280-1). Thus popular musicology again directs the researcher towards the social context of music production and consumption, as well as calling for more methodological resources by which to dissemble musical meaning.

Martin's examination of music is explicitly sociological: his aim in 'Sounds and society' (1995) is to assess the usefulness of examining the relationship between social life and music. By reviewing sociological and psychological approaches Martin demonstrates the influence of social factors on the construction of musical meaning, indicating how cultural conventions instruct how music is interpreted and how

musical structure itself is dependent on the social organisation of society. For this purpose, and wholly within the tradition of popular music studies, he turns to critical theory and Adorno, to examine the representation of society in music. Martin however disagrees with Adorno's expression of the reflection of the social in music, arguing that Adorno does not develop the appropriate conceptual tools and is hampered by his own value-judgements. He outlines more contemporary attempts to examine music in terms of social structures, including Alan Lomax's extensive research on the structure of song and its relation to individualist and collectivist configurations of society and Shepherd's work on the musical articulation of social reality. Martin is concerned however that the implication in both Adorno and Shepherd's work, that musical structures embody social structures places structural determination over individual agency, without resolving the problem of the relationship between music and the social. He distinguishes between structuralist and interpretative approaches to this relationship, where structuralist analysis can be considered synchronic since it assumes a relationship between different structures at the same time in society. Interpretative analysis considers structural patterns in cultural activity (homologies) to be responses to changing circumstances emerging in society, and therefore doesn't presuppose correlations between musical and social structures but rather seeks to prove or disprove them (Martin 1995:164).

Dissatisfied by structural explanations of meaning and content of music, Martin then turns to action theories, specifically working through Becker's conception of 'art worlds' and its application by others as an attempt to reconcile the problems in relating individual agency, innovation and collective organisation of the social world. The final analytical area for Martin is that of examining music and the market, where music is simultaneously work and commodity. Examining the production of music in the industrial world gives Martin the space to concentrate on literature concerned with popular music as the dominant genre of the music industry and implicate this area as a neglected focus of sociological study. He suggests sociological analysis is entirely appropriate since his conclusion points to the social need for popular music as an agent of social cohesion - for him the music business holds

> a position and significance [which] in contemporary culture are unprecedented (Martin 1995:275)

Thus Martin's account highlights the dichotomy of structure and action in relation to music, and although ultimately it fails to resolve it, it points to the importance of considering popular music's relation to social life as specific to the conditions surrounding this relationship. It also points to the political and economic potential of popular music, and the merits of an interpretative understanding of the social worlds which inform and realise these potentials.

The work reviewed above thus raises a number of issues. Popular music is important to the way in which different social groups distinguish themselves and alter their position in power relations. The identifications made through cultural practice work politically in social life, but must be seen in the context of surrounding conditions, including the influence of media institutions and in terms of participants' access to political and economic resources. Attempts to understand the meanings which popular music communicates involve a mixture of approaches, which variously prioritise the musical and social structures to be examined, but also point to the importance of examining social action and interrelations between actors involved.

Other theorists argue that the issue – the excavation of musical structure in order to see how it acts on us socially - is indeed so complex that time would be better spent concentrating on its social use and the conveyance and formation of meaning through mediation:

> To search for *the* 'meaning' is probably a waste of time, and it might give more insight into how music communicates to follow the processes of change which occur as the music leaves its points of origins and connects with different bodies across a range of social and technological mediations. It is perhaps the way that music connects with meanings that indicates how it can work and be made to work for particular political agendas (Negus 1996: 192, original italics).

Street, like Negus, urges consideration of the tensions existing in the mediating sectors of popular music and of the aesthetic politics of popular music production and consumption:

> Musicological study of the sounds must be integrated with a sociological account of the context in which they are heard. Furthermore, this setting is not

determined either by audience or by industry, but by a constantly evolving tussle between the two, and the sectors within them. Nor does the context exist only in present. It is constituted by collective and individual memories of past experiences. Equally, the process of understanding cannot be separated from that of judgements about what is being heard and the response it evokes (Street 1993:288).

Interdisciplinarity appears to resolve some of these debates, and indeed has both been encouraged and evolved in the growth of popular music study. However, the above quotations suggest two issues which should be emphasised in popular music studies. these are the contingency of the meaning of popular music on the context of its mediation, and the power relations, judgements and decision-making that surround popular music practice. In the next section I critically assess some ethnographic studies which look at the context of local popular music production, mediation and consumption. These ethnographies, I argue, potentially facilitate the aims of the above theorists, in that they allow close attention to the sectors of activity in popular music making and consumption and to the processes, conflicts and relationships involved. By situating practice in the social, political and geographical contexts of their locales, the studies also have the potential to explore the relationships between cultural practice and the wider political structures and institutions particular to these places.

The study of popular music practice: local ethnography and local music scenes

Localised studies of popular music allow researchers to examine musical practices in relation to the economic, political and technological structures within which they are situated and in relation to the actions of those individuals who populate the interlocking spheres that constitute cultural production and consumption. The preferred methodological approach is that of 'thicker' ethnography, immersing the researcher in the field and allowing them to re-construct the lived experiences of these individuals and reflect the contexts of their practices. In this next section I examine some ethnographic studies of musical practice in towns and cities, which have provided material for debates over the relationship between music and place. These studies are considered with particular regard to the notion of 'scene', as a concept with

potential to encapsulate the micro and macro elements in situated musical practice.

Local music practice, pathways and scenes

Finnegan's detailed study of music making in Milton Keynes is a study in microscopic detail of local musical practices. Following and documenting both quantitatively and qualitatively the variety of activities connected with music in the town, the account reveals the importance of music in a host of different settings. She examines rock and pop amongst many other forms of practice, spanning the professional-amateur (but mainly the latter) continuum, to explore the beliefs, motivations and values surrounding participation in musical activity and the reasons why people embark on particular 'musical pathways'. Attempting to discover the significance of local musical practice to the wider structures and experiences of urban life Finnegan finds that, in opposition to the impersonal anti-communal properties associated with the new city of her fieldwork, local individuals follow 'habitual routes' and create networks and communities in their musical practice (Finnegan 1989: 306). These pathways, through which people sustain alliances and associations with both others and the institutions where they practise and perform are, with the notable exception of rock and pop, often inspired by family connections with music as well as traditions of music-making in the locality.

Finnegan aims by looking at all types of music, musical activity and musical participants to establish what system lies behind this practice, concluding that music is a deeply embedded cultural practice, which threads through people's lives as a social modality as strongly connected to humanity as any economic, symbolic or linguistic practice (Finnegan 1989: 341). She discusses the resources and rewards that people draw upon within the musical worlds which they inhabit, and finds unsurprisingly that in local music-making economic return is only part of the story. Thus she uses the examination of musical practice in one location to extract general observations of the significance of music in social life. However, although she uses this wide-ranging research into different sorts of music-making to examine differences between musical genres, the account fails to explain further why rock and pop (or popular music as it is termed here) involves the distinctions described in relation to music's significance to urban living. It also neglects to adequately examine how the specific political characteristics and civic structures of Milton Keynes might influence local music

practice, which may lead to the findings of research being less rather than more universal.

Cohen examines the practice of music making in another site in her book 'Rock Culture in Liverpool' (Cohen, 1991). Framing the subject as a micro-culture in itself, this anthropological study closely follows the members of two local bands as they engage in the practice of 'trying to make it' in a commercial sense. This account of one particular music scene explores the bands, businesses and events, relationships, issues and problems that inhabit and occur within it. Similarly to Finnegan the detailed study works to extrapolate the values and ideologies attached to and associated with particular events, behaviour and the music itself. Certain dualisms and dialectics emerge, revealing conflict between the dual pursuits of art and commerce, and demonstrating tensions in social relations, in particular gender relations, where women are posited as a threat to the status quo of the male-dominated rock and pop culture.

The study offers the opportunity to examine the situated practice of 'rock culture' in terms of social and cultural processes which generally surround popular music and in terms of the musical history, scenes and communities found on Merseyside. Cohen (1991) does not however explicitly consider more structural constraints and opportunities which the local environment and economy has to offer, preferring to concentrate on the micro-relations surrounding the different individuals and groups involved. The local political and economic structures, although discussed in terms of the issues and problems revealed in tensions between different interest groups, are therefore not considered in terms of political ideologies and institutions they represent, so that there is no real systemic analysis of the relationship between local political and economic structures and music making in Liverpool. Also, although the examination of the bands' music practice introduces the tensions and conflicts over gendered identities endemic to the music industry, the issue of different political interests and identities – local, ethnic, class-based or otherwise - as represented and recreated through popular music never really informs the study's conclusions. The study does point however to the growing interest in popular music by local and national policy-makers, particularly in terms of economic development and regeneration and tourism, and indeed this work began a series of localised studies on

Merseyside which address the role and influence of local political and social structures on local music scenes. These studies are discussed further below and *in situ* in later chapters with regard to local cultural policy and musical practice.

Shank's account of the rock'n'roll scene in Austin, Texas presents another detailed ethnography of a local music scene, which also offers a historiography of the Texan singing cowboy in an attempt to recover the influences on the collective musical psyche of the contemporary scene (Shank 1994). Shank combines a number of approaches to examine identity in relation to music and place. Firstly, he traces the socio-musical heritage of Austin, to show how the commercial production of popular music in this local is grounded in cultural tradition of the honky-tonk and the legacies of 'cowboy lore' (Shank 1994: 37). He tracks the shift through different styles and performance practices using Lacanian theory and social psychology of adolescence, and discusses how subjectivities are produced within Austin music scenes. Shank then turns to the production of identity in the commercial milieu of the music industry. This involves looking at the construction of a local music industry and its consolidation and special relationship with the Austin Chamber of Commerce, culminating in an ethnography of the subsequent music industry forum that is established and used to literally sell Austin through its music scenes.

Shank's work sees the beginning of a more developed analysis and presentation of the concept of 'music scenes'. His work suggests the historical influences on scenes, and also points to their fluidity, as he describes the shifts in the conditions, and hence the meanings and potentials, that occur in his chosen locality from musical practice in the context of performance and identity work, to a more commodified scenario based on recording and pursuit of profit in an international market:

> The basis on which good music in Austin was traditionally evaluated was an aesthetic of performance that acknowledged the power of musicalized experience in the production of adolescent identities. Music abstracted from the conditions of that experience - that is recorded in a studio and sold to a record company where it becomes a commodity competitively exchanged - is no longer susceptible to such an aesthetic...Music-making in Austin now focuses on recordings rather than live performance. Live performance is now treated as one aspect of a complex industry oriented to the production and

circulation of commodities in the pursuit of wealth (Shank 1994: 250-1).

The example of the South by South West music industry conference, initiated by the Austin Chamber of Commerce, reveals how the relations created and upheld by the commercialised music sphere are both dependent on local cultural traditions and supported by local policy. Shank maintains that the regional conference, which included four days of live events hosting local bands, was indicative of the importance of live performance to the history of industrialised music-making and the contemporary music scenes which revolved around the region's clubs were involved in a relationship with local political structures through the inclusion of Austin's music industry in local policy. This inclusion, which included the development of local business links to musical activity, evolved to forefront the recording industry aiming to further the profitability of local music making and promote it on a national and international scale. Whilst this development recognised live performance as the 'research and development' for the local music industry it also altered the ethics and meanings of local music performance:

> The experience and the aspirations of musical performance turned form 'playing music and 'not having to work' to 'making it easier for other people to like it' and 'being in business for yourself and making a living for it' (Shank 1994: 248).

Thus Shank's account suggests that there are complex relations between local music practice, embodied in the notion of 'scenes', and local music policy, which holds the institutional power to sway and further particular aims, objectives and interests. Whilst he recognises that Austin contains many music scenes organised around different musical styles and genres and is particularly concerned with the practice of adolescent identity construction (Shank: op cit.), the account suggests that demographics of Austin music industry is now more formally organised around the commercial agenda introduced by the political intervention into cultural production; the aesthetics of local music making are dependent on the political ethos of success in the commercial sphere.

These studies – Finnegan, Cohen and Shanks – introduce the argument that social practices and relations involved in music making are organised according to networks

and alliances which are in turn effected by their position in relation to political, economic and cultural resources. The conceptual tools emerging from these examinations include musical pathways, communities and music scenes. It is to the latter which I now turn, as concept which prioritises the aesthetic and organisational implications of the relationship between music practice and its surrounding political and social conditions.

In 'Systems of articulation, logics of change' (1991) Straw considers, amongst other issues, the relationship between scenes, differentiated by location and by musical terrain, and social groups primarily organised around class, gender, sexuality and race/ethnicity. His discussion of the 'systems of articulation' and 'logics of change' in popular music is contextualised in the growing concern of popular music scholars to examine relations between music and place in the context of globalisation, as evidenced by the interest in urban musical cultures. In this he compares music as a cultural sector to that of film, commentary on which suggests that film product targeted at a global audience is increasingly homogenised in a process of internationalisation and separated in form and content from smaller scale production aimed at the domestic market. Popular music by comparison, Straw maintains, is not necessarily reduced to internationally homogenous and generically simplified consumption practices, but is in fact highly diversified, implying more strategically individualised consumption practice based on social location:

> [it] is...marked to a much greater extent by its importance within processes of social differentiation and interaction. The drawing and enforcing of boundaries between musical forms, the marking of racial, class-based and gender differences, and the maintenance of lines of communication between dispersed cultural communities are all central to the elaboration of musical meaning and value. What the analyst may reconstruct in the case of the cinema - the correlation of tastes and consumption patterns with categories of social identity - is a much more explicit and resonant component of the sense music fans make of their own involvement in the culture of popular music (Straw 1991: 372).

Straw stretches this analysis to look at the implications for musical form across different locales and levels of production and consumption and across both time and

space, by contrasting the notions of scene and community. Noting the usefulness of the concept of scene from earlier work by Shank as one that accounts 'for the relationship between different musical practices unfolding within a given geographical space' (op cit.: 373), Straw recognises that music can create a sense of community amongst those involved in musical practices in particular locales, but seeks to ascertain the 'logics' that drive and change music as well as motivate these peculiar relationships. Musical communities are relatively stable and are fixed within the given trajectory of the particular musical form or idiom they are based around; musical scenes however are concerned with a mixture of practices, constructing their own terrains symbolically from the activities associated with production or reproduction of musical styles and forms, the creation of musical taste and value and identity demarcation. They thus have different 'logics' to those of communities:

> The manner in which musical practices within in a scene tie themselves to processes of historical change occurring within a larger international musical culture will also be a significant basis of the way in which such forms are positioned within that scene at the local level (Straw 1991: 372).

These local levels are often urban centres: both differentiation and continuity are organised in the metropolis at institutional level, around the situated activity of record labels and shops, venues and clubs, and communication and distribution networks. These institutions are the sites that house scenes, and

> [t]hese sites, themselves shaped by their place within the contemporary metropolis and aligned with populations along the lines of class and taste, provide the conditions of possibility of alliances between musical styles and affective links between dispersed geographical places (Straw 1991: 384).

By concentrating on the 'logics' of particular systems of articulation Straw can examine the characteristics of scenes diachronically and in terms of their geography and temporality, factors he finds important when looking at the differences between alternative rock and dance cultures. For example, he finds that more recent alternative rock scenes can be parallel or overlapping in different locations, rather than following the previous pattern of having a dominant localised style which led the way for others grounded in other locations. With dance scenes however, Straw traces a culture that

operates to a different temporality since the networks of distribution and sites, practices and units of consumption are very differently organised to those of the older canon. The connections between different locations and dance styles are linked to these practices and act to define particular movements within dance music's rapid history.

Kruse also focuses on scenes in a discussion which posits US college music as a site for subcultural behaviour. She maintains that an alternative music subculture is facilitated by college music scenes and is typified by practices associated with the resources and conditions found there. College radio is extremely significant as an alternative distribution service, offering potential alternative 'cult' status through college charts and reviews in local fanzines for the music which is usually produced through independent labels or through domestic production. The small scale of production and its reliance on local and regional services incorporates local geography into the heart of musical practice, so that

> college music is associated not just with college radio, but with particular geographical sites...[it] is largely geographically defined (Kruse 1993: 33)

Kruse's conception of scene implies sets of practices which although specific to their location can bear similarity and relation to other scenes. Thus the 'indie' scenes she describes in Champaign, Seattle and Minneapolis have identifiable characteristics in common, which may be replicated or at least represented in the more amorphous (and less-researched) conception of trans-national or trans-local scene.

Olson (1998) takes issue with Straw's conception of scene, which he claims is undertheorised. By defining scene as a 'cultural space' which hosts a range of practices, Olson is concerned that this empties out such spaces, leaving them to act merely as receptacles for action, so that ultimately the notion of scene is equated or conflated to that of community, without assessing the impact of the cultural space or locality on the scenes which inhabit them.

This concern for cultural spaces appears however to misunderstand the complexity of 'scenes' which Straw attempts to unravel. It is the musical practices that constitute scenes which comprise the relationship between locality and action: scenes in this sense can be considered as praxis. Space, particularly cultural space does not exist

independently but is always reliant on the ontological factors which bind and define it. Thus the cultural spaces which host scenes can never be the 'contourless terrain' (Olson 1998: 271), which Olson fears them to be designated according to Straw's definition.

Olson also details issues raised by Grossberg (1994) in relation to scenes. These include the proviso that scenes should be viewed as relatively autonomous from the musical practices pertaining to them, in that a particular practice does not necessarily imply a particular musical form or style, e.g. second-hand record buying does not necessarily mean adherence to the Northern Soul scene; aspirations to musical mecca do not necessarily mean Elvis and Graceland, but could point to the Beatles and Liverpool or REM and Athens, Georgia. Secondly, scenes should be considered the 'apparatae' of music - as such they are constructed vehicles deployed for selling music, and in this guise they are commercially and discursively (through associated media) driven. Thus, as media communications expand and multinationals aim at global markets the role of (localised) scenes changes, as the cultural product sold by them must be marketed in increasingly differentiable ways.

> it is important to position the recent proliferation of scene-marketing within a larger shift in the economics of the entertainment business, a shift predicated on the absorption of record labels into multimedia conglomerates. These conglomerates produce highly mobile commodities that are marketed across a wider variety of media. As such, the recent attempts to organize taste through the marketing of scenes can be viewed as one extension of the *deterritorializing logic of capitalism* (Olson: 272-3, my italics).

Olson points to the ways which commercialism (re)constructs the narratives of scenes as part of this deterritorialisation. Hence, global capital requires that the meanings of scenes are not predicated upon their original geographical locales in relation to the logics of capitalism deterritorialisation of cultural space. The histories of scenes can be re-invented to suit such a purpose:

> the logic of capital works in a contrary trajectory, for such historical knowledge works to situate scenes into particular narratives of space-time and therefore hinders a scene's mobility (op cit.: 274)

Olson suggests that scenes can be built around particular institutions, when he discusses the similarity between the music scene surrounding the Subpop record label, and the Seattle grunge scene. Similarly he talks of the Motown scene, as being almost entirely disconnected from its host city Detroit, but operating in the same way as a geographically based scene. However he shies from developing this point, prohibiting any further insight into a notion of cultural space, or territorialisation premised on branding or commercial allegiance rather than geographical site.

Olson conceives of scenes in terms of trajectories, flows and movement. Allegiances can be seen as fleeting rather than as fixed and rigid as geography, as fans move or 'migrate' from scene to scene, so that scenes are 'temporal trajectories of belonging' (op cit. 282). This analysis, although interesting in its approach to the media and communications industry's influence on the creation of supra-local music scenes, avoids consideration of the conditions and characteristics of the places of origin of music scenes, or indeed the relationships between social and political structures, local identities and trans-local scenes once they have landed - have been successfully - marketed at - the localities of reception.

Masahiro Yasuda examines the relation between music and place in his comparison of two scenes which are arguably either trans-locations of one scene from its original American situation or representative of the transculturation of indigenous culture to a faux-American context. Yasuda's work offers a historical account of the influence and affect of local state policy on music in Tokyo and Paris, leading to a discussion on present day Hip Hop scenes and their comparative differences.

From his ethnography of Hip Hop scenes in Paris and Tokyo, Yasuda finds that although these scenes initially use black American records and publications as a resource and appropriate US Hip Hop language and gesture, the physical space and social structures within which the scenes operate impact on music practices so that they become distinct and localised. For example, in a discussion of the significance of 'street' to Hip Hop semiography, Yasuda suggests that because of the prohibition of Hip Hop due to its threat to French social order in central Paris and the lack of focal point that may have been provided by permanent venues, the notion of street in this scene is mobilised, and finds itself physically instanciated in the metro trains running from the centre to the banlieue, in the form of stickers, graffiti and 'tagging'. In

Tokyo, the 'street' is not the residential territory suggested by the US term of (neighbour-) 'hood' oft-quoted in Hip Hop lyrics, but rather relates to the high class shopping and business district, Shibuya, ironically constructed as a strategy to upgrade the area, but re-appropriated by Japanese b-boys as an area of display (Yasuda 1998). The allegiances and practices constituted in scene membership are intimately involved with local identities and local urban policies, despite being predicated on trans-national music scenes.

This thesis considers local music practices in Leicester in terms of music scenes, networks and communities primarily in Chapter 4, where the local infrastructure for music practice is examined and case studies which look at the relationship between music scenes, communities, networks and facilities are discussed. Studies which examine music scenes in geographical location, such as those by Shank and Yasuda, indicate how the regulative bodies and political structures of these places are concerned with cultural activity. These studies show that the political conditions of localities are important to the creation and reception of music scenes; in this next section I look at some which explicitly link the examination of music scenes with that of local music policy.

Popular music, politics and policy

The relationship between popular music and political expression and action has been indicated by the above studies and theoretical approaches and other studies document empirical examples of this potential in more detail. Popular music, through lyrics, associations with sound and image and political alignment of artists, has been used to mobilise interest groups and has invoked reactions from those threatened by its potential, as explored and documented by Street (1986). Other writers within the canon of popular music studies have also examined this potential in more crystallised form as rock and pop has been created, performed, sold and listened to under the explicit heading of political protest (Garofalo 1992; Wallis & Malm 1992). It has also been banned, censored, constrained and organised by national states, as shown by studies such as Cloonan (1996) and Wicke (1992, 1993).

Central to all of these accounts is the potential popular music has to communicate, to represent social groups and to provoke a response, and underlying this potential is the

notion that popular music has political, social and cultural value. Theoretical approaches to popular music have recognised and studied the conflicts between popular music and dominant social orders embodied in the state, in social institutions and in social stratifications of class, gender, age and ethnicity. The growth of popular music as an industry, the development of technology and the rise in economic and political power of media industries have suggested that the relationship between regulatory and institutional bodies and popular culture needs examining according to additional criteria to that of popular political value. The recent concern in popular music studies with the intervention of states, local and national, into popular music practice through cultural and other policies has awoken a debate about how these values are mediated and controlled by processes outside of music-making and reception. As Bennett et al (1993) recognise, the embracing of popular music as an industry by governments suggested that rock and pop had moved from the political expression of youth and counter-cultures, in the eyes of the state, to an important economic force.

> Things had therefore seemed relatively simple during the 1960s and much of the 1970s. Rock was good because it was authentic to subcultural and counter-cultural values. These values were in opposition to the dynamics of capitalism and their expression through the actions of the music industry was to be welcomed. Rock was political...By the mid-1980s, therefore, initial critical *and* commonsense discourses of rock were beginning to fragment. Established discourses based on notions of opposition, national cultures and cultural 'meanings' were becoming uncomfortable. There was world music, the industry (or, more correctly, industries) was no longer so clearly dominated by the US (and, to a lesser extent, Britain); the industries were less concerned with the production and management of commodities than they were with the management of rights; governments which once held rock at arm's length as socially and morally undesirable were beginning to realize that it was big business with policy implications (Bennett et al 1993:2-3).

As the arts and cultural industries have been highlighted more recently for their potential in economic development and in urban regeneration there is growing body of work which examines this potential and attempts to assess the economic, social and

cultural impact of policy aimed at nurturing these industries.

Street (1993b, 1995) examines the campaign for a council-supported local venue in Norwich as a case study of local politics and popular music. Here, action by local musical communities created opportunities for local consumption of popular music produced nationally, as a venue with capacity for major visiting acts was established after lobbying by local music fans and interest groups. This local political recognition of popular music and the agendas of its lobbyists was, Street maintains, indicative of both the local political structures and the political resources which campaigners drew upon: Norwich's Waterfront venue complied with the aims of the local state to improve arts and leisure facilities in conjunction with the physical regeneration of the area, and the personal experiences of some of the lobbyists allowed them to structure their campaign in sympathy with the characteristics of the local policy process (Street 1997). Thus, local music communities were provided with facilities that linked them to the wider music scenes and activities, through their access to more global consumption of popular music performances at the local venue.

Cohen (1991, 1991b, 1994, 1995) has also been concerned with the relationships between local popular music scenes and industries, local strategies and policy for arts and cultural industries and local research and education centres in her research on Merseyside, since her initial research in the area discussed above. This work has revealed the many different factors at play in local music scenes and industries and the accompanying agendas that advise the competition over resources in a local region. Industry members, educational establishments, local authorities and national government agencies, arts and cultural consultants, local businessmen, musicians and club-goers are all involved in the struggle over capital, all with competing perceptions, evaluations and definitions of local scenes, industries and sounds.

Cohen's focus has been particularly directed at the relationships involved between these different sectors and their reactions to the particular developments, policy changes and events in the region surrounding Liverpool and in relation to wider national and international developments. The organisation of the Merseyside music industry, its struggle to compete as a regional entity on a national and international basis and with other local industries and the recent development of cultural funding for the region through European structural funds figure strongly in this and

forthcoming work[4].

These theorists are concerned with the relationships between the practice of popular music and the actions and policies of local governance agencies. These are agencies belonging to what Negus terms 'benevolent' states (Negus 1996:209), defined as such to distinguish them from the oppressive policies of regulation, propaganda and censure of repressive states, such as Nazi Germany. Benevolent policies can be divided into two main areas: those which are protectionist of local culture and those which provide local resources. Policies of the former category are concerned with the promoting local culture and economies through strategies such as the imposition of music quotas on radio stations (where a percentage of music played must be local), thus protecting the local from foreign intrusion. The latter category include policies which provide populations with music facilities and amenities, such as training, recording studios, supported events and venues like the Norwich Waterfront. These policies are often found at local rather than national levels (Negus 1996:216), and exemplify ways which local governments can respond to and resource local populations unfettered by more homogenous national policies.

Frith (1993) argues that local provision for popular music has been more instrumental than national policy in reaching the diverse needs of local music scenes, audiences and participants, since local authorities are more able to direct resources towards local producers and consumers on the basis of local knowledge. Local authorities and regional arts boards have the flexibility to respond to smaller scale cultural practice, however, as Negus points out, this does not mean that they are not constrained by national policy and not directed by wider cultural and political movements (Negus: op cit.). This thesis examines how these factors - the provision by local agencies, the changes to national arts and cultural policy and approaches taken in urban cultural policy elsewhere - effect cultural policy and popular music practice in Leicester by examining the provision for popular music in the city in Chapter 5 and cultural policy more generally in Chapter 6.

4See Appendix I

Summary

This thesis is concerned with the examination of popular music practice in the city. It examines the organisation of popular music making and consumption and considers the relationship between social groups and social and political structures in a particular locality. In this chapter I have examined some examples of popular music studies, looking at the emergence of theoretical approaches and the growth of the canon towards the multi- and inter-disciplinary forms it takes today. I have concentrated on work that aims to understand and explain the relationship between the musical and the social, encompassing subcultural theory, structural homology and the integration of musicology and sociology. I have then examined in more detail studies which focus on particular localities in order to unravel the complex relations involved in popular music.

Several issues have arisen from these studies, including the importance of looking at the social, cultural and political contexts of musical practice to ascertain the influence of social structures on social action. I have also argued that the concepts of music scenes, music communities, paths and networks are useful in considering the links between individuals, groups and cultural practices, and the relationships between local popular music practice and wider structural conditions, such as local and national music policy. They potentially reveal the local differences, practices and identities of those involved and their relation to local political structures and the process of policy making and implementation. These concepts have arisen from qualitative research methodologies organised around ethnography; in the next chapter I discuss the research methodology used in fieldwork for this thesis.

Chapter 3

Research methods and approach

In this chapter I outline the methodological approach I undertook when conducting the research for this thesis, including a description of the methods I used and the problems and issues I encountered.

Methodological Approach

My approach to research methods – the research strategies that I have undertaken – can be aligned with the approach outlined by Layder (1993), which he terms a 'realist' approach. This approach aims to supply a bridge across the gap between theory and research, a gap reinforced by an inclination towards theory testing to the exclusion of theory building or a reliance on the emergence of social theory within social research to the exclusion of substantive grounding. This approach emphasises the importance of applying a layered model of society to the investigation of social phenomena, in order to include both macro (structural and institutional) and micro (behavioural and interaction-based) elements in one's investigation. As Layder argues:

> It enables social research to address the problem of the division between macro and micro levels of analysis in sociology by concentrating attention on the organic links between them...Such approach directly opposes those which assume either that one level can be reduced to, and explained by, the other more 'favoured' level, or that the less favoured level can be simply tacked onto the more 'important' focus of analysis (Layder 1993:8)

In the main example of a theory testing approach Layder uses - middle range theory (following Merton) - theory is applied deductively as opposed to constructed through research. Hence hypotheses are tested in their application to empirical data, usually through more quantitative methods. This approach is objected to on the grounds that it limits the production of new theory since it is reliant on pre-existing hypotheses to test and also because it restricts the scope of research to the constraints of the questions generated. The boundaries within which research of this type takes place also create difficulties in establishing historical and processual factors in social phenomena.

Grounded theory (following Glaser & Strauss) emphasises discovery through qualitative methods, such as ethnography and interview, and the induction of theory by conceiving and linking emergent concepts within this research. It lies midway between everyday life (substantive) assumptions and 'grand theory' (in the sense of all-encompassing social theory) placing confidence in the production and ratification of knowledge through in-depth, qualitative research. It is also found to be limiting however, since it highlights the phenomena the researcher can 'see' whilst potentially omitting more structural influences on social action.

> For example, some aspects of the operation of social institutions or relations of power are not clearly visible or detectable if the researcher focuses on the observable behaviour and activities of people in particular settings. The GT [grounded theory] approach tends to encourage the researcher to focus on the 'close up' features of social interaction, and in this sense, neglects the seemingly more remote aspects of the setting and context. These 'structural' or 'macro' aspects of society must play a more central role in fieldwork analysis (Layder 1993:55).

In answer to these criticisms, Layder outlines the combination of aspects of both theory testing and theory building in research strategy. In order to involve the dynamics of social interaction, the influence of the research on the production of empirical data, the environment or culture of activity and the wider context of historical dimensions and power relations that surround social action, the researcher is urged to pool strategic and methodological resources. Hence there is an emphasis on awareness of the 'textured' nature of social life, whilst being flexible in response to findings, through a research map which reminds the researcher of the different levels on which the assumed and emergent theoretical implications operate (see Layder 1993:8).

These observations effectively describe the focal points which this research hopes to encompass in its approach: that the 'micro' level of musical practice, day-to-day organisation of music scenes and communities and processes of decision-making and implementation of policy are affected by and contributory to the wider social, economic and historical conditions and power relations which surround them. Rather than attempting to test hypotheses at the outset of research (for example, that popular

music does not require attention in local authority music policy because it is better served in the commercial arena) this research aims to investigate the relationships between institutions and actors, political structures and organic activity in order to 'throw up' theoretical links between micro and macro factors.

Methods used

This was not a musicological enquiry but an examination of the social practices surrounding music making and distribution and the relationships between the rules and resources in a city and the outcomes and effects on its population. The data I wanted to collect therefore consisted of descriptions of, meanings and intentions behind and attitudes towards social action, in order to consider how these derived from and shaped social structures. I was particularly interested in getting to the values that people and institutions ascribed to popular music making and the ways that these values might impinge on the resourcing of such activity in an urban setting.

The empirical research undertaken for this thesis consisted of a number of mainly qualitative methods. I conducted semi-structured interviews (both recorded and unrecorded), participant observation and ethnography. Contacts in the field were made through face-to-face meetings during ethnography, via telephone contact and on the basis of recommendation from previous interviewees. I also used documentary sources, such as reports and directories, promotional literature and pamphlets and articles in the local and national press and media.

The field research took place over a period of three years, from 1995 to 1998. The first period of research, on pirate radio, began in January 1995. I conducted some interviews with DJs from one pirate radio station; these were mostly unrecorded due to the illegal and covert nature of the activity, although one DJ allowed himself to be recorded under the promise of anonymity. I also conducted 'aural ethnography', in that I listened to the three pirate stations then operating in Leicester, taking notes, but not in such a structured way as to perform content analysis. These listenings were used to draw out themes and issues that I wanted to consider in my research, such as mention of locality and reference to communities in Leicester, allusions to gender and race/ethnicity and participation by pirate audiences. I considered the different forms of music played on the stations and the formats the programmes undertook. Ethnography

also took place when I attended blues parties where pirate radio DJs performed live and I also frequented a record shop which was the base for one particular pirate station.

For this case study, I also interviewed the programme managers at Leicester Sound FM and BBC Radio Leicester and was given guided tours and written background information of these two stations. Comparative listening was conducted into local music magazine programmes featured on these stations. Some of the material gathered for this study was then presented in a paper given at British Sociological Association conference 'Contested Cities' in April 1995, later published as a University of Leicester Sociology Department discussion paper[5].

Research on the organisation 'Women in Music' began at the same time, but less formally since I was already a committee member and had in fact been asked to conduct some research into the needs of women musicians in Leicester on behalf of the organisation[6]. Attendance of committee meetings, events and concerts allowed me to observe the working practice of the organisation and to find out information about its history and the opinions and approaches of members, musicians and audiences. I later formally interviewed two key members of WIM in 1997.

In 1996 I began more systematic interviewing of key personnel of music communities in Leicester. These were chosen according to snowballing techniques; I asked each interviewee to name other people that they considered pertinent to the topic as they construed it from discussion and interview. I began with the then Rock and Pop Officer for Leicester County and City Councils, who I later re-interviewed in his role as tutor in sound engineering and music technology at Southfields Community College. Other interviewees over this period included City Council and Regional Arts Board officers, festival promoters, music teachers, studio technicians, a local music journalist, musicians and record label owners. By mapping the individuals named by each interviewee I was able to gain an idea of those people central to the sphere of activity I was examining, as often the same names would be mentioned time after

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5 Gilmore, A (1995) 'Big up to the Braunstone massives': pirate radio in Leicester as local representation and resource Discussion Paper, University of Leicester
6 Initial research was conducted in conjunction with another member, Janet Brown, but was sadly never completed as the committee disbanded.

time.

Access was generally good with most contacts responding positively to the research and willing to be interviewed. I was helped by the fact that I was also performing in a local band at the time, so that I was known to many of the interviewees by face if not name, and they viewed me as a member of the local music scene. The non-musicians that I spoke with were mainly based in the public sector, so that they were encouraged by a sense of public accountability to represent themselves and their organisations. Being in a band also helped me to conduct ethnography in places that I may not have had easy access to otherwise - for example, back stage at the Abbey Park Festival and in recording and rehearsal studios.

Being a musician also lead me to look at Irish theme pubs as a case study, since the band performed mainly Irish music and the gigs that we played were often in local theme pubs, as well as pubs in London, Nottingham and Luton. This case study involved talking to pub managers, (Irish) session musicians, Irish cover band members and pub-goers; I also drew heavily on my own experience as a Irish traditional session musician.

In March 1997 I began work as a research assistant on an ESRC project at the Institute of Popular Music at the University of Liverpool, 'Music policy, the music industry and local economic development'[7]. I conducted over 40 interviews for this project, and PhD fieldwork in Leicester was put on hold for most of the year, although I conducted most of the interviews for the Irish theme pub case study whilst on holiday and at weekends in early summer 1997. The work for this project was invaluable to my experience as a researcher and to this PhD project, since it gave me excellent access to comparable situations in different cities, as well supplying me with insight into regional, national and international policy making and industrial organisation.

The post finished in March 1998 and I returned to the Midlands, to conduct some more interviewing with key musicians and Leicester scene members, and to consider what may have occurred whilst I was away from the city on a day-to-day basis and through the filter of my experiences in Liverpool. Field research proper ended in Autumn 1998 (coinciding with the birth of my daughter), although contacts with the

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7 See Appendix I

field continue to be upheld in order to follow developments, particularly in terms of burgeoning evidence of a change in the outlook of City Council cultural policy making. The thesis fieldwork is thus formally contained in the period 1995 to 1998.

Comments on particular methods

Participant observation

Participant observation can take four different forms, as identified by Gold in 1958: complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant and complete observer (Burgess 1984, Lewins 1992). When using participant observation as a research method, I found that I swung between these four ideal types, taking a different approach on frequent occasions. As a musician playing at a Leicester venue or a student taking a music technology course at the Music Project, Southfields Community College, I was immersed in the same activities as other participants and unknown in my capacity of researcher, so I was able to consider events and activities as everyday processes, taking notes on return to my office. As a musician in Irish sessions and committee member of Women In Music my role could perhaps be classified as participant-as-observer since my thesis research was well-known, and sometimes discussed, amongst fellow members. As an attendant of City Council meetings on the development of the Popular Music Network and the Abbey Park Festival I was a observer-as-participant: my presence as a researcher could be noted by co-attendants, since I was either known to them in this capacity or I could be observed taking notes. I was also more distanced from the activity, since I did not take part in discussion in public meetings as I was aware of the implications of the research process impacting on its subject. I could be considered to be a complete observer in situations such as ethnography in record shops, in the street and in pubs, as I had no contact with informants and little interaction with events. My role when going to concerts, festivals and carnivals could also be considered as complete observer according to this typology, since these events were of such magnitude that my presence as researcher went unnoticed – I was part of the audience. However, if I struck up conversation with others with the purpose of noting their response to or role in events, then my role would change again.

These overlaps have been noted by Burgess (1984):

> The field researcher may, therefore, find that these different roles are used in different phases over time, or for that matter these roles may be used in different moments in the course of research (Burgess 1984:83-4).

These distinctions are in some senses arbitrary in the context of this research, since ethnography and participant observation were not my only sources of data, but rather formed two important but subsidiary functions. The material that resulted from them, mainly in field note form, but also as documents, pamphlets and flyers from meetings and events was used firstly to identify key personnel, sites and types of activity in the city, and secondly to supply descriptions and background information on music scenes and practice and the culture of music policy-making in Leicester.

Interviewing

Similar distinctions to those made by Burgess in the context of ethnography were relevant to my experience of interviewing. Lewins (1992) distinguishes between 'outsider' and 'insider' in the context of participant observation. Researchers take one of these two roles according to the degree of participation they have in the activity they are observing. Hence, outsiders typically participate in routine activities but are known to be researchers and to be participating on this basis, or do not participate but observe from a distance, aided by a full knowledge of the activities they study. Insiders are legitimate participants, for example they work within the organisation they are studying, and are either known or unknown to be researchers by other participants (Lewins 1992:79). He points out that it is crucial to make this distinction explicitly when drawing from qualitative research since the different roles may strongly effect the kinds of questions asked in research:

> [F]ull participants in social settings (insiders) can not easily ask outsiders' questions. A nurse doing a study as a complete participant would find it very difficult to ask colleagues 'why is working to a routine important in this hospital ward?' Such questions are strange coming from a colleague because they are outside the understandings taken for granted in that situation (Lewins 1992:80)

This distinction is also pertinent in the context of interviewing. The notion of outsider

and insider role was very apparent when comparing responses in interview of different types of interviewee, for example musicians and council officers. I found that different assumptions were made, different responses elicited and different language used, depending on whether I was considered an insider or outsider, in terms of my role as a member of the Leicester music community.

My own experiences and my level of understanding as assumed by the interviewee allowed me access to interviewees' opinions, attitudes and definitions of certain situations, without taking up time with basic information about the activities taking place. For example, with the research into Irish music venues and women in music, my role as insider facilitated an atmosphere of trust and complicity that enabled the interviews to take place on a level where general knowledge was assumed by both parties. This is due to my (known) status as a female who plays Irish music. In research settings where the musical practice in question was more rock or dance-oriented I found that it was easier to play down my association with the Irish music scene in Leicester and concentrate on less specific music practice.

Conversely, my role as a musician was sometimes an obstacle in the competitive sphere that popular music often inhabits. Respondents either wanted to offer more personalised information than was necessary or were defensive of their activities in relation to those of other members of the music scene. The music industry in general is typified by the numerous small units of activity competing for audience attention and access to both economic and social resources, and can be rife with guardedness, jealousy and cliques. To combat these obstacles I had to develop strategies, such as the redressing of questions which steered interviewees back to the level of information I required or which assured respondents of the substantive, rather than subjective, nature of the research. Conversely, council officials and policy makers tended either to concentrate in a more general way on their organisation's practice and to offer less detail on the activities which take place. So, sometimes it was better to 'go back to basics' and assume ignorance of the processes and practices of musical activity and policy culture in order to encourage interviewees into particular areas of discussion.

As a result I conducted 45 interviews, most about 45 minutes to an hour in length and with a semi-structured form, in that I attempted to lead discussion with the interviewees to a number of related areas. Most interviewees were happy to be taped

(interestingly it was often those involved in recording that most loathe to be put next to a tape recorder). Material from these interviews has been used on two levels: on an informational basis, and as substantive evidence of the meanings and definitions ascribed to the social phenomena examined by interviewees. Thus full quotations are used in the thesis; wherever possible I have cited the sources of unquoted material by footnote. Appendix II consists of a list of interviewees and the roles and capacities in which they were interviewed.

Power relations

When coming face-to-face with contacts or when speaking on the telephone, I was aware of power relations which may affect the research process. These can be organised into the following categories

Political power

Examining music policy has meant asking those in power to elucidate their positions and in some senses defend their role as officials with responsibility of policy and budgets. As a researcher I had the intent of questioning this role with respect to systems of cultural value, and whist this relationship was tempered by the accountability of council officers and regional arts board officers to their public, I learnt that deference was a necessary part of my role as interviewer (see below).

Gendered power relations

The male dominated music industry is well known for its marginalisation of women (see Steward & Garratt 1984; Bayton 1990, 1992; Evans 1994; Raphael 1995, Rumsey and Little 1989); indeed this was a topic in some of the interviews I conducted. These power relations were found to be most evident when talking to industry personnel and also in the macho world of pirate radio. In both cases it was more of an undercurrent to proceedings than any particular threat or action. Being female was never a definite disadvantage, although commentary on my jewellery and appearance by one male interviewee and the disruptions by a suspicious wife of another were not beneficial to the interview process. When interviewing women on the Leicester music scene my gender was absolutely a positive factor, and a sense of camaraderie (or perhaps soriety) pervaded these interviews.

Race and ethnicity

Ethnic and cultural difference can be a sensitive issue, particularly in qualitative research and a growing literature examines the methodological implications of the diversity of experiences, premised upon race/ethnicity, between researcher and researched (Burgess 1984, Song & Parker 1995, Bourgois 1995). Despite my concern over these issues, particularly in terms of the research into pirate radio, I feel my initial misgivings to be misguided. When attempting to contact interviewees, I felt constrained by my background and was convinced that I would not be able to gain access to the world of pirate radio, or other music scenes that I wanted to study, because I am white. Any ethnic difference between myself and research contacts took second place however to issues of class, musical knowledge, street wisdom and illegality. It was not my ethnicity that was prohibitive so much as the fact that I did not grow up in the city, have only a passable knowledge (although passionate interest) of 'black' and dance music and basically represented a threat to interviewees who were involved in an illegal operation. These factors may have prevented me from accessing pirate radio culture in more depth, but the material I gathered for the case study shows that they could at least in part be overcome by my interest in music and local musical practice and awareness of the sensitivity of the situation. The focus of the research was outlined to respondents so that discussion centred on the importance of music, the ways in which it is presented and the routes by which it becomes part of the city's sonic fabric.

Examining Irish culture similarly highlighted the potential in music to straddle cultural differences. I was aware that there were religious and cultural differences incumbent in the relationship between myself and the first and second generation Irish people I spoke with, but whilst my background does not mirror that of many of my respondents, my knowledge of the structures, institutions and practices that shape the experience of learning Irish traditional music facilitated a rapport with respondents. Consideration of ethnic stereotyping and the search for authenticity amongst many Irish musicians made this research all the more illuminating: stereotypes of Irish 'paddy-whackery' are rife as marketing techniques for the Irish theme pub and associated products and became part of the discussion in interview, often eliciting strong opinion both for and against.

Appearance, language and difference

So much of the music industry is bound up with image that it was difficult not to be aware of the importance of 'looking' and 'acting the part' in some situations in order to each the greatest balance of power and ease of relations. It is not an exaggeration to say that in certain situations almost chameleon-like skills were draw upon. Different scenarios required different attitudes: talking to a pirate radio DJ in a back street café brought out the "street" in me, in accent, inflection and language as well as dress and posture (although only the former remain to embarrass me on interview tape). Attending a public meeting or going to the City Council to discuss arts and cultural policy demanded another demeanour entirely. In terms of power relations, I found that in the latter scenario it was advisable to affect the role of student and prepare to be patronised – although interviewees were never harsh in their treatment of me, the more eager to learn and less knowledgeable about Leicester arts and cultural community I appeared, the more detailed information I was able to obtain. These individuals were also more used to presenting their work to students and researchers and as a result were less likely to be confused by my desire to research this topic and more likely to have answers prepared.

In the music-oriented research situations subcultural capital (Thornton 1995) plays an important role. As discussed in Chapter 2, this term indicates that social knowledge is an important resource in achieving parity of status with members of different social groups:

> Subcultural capital confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder. In many ways it affects the standing of the young like its adult equivalent. Subcultural capital can be *objectified* or *embodied*. Just as books and paintings display cultural capital in the family home, so subcultural capital is objectified in the form of fashionable haircuts and well-assembled record collections...Just as cultural capital is personified in 'good' manners and urbane conversation, so subcultural capital is embodied in the form of being 'in the know', using (but not over-using) current slang and looking as if you were born to perform the latest dance styles (Thornton 1995:11-12).

Gaining access to information from the different social groups representing and

represented by different music scenes and styles involved gaining entry, albeit fleeting, into their social worlds. As indicated above I had certain advantages from my previous involvement in music in Leicester; however as the canon of popular music studies documents, and as this work hopes to show, a myriad of different factors – styles, codes, products, mannerisms and connections – are aligned to the many different allegiances of popular music. Although the subject is not so sensitive that access would be denied on the strength of subcultural ignorance, subjectively at least it was important to have some understanding of the surface manifestations of cultural practice involved in music scenes and communities.

Summary

The methods I used in this research project and the methodological approach which underlies them were chosen through a combination of personal academic preference and suitability to the subject matter. I began the project with some basic ideas, assumptions and tenets about my topic, organised around the social practice of popular music in the context of the city. I found that these starting blocks were best investigated through an inductive approach, relying on flexibility of methods to attain emerging conceptual hooks on which to base subsequent lines of inquiry. Popular music practice moves quickly: although styles and genres are recorded and documented and have their own longevity, the many different activities involved in making, mediating and listening to popular music in the city operate at individual paces. The processual and shifting nature of music scenes presents problems for an attempt to hold their attendant meanings in focus for too long and the wealth of material they generate ensures that systems of selection must be imposed. Frustratingly, when researching in the field this leads to a sense that there is always 'something else happening somewhere else' that may complete the picture. By contextualising consideration of music practice within the macro or structural conditions in which it operates – in this case the physical, political, symbolic and cultural boundaries of the city – I found the methods not only facilitated research, but also suggested and encouraged its confines.

Chapter 4

Popular music in Leicester:

key sites and practices

This chapter examines the production, distribution and consumption of popular music in Leicester in terms of how activities and participants are organised and situated around key sites and practices. It considers different social groups in Leicester that are organised around and anchored to their involvement in music scenes and communities, by looking at the infrastructure of musical activity in Leicester and at three case studies of popular music-related practice. These case studies show how the participants use popular music for reasons of identity, entertainment and leisure, and the accumulation of social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital. They also explore how music scenes emerge and how the practices involved act as cultural resources for different communities in the city.

Music scenes and music services: local music infrastructures

When looking at local musical activity, there is a need to distinguish between music scenes, musical communities and practice. Here I am working with a semi-consensus between various theorists discussed in Chapter 2 (Straw, 1991; Shank, 1994; Kruse, 1993; Olson, 1998; Cohen, 1994) centred around a distinction between 'scene' and 'community', where scenes are cultural spaces that are constituted by the social interaction and processes that are situated around sets of practices and often tied to particular localities. Communities represent more enduring musical practices and their more longstanding relations with the conditions and traditions of a geographical locality over time. Musical practices thus present potential links between music scenes and musical communities.

In this chapter, I look at the role of social actors populating a local music community at key points in these coalitions and alliances, and ask how are they involved in music scenes over time? What are their positions in relation to the local music industry infrastructure? How might individuals and organisations participant in scenes

influence policy? How do they represent links between policy and scenes, and between different scenes (defined, according to Straw, by different 'logics') across time?

Music scenes, locality and the music industry

> Typically the production and consumption of music is explained by reference to national (or international) agencies: the music business, the broadcasters and the pop process...While there may be no local power base, it does not mean that the locality lacks any significant role and can be written out of the study of popular music. Local arrangements may provide opportunities for both producers and consumers to acquire skills and tastes in popular music, and the structure of such opportunities will vary with the locality. (Street 1993:52-3)

> New Orleans, Memphis, Liverpool, Seattle, Bristol? If you believe in the theory of site-specific popular music, of musical movements that are geographically determined (and in the mysterious power of ports) then the Avon is the latest river to follow the tides of the Mississippi and the Mersey in beaching up a revolutionary new musical form. (Phil Johnson, 'Avon Calling', *The Independent*, 8.11.96)

As indicated by the above two quotations, the production of music is often associated with place. Popular music cuts across social, physical and geographical boundaries, but is also seen to represent them, as particular musical styles and sounds are associated with their places of assumed origin or of strongest affiliation. Music scenes are built around and out of the social practice engaged in musical production and consumption and enhanced by their relation and reputation in the music media. More controversially, the characteristics of place are also presumed to reside within musical structure, as local inferences and dialects assert their influence on music production. Popular musicology attempts to test and discover the intimacies of this rubric, to enlighten the processes by which geographical and historical factors impede on and structure the noises we hear.

Aside from the symbolic relations surrounding locales, other forms of production, such as the production of economic and cultural capital, need consideration. Localities

are important because of the unique ways in which they host the resources for production, the economic, physical and human resources usually known as music industry infrastructures. The resources around which production takes place and which scenes are built are usually found in the urban context - in order to host the activity that is collectively labelled a music scene, places should offer appropriate constituent elements. These infrastructures consist of:

- production services and facilities, e.g. rehearsal and recording studios;

- post production facilities, e.g. CD and record pressing, design and merchandise;

- performance facilities, e.g. venues, clubs and audio and visual media;

- promotional and developmental services, e.g. management companies, record labels, publishing companies, promoters and critics;

- services for the artistic, technical and compositional development, involving education and vocational training initiatives.

Many of these imposed categories overlap, and all are subject to difference in scale and quality, dependent on variables such as personality and style of management, genre and style of music, economic stature and technological preference, and in response to local needs and markets.

Without these services local scenes would not be able to offer a product to be evaluated at a national or global level, and recent research has found that although not fundamental to production itself, close physical proximity between certain facilities aids the promulgation and health of local scenes based around production and consumption. Considering the Irish popular music industry in relation to competition between national industries, Clancy and Twomey (1997) discuss the reciprocity between local music industry infrastructures and global industry success. They find that local activity is important to global competitiveness on two counts. Firstly, the retention of local artist management and development is key to successful indigenous industry, since it channels the income accrued from global sales back into the local economy, rather than losing it to multinational companies. Secondly, combinations of elements of local infrastructures are bolstered by their global success, so that clusters of particular services and facilities, for example those concerned with recording and

post-production, are nurtured in the context of increased artistic development (Clancy & Twomey 1997:57-8)[8].

The sum of popular music industry infrastructures may be more, then, than all of their constituent parts. However, having all the right music services does not mean that a locality necessarily has a music scene. Scenes involve discursive elements which are separate (although intimately related and highly instrumental to) the economic success of music production in particular localities. The popular beliefs and ideologies that surround the description of music scenes are cloaked in a variety of rationales, appeals and claims. Music scenes are considered variously in relation to their recognition on global scale, longevity, exclusivity; charisma and character of individuals and bands associated with scenes, authenticity and appeal to the underground, chart success and level of media attention, the attached significance of place or era, and so on. The discourses of success and popularity that are tied to scenes are often regionalised or localised, reflecting the peculiar sets of influences associated with the sites of origin for particular styles.

Popular music practice in Leicester[9]

In Leicester, the music industry is not so developed as that of the national industry in terms of constituent parts. There is not the need nor viability for many of the services such as music lawyers, licensers, pressing plants, talent agencies and other supporting services which are available in London and other larger cities in Britain[10]. As with other provincial cities the infrastructure can not support larger or more secondary interests, and Leicester music businesses look to the Capital to fill in the gaps. There

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8 Although this example is concerned with a national industry, the scale of 'local' in these observations is comparable to local urban industries, since the majority of industrial musical activity in Ireland is clustered around the Greater Dublin area: e.g. 81% of managers, 65% of recording facilities, 80% of producers, 83% of publishers in Ireland are situated in this area (*Hot Press* Music Directory, 1996).
9 A map and list of key music sites in Leicester is included in Appendix 3.
10 One prevailing issue in the debate over regional music industries is whether such services are necessary away from the capital. For example, during my period as research assistant in Liverpool the case for a regional publishing house was discussed many times by the newly formed Merseyside Music Development Agency. Some argued that music publishing could be supported regionally if there was the critical mass of music production to support it, whereas others, including a manager of a nationally famous band who spent much of his time travelling to London to conduct business, argued that it would not be viable or competitive with existing services. Similarly, one major deficit felt lacking in the region was expertise in music law. Thus, although these services can be easily attained by telephone or by a two hour train journey geographical proximity was felt to be extremely important, perhaps for reasons of collective regional identity and the feeling of independence from the capital.

are some management and promotion agencies and a number of independent record labels based in the city; these have mainly arisen out of the need to release records without having to obtain a contract from the major record labels or are situated in genres that use alternative distribution networks, such as folk, acoustic and dance music. Technological developments, such as CD writers and the Internet's capacity for the distribution of music, are changing the geographical dynamics of music distribution, however, and allowing smaller provincial enterprises to reach wider audiences faster and to avoid the risks and pressures of chasing national industry interest. However, at the time of field research, activity in Leicester was concentrated on the primary stages of production: composition, recording and performance, with fewer examples of services such as management and record labels.

The majority of respondents in this research were involved in production and the local media. Key players are found working in and between particular sets of activities: chiefly those grouped around live performance (e.g. the organisation of venues and festivals), the distribution and circulation of popular music (e.g. in positions of influence in the media), and in provision of rehearsal and recording facilities. Below I examine local music practice in relation to such resources and facilities at particular sites and nodes of activity and consider how such practice effects, relate to and comprise local scenes and communities.

Live performance and local venues

Live performance is a unique mode of production and consumption of popular music, often heralded as the true test of an artist's ability and the basis for a committed relationship between musicians and their audience. Being in the presence of musicians (and other audience members), whether in a 20,000 capacity stadium or a 200-seater venue somehow confirms a commitment to the music and the musicians, as the event is one-off, instantaneous and never entirely repeated (although rehearsed, planned, and produced). As well as offering a particular form of music consumption, playing gigs also remains a priority in record and artist promotion. Local bands use gigs to sell their first CDs and attract their first followings. Bands newly signed to record companies are sent out on the road to test their worth and build up a fan-base, having been spotted by a talent scout at a gig. Even national music industry conventions, like

In The City and Sound City, use the device of filling every venue with new fodder for frantic Artist and Repertoire representatives to scour for the latest 'next big thing'.

Venues provide the physical link between local music scenes and the national industry, by hosting the bands who have achieved national success as well as providing those that haven't with the platform for performance. In his discussion of the relevance of local cultural policy for popular culture in the context of globalisation, Street (1995) examines local authority support of popular music. By looking at the decision over supporting venues for pop and rock music in Norwich, Cambridge and Ipswich, he finds that local political action can affect the global through the sustenance of cultural spaces for interaction and consumption of popular music. Importantly, the venue in question in Norwich brought in acts from outside and extended the range of live performances locals could attend. Thus the subsidy of a venue for 'indie' music in Norwich was a way of supporting the interests of those who argued that for a link to wider music activity and industry:

> Venues provide the conditions for participation in the larger political economy of popular music (Street 1995:321).

This bridging of local and global culture through the provision of such venues highlights their role in the creation of local scenes.

> The creation of a scene is not a function of purely social interaction; it is also a function of institutions. Venues are part of the process of creating the public spaces within which such scenes evolve. (Street 1995:322)

Shank (1994) recognises the importance of live performance practice to the production of music scenes, in particular performance based at specific venues. He notes in his discussion of the punk scene that arose around Raul's in Austin, Texas:

> At least thirty punk bands formed that winter, almost exclusively comprised of students, almost exclusively playing at Rauls' (Shank 1994:116).

This scene grew out of the combination of the opposition created between Tex Mex programming in local venues and new student punk bands. A moment of anarchy when Raul's was raided for noise complaints and a mini-riot ensued during the performance of one punk band was subsequently mythologised as the scene's genesis.

Other research has looked at the patterns of behaviour at concerts themselves, to try to ascertain how live performances are used. Fonarow (1997) studied 'indie' band gigs of different sizes and found that the audience was spatially dissected into different social categories in a discernible manner which could be related to their alignment to the 'object of value', the band. She comments that

> Within the scope of the gig, a live musical performance, a territory of meaning
> is constructed in the activity of a musical performance. At indie gigs, social
> relationships are enacted through spatial distribution and different modes of
> participation within a specific participant framework...Gigs occur in venues
> where participants distribute themselves in space. These venues present the
> opportunity for interaction, which is often characterised by a high degree of
> activity and bodily contact. In contrast concerts that occur in seated halls place
> participants in equidistant positions and generally discourage or limit physical
> contact. In open halls, participants place *themselves*; they choose where to
> stand and what to do with their bodies within the parameters of expected
> behaviours (Fonarow 1997: 360-1).

Audiences thus have expectations from live performance venues and use them to consume music in particular ways and construct meanings. Musicians also have expectations of venues, and the facilities a venue offers – audience capacity, quality of PA, acoustic and visual conditions and the all-important dressing room – amount to where it is placed in the hierarchies of venues which bands hope to span.

Live performance in Leicester

Live performance is viewed as an essential practice for achieving success in both local and national scenes and hence the venue circuit in the city – the range, scale and sorts of venues available to local bands - is seen as crucial to local hopefuls. The live performance circuit in Leicester was frequently pinpointed in interview and ethnography as disappointing or lacking. The venue problem is a perennial point of discussion in the general Leicester music scene - in particular the range of small to middle-sized venues for live bands was felt to be inadequate.

The volume of medium-sized live music venues increased rapidly after the punk era in the mid-to-late seventies, when pubs and clubs took up the do-it-yourself approach of

the bands and began hosting live performance. A combination of the interrelationships between different sized venues, poor late night inner-city-to-suburb transport networks and a perceived lack of enthusiasm for live music in the city led to decline in gig-going and medium sized venues which was noticeable at the beginning of the period of research in 1995. Those venues available are also criticised for their particular qualities and lack of professionalism: the capacity of venues aside, other factors such as feel, approach, commitment to genre, and music policy in terms of music programming, fees and costs for local bands music also need be taken into consideration.

> I think Leicester is as well equipped as most cities, in that we have got several places where you can rehearse, several places where you can record. I think one main thing that we are missing is venues. There is the Charlotte, obviously, and the Shed and the Royal Mail, but they are all relatively small venues and the next step up from that is far too big, even if you are talking about the YMCA you are talking about a capacity crowd of 320, which if you are doing your own ticket sales is a hell of a lot of people to get in. It would be great if there were one or two other slightly in between type venues that were good. If you look at Nottingham they have got it sorted on the venue front (Deryk Roberts, studio owner and promoter, in interview).

The sorts of venues available were seen as having the potential to effect consumption practice in the city:

> I think it is a culture thing as well. I mean, Leicester, most people in Leicester are just as happy to go and listen to a juke box as they are to go and see a live band. A lot of people unfortunately...They would rather go and see a band play some of their favourite songs than go and see a band play some of their own songs. And that is something again, it is not something that you can just flick a switch and just change it, you need to change peoples perceptions. The only way you can do it is to get quality acts playing quality material with a quality sound, and having established that you've then got the people in and give them a good time so that they can think 'well that was good' and get this perception that live music is going to be quality, wherever they go, whatever night, whoever they see, they can expect something good, and that is a lot of things

to tie up...it's not just about the artist, it is about the PA system it is about the seating arrangements. There are a lot of things that you need to keep in mind - and as I say Nottingham I think has got just about sorted. There are so many different types of venue, from the posh to the sordid and seedy. And Leicester hasn't got that array. It hasn't got the reputation of giving you a quality product so. (Jon Knight, former Leicestershire Popular Music Development Officer, in interview).

Sometimes having the right facilities is not enough:

De Montfort Hall is impossible to book. I've looked at stuff before and said 'let's put that on at De Montfort Hall'. But their stumbling blocks before you have started are so massive, their criteria for who they want to have on are a fucking joke. The first thing that they ask you is 'what are you going to put on?' You could put some fantastic things on, but you look at what they put on – David Essex, Englebert Humperdink. Granted, they are sell-out gigs but they don't appeal to all aspects of the community. Back in 1977, at De Montfort Hall in one month I saw Santana, Deep Purple, The Police, The Clash, Talking Heads. The venue is supposed to have one of the best sounds in the country. Bands and orchestras alike say it has the best acoustics in the country, yet you can't get it (Nick Murphy, local musician and promoter, in interview).

Larger concerts in Leicester for national touring bands take place at the two universities and at De Montfort Hall. These venues have larger capacities and more institutionalised structures in charge of music programming. The opportunities for large-scale performances (i.e. over 1,000 capacity) do not exist in the city, outside of the parks. The debate over whether the city needs an arena or stadium has been grumbling for some time, and surfaces whenever the opportunity for redevelopment of sizeable plots of land appears. For example, the Cattle Market site, which now hosts a supermarket, cinema and bingo hall, was considered, and the plans for the new football stadium in the city have also included discussion over the viability of hosting music concerts. These debates, displayed in the local newspaper the *Leicester Mercury*, are always accompanied by complaints from local residents over the potential nuisance of large-scale music concerts.

The next level of venue size is that of the Charlotte and Mosquito Coast (200-400 capacity). Mosquito Coast is run by two brothers, pioneers of the new business class who are well known in Leicester for their selection of multiculturally-themed restaurants and venues and their close relationship with the City Council. Mosquito Coast is a large nightclub venue in the centre of town that was opened on the premise of providing live world music, particularly of Latin American flavour, which was part of the application for entertainments license. After two successful seasons with the music programmed by a long-time member of Leicester's music industry, the brothers began to interfere with programming, reportedly because they found the customers attracted by certain acts unsuitable. The promoter left and the live music policy declined so that the club operated purely as a student disco, with an occasional live concert by an outside promoter or on special occasions such as St Patrick's day. Previously, a number of respected world music acts had been brought in from outside of Leicester, although the venue never really functioned to serve local bands as it was expensive to hire. When the building reverted to functioning as a discotheque however the venue was no longer considered part of Leicester live music scene, and became even less used for this purpose. The brothers' other establishments offered employment for local musicians as duos and bands for diners and private parties, and promotion of live bands is about to begin again in Mosquito Coast, as the former promoter has been wooed back to programme live music there.

The venue that has perhaps greater influence over the live music scene in Leicester is the Princess Charlotte, a pub venue in the city centre. The Charlotte was until recently the only private venue in the city on a national circuit and has been the showcase for 'indie' bands for the last decade, having rode the wave of Britpop profitably during the 1990s. Most if not all up-and-coming 'indie' bands play the Charlotte in their early tours of the country, which usually include other 'toilets' such as the Duke of York in Leeds, the Lomax in Liverpool and the 13th Note in Glasgow. Until recently for local acts the Charlotte constituted the pinnacle of their local live performance:

> if you could fill the Charlotte, or even half-fill the Charlotte, you knew that you had done all you could in the local scene, and that you were ready to move on to outside of Leicester (Jan Fraser, local musician, in interview)

However the pay-to-play policy at the Charlotte and its grotty conditions and poor

equipment have been prohibitive to the local scene and the owner, despite his influence and connections on the national indie scene, has been criticised as a 'glorified landlord' who has no real interest in furthering the local industry. This is because nationally signed acts are not effected by such conditions, since they are subsidised by their record companies for their first tours and do not have the pressure of having to fill the venue to avoid making a loss or to create hubris with a local following. Conditions at the venue are due to change however through the 1998 expansion of the venue from 200 to 450 capacity and extension of its opening hours. This, alongside the opening of 3 new venues of small to medium size in the city centre in the same year, is a welcome development for members of the local industry and live music scene.

The Phoenix Arts Centre is the another city venue that offers the opportunity to see nationally known acts. Music is not prioritised in the programming which also offers theatre and independent cinema, and the venue's themes concentrate on folk and ethnic art. Showcasing for local acts is not usual in the main part of the venue, but the Centre has developed a well-known and respected weekend lunchtime café slot for folk and jazz musicians which regularly features local solo and duo artists. It also works with other agencies such as Access to Music, Charles Keene College, De Montfort University and the City Council to host music educational programmes and films.

The other opportunities for local bands exist in the city's pub venues: these include (or have included over the last ten years) the Royal Mail, O'Jays, the Pump and Tap, the Magazine, the Shed, the Windsor Suite. Each of these have operated as important sites for the development of local music, with their own individual mini-scenes attached, comprised of the loyalty of certain bands and individuals and the characteristics derived from their particular physical structure and location, acoustic and aesthetic distinctions and music programming and policies. The pub-as-venue is highly instrumental for local music consumption, both of original work and of the performance of others' material.

Bennett (1997) examines the phenomenon of the pub rock scene, in terms of the resource it presents audiences as consumers of popular music and members of local communities. Taking the cases of a pub covers band and a tribute band, he argues that

the milieu of pub rock offers the chance for social interaction and appropriation of music into local structures of feeling, mirroring practices normally associated with 'folk' music and representing distinctive local use of universal music.

> The pub rock scene, far from being simply a stepping stone for bands and artists aspiring to full-time professional music-making, is an important resource for the production and consumption of popular music in its own right (Bennett 1997:107)

This argument is perhaps best represented in Leicester by the relatively new venue Half-Time Orange, a 600 capacity concert hall and bar complex which is modelled precisely on the pub rock scene, featuring tribute bands and lesser known heroes of the rock circuit. Finding success in this format the venue occasionally hosts local bands' nights but concentrates on the more profitable cover and tribute band programme.

Community centres in the city are also occasionally used by community groups and local bands as music venues. These suffer however from lack of in-house facilities (such as PAs) and also from their peripheral locations, outside of the city centre. A further opportunity for local music consumption and production, and an area I have focused on in my ethnography, was discovered in the more recent creation of new spaces for local musicians to perform in Irish theme pubs, discussed later in this chapter.

Clubs and bars

I have separated this category from that of venues heuristically to emphasise the difference between live performance and 'live' Djing or 'live' record performance. Often however venues double up as both clubs and concert venues, or live 'personal appearances' are made by dance artists in clubs specifically designated to dance music. Djing and live bands are rarely mutually exclusive; there are however very different practices which make up each activity. Live performance in contrast to Djing uses space differently, both acoustically and socially, and also requires different resources and different licensing. Different behaviour (sitting, standing, watching, dancing) is elicited in response to the music and different clothing, styles and mannerisms are on display and activities take place on different time-scales, ordered

by factors such as the beginning of bands' performances and the end of licensing hours in clubs. These different sets of music practices organise and are organised by their accompanying taste cultures11. Thus there are venues in the city which are specifically the preserve of live music-oriented participants and clubs and bars which cater only for 'disc' or 'DJ culture'.

The fieldwork for this thesis has not concentrated on clubbing and dance music in Leicester: however the rise of bar and club culture in the city has been noted during the period of research. Leicester has been relatively unidentified by influential commentators on the national dance music circuit (for example, the dance magazines *Mixmag, Eternity* and *D:ream* and style magazines such as *The Face*) as a city with a strong clubbing scene, and this is perhaps because of its lack of recognisable facilities. Since 1997 new clubs have appeared in the city (notably Junction 21, Flaming Colossus, the Lizard Lounge, Club City, Kudos, Zanzibar and Golds), more existing venues have been putting on club nights (for example, The Attik, The Charlotte, The Factory, The Venue at Leicester University) and a host of bars, often targeted at pre-club customers, have opened up. These establishments, taking advantage of looser licensing policy in the city and the current trend for bar economies which have also encouraged a number of new pubs in the city centre, are not all music venues, although many have in-house DJs and sound systems. Rather they are locations for the exchange of knowledge, opinions and ideas, for meeting friends and for learning about events and occurrences which make up (dance) music activity in the city.

Local Media

The media in Leicester comprises of local radio and the local press and print media. There is also local television programming by the BBC East Midlands network and Leicester 7, the cable TV service. In terms of local music activity the local press and radio stations have the most to offer local participants.

Print media

The *Leicester Mercury* has a preview and review section which features articles on national music acts and local pop, rock and dance music. In particular the weekly

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11 For a detailed discussion on the rise of clubbing culture, the differences between live music and clubbing and the disparities between pubs and clubs, see Thornton 1995

columns, 'City Scene' and 'Land of Club', comment on local events and artists and offer reductions on entry for a *Mercury*-sponsored showcase event in a local venue12. Music fanzines and listings magazines in the city (also discussed in Chapter 5) provide information on music events and commentary on the city's activities. Many are free and are distributed at local pubs, bars and venues, clothes and record shops and the city's libraries. They constitute a fragile local media however, in competition with the prolific range of music and lifestyle publications on the market. They rely on the constant chase for advertising, unless supported by a regular benefactor or consistent source of income, as well as the continuing need for copy, and many have come and gone in the city since fanzines first became popular in the late 1970s.

Another main form of music scene knowledge are flyers, posters and pamphlets advertising events. Since the rise of dance music in the 1980s, club night promotion in the form of flyers has become ever more sophisticated. Thornton (1995) considers the distribution of flyers as a device for tracing young people's routes through the city, referring the way that they are targeted at those the clubs wish to attract via record shops, pre-club bars and boutiques and hand-to-hand distribution on the streets. In Leicester, the sites where those who participate in the city's dance music scenes congregate may be identified by the presence of flyers: for example, 5HQ record shop, the number of small designer clothes shops in the Silver Arcade and bars such as Helsinki and Bossa, which have racks specifically for the purpose of displaying flyers. The proliferation of flyers could perhaps be an indicator of the increase in number of dance clubs and club nights in Leicester since 1995. Flyers and pamphlets are not confined to dance music, however, and the Goldsmith Music Library is a rich source of information on non-dance music scenes, through its collection of notices, leaflets and flyers on events and organisations as diverse as the Leicester Flute Ensemble and the Open Hearth acoustic night at Molly O'Grady's pub.

Knowledge of what is happening locally and in the music industry more widely can be found at the other source of consumption – the record shop. Leicester features four large record shops HMV, Our Price, Virgin and Ainleys. These shops are chart-

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12 Interestingly the writer of the 'City Scene' is a long-time Leicester musician who also happens to be the partner of the licensee holder for Abbey Park Festival, and much conjecture is levelled at the influence of one Leicester 'music scene intermediary' on the other at the time of year that acts and stages are chosen for the Festival

oriented, national and international outlets however and do not possess the mystique or microcosmic approach that supports the subcultural know-how of local music scenes. The 'hanging out' at the counter, chatting to record store owners and looking at the posters for local gigs and ticket sales occurs more commonly away from these 'departmental' style stores, at the independent outlets. Examples of these are 5HQ and BPM, both dance music specialists, Rockaboom, which initially focussed on 'indie' music, and second-hand shops like Archers, World Records and Boogaloo. In these places sauntering, although not exactly encouraged by the often sultry glances of those behind the counter and fellow punters, occurs, offering opportunities to find out what is popular outside of mainstream and national press and to hear records and CDs before purchase. The practice of being able to listen to what you might buy has reappeared in record shops, since the days of the record booth, and has been picked up by some of the nation-wide stores as consumer friendly. More often CD listening posts are used in the larger stores however, and it is the smaller independent outlets that offer the chance for interaction with other customers and store owners when asking for one's own selection to be played. Frith (1988) discusses this phenomenon as 'shop-buzz':

> Record-shopping is a surprisingly sociable activity. Propping up the counter (and I'm talking about small shops, provincial shops, special shops, record shops, not the audio hypermarkets) are disc jockeys, cultists, collectors, knowalls, obsessives, the unemployed. They watch with amused contempt the 'ordinary' buyers, the parents with a scruffy request list for their children, the routine rock fans, the desperate 12 year-olds trying to collect all 1976's punk hits now. The record shop is where gigs and clubs and musics are publicly discussed and placed, where changing tastes are first mocked and marked...Shop buzz precedes radio and even disco buzz and is more reliable than the music papers' London-based tips13.

Dance music shops in particular act as hang-outs for DJs and 'DJ wannabees': in 5HQ a small crowd can often form around the DJ booths as the latest vinyl (or 'twelves')

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13 Frith 1988:183. This article, appearing in Music for Pleasure, called 'A-Blinga-A-Blanga, A-Bippity Bop, I'm going down to the record shop' was originally written in 1982. It is testament to the continuum of popular music practice, as well as Frith's astuteness, that it is still (bar references to 'funk' as the new thing) so relevant in the late nineties.

from the distributors arrives on the decks. As such it is not necessarily the consumption of local music which is encouraged but, as Frith notes, the formation of local tastes around record culture, in the shops to small groups of people *before* these records are played by DJs in local clubs.

Local radio

The radio stations in the city provide an important source for both information about local events and actual music consumption. The stations available in the city can be classified in three different categories: public service, commercial, and community and pirate radio stations.

Radio is described by Barnard (1989) as

> the most pervasive, the most readily available, the least escapable of all mass communications media in Britain."(Barnard 1989: vi)

In Britain radio has undergone a period of important change over the last decade, in line with ideological and political shifts in approach to British media in general. Deregulation has occurred, signalled by the 1991 Broadcasting Act, as both public service national and local radio and commercial stations vie for listeners in the battle for markets. In this environment of commercial media where there is no longer the climate to sustain radio as a purely public service enterprise, the pressure is on radio stations to compete further. Factors such as Independent Radio stations (IR), the popularity of pirate stations, and the reformulation of, in particular, music radio as the terrain of marketing of both records and structured categories of audience to sell to the advertisers, have all served to encourage deregulation and erode the high culture/public service face of BBC music radio. The forthcoming digitalisation of radio will only serve to increase competition further.

Musical content on the radio has been effected radically by such changes, particularly by the rapid growth of local and regional licenses and the competition for audiences stratified demographically for advertisers. Commercial media groups such as Emap and Capital radio have become increasingly more powerful, as they have bought up larger segments of available transmission through local license bids, and local music radio has been accused of becoming increasingly homogenous due to more centralised programming and the reliance on 'gold formats'. Gold formatting consists of the

broadcasting of predominantly back catalogues of 'classic tracks' to appeal to a conservative older demographic, who have more appeal to advertisers (Barnard. 1989; Negus, 1996). The increase of licensing and some intervention by the Radio Authority has led to some specialisation of music radio, notably in the successes of Jazz FM and Classics FM, and some larger local stations have extended programming to profit from other market segments, e.g. catching youth audiences through dance music shows (Barbrook 1990). A broad mid-range emphasis still prevails however in local Independent Radio.

Presently, a three-tiered hierarchy of radio exists in Britain, where national BBC radio forms the public service stratum, attempting to offer a wide range of formats and services to cater for a nation of licence payers. The BBC controls the five centralised stations transmitting nationally from London which have various areas of interest and target audiences, leading to specific station identities which have been developed over time. The key popular music station is Radio 1, although recently music policy changes to Radio 2 have included more current release artists than ever before, in a bid to maintain audience figures[14]. Local radio consists of Independent Radio stations, BBC Local Radio stations, Restricted Special Licenses and in some places pirate radio stations.

Local Radio in Leicester

There are 39 BBC Local Radio stations, which are based around 6 regional network centres - BBC Scotland, BBC Northern Ireland, BBC Wales, BBC North. BBC Midlands and East, and BBC South, which are accountable to the capital. *BBC Radio Leicester* was the first of the BBC local radio stations to be set up, in 1967 when it was originally funded by a Labour-led city council as part of an experiment initiated by a *Radio Four Home Service* employee. The BBC took over funding in 1970 and retained the local remit.

The station has become progressively more speech based, following a decision from London in 1991 to facilitate "niche broadcasting", as a result of competition from Independent Radio. Since the latter radio targets specific audiences for advertising purposes, there is a pressure to find specific audiences for BBC Local Radio - for

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14 'Radio Two: tuning in its changing audience', *Music Week* 22 March 1997

Radio Leicester, this means a niche group of middle-aged listeners from a "middle range" social background. The core of this group is seen as 40 - 45 year olds, with an aim to increase range to slightly younger listeners. During the time of research the station was 85% speech, 15% music.

Music is not a priority: it is seen very often as a backdrop to speech, with an emphasis on music as a source of continuity rather than a feature in itself. The station uses PC software which logs the amounts of time that music is played for the purposes of payment of dues to Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) selects the music for different shows according to pre-established parameters, such as softness of sound, genre of music and suitability for time of day and of year. The station's dominant musical identity like its target audience, is middle of the range and restrained by a comparatively small budget of £74,000 p.a. to update the collection and pay PPL. It is purposively standardised since it is considered "very important for the station not to change its identity" (Stephen Butt, *Radio Leicester*). Any deviation to this is due to the station's identification of specific programmes for particular communities. These are specialist shows that feature particular types of music, such as *Celtic Fringe*, which is a network programme for the region's Irish communities and *Talking Blues*, an African-Caribbean oriented programme, that was originally established via funding from the Commission for Racial Equality and featured Herdle White, a key public figure in the African-Caribbean community. Leicester also has a *BBC Asian Network* station – which began as part of the local service and now exists in its own right on the AM band to cater for the large Asian community in Leicester, transmitting in five Asian languages as well as English.

Independent Radio

More than 100 IR stations broadcast across the nation with increasing success and popularity. These stations have a very different history to that of the BBC and, as the climate of broadcasting has become more deregulatory, have recently enjoyed less stringent control of its provision for local regions, including the symbolic dropping of the L for Local from the original acronym IRL, partly as a result of a Green Paper on radio in 1987 (Lewis & Booth 1989: 193-4). The regulation of IR has evolved through its origin as an offshoot of both paternalist and entrepreneurial Tory policy in the early 1970s (Barnard 1989: 70-2). The IBA Act of 1973 embodied a number of principles

for IR to adhere to, involving commitment to the 'local' on a cross-community basis, programmes for ethnic minorities and public access to the radio through participation in phone-ins, producing a combination of education and entertainment, public service values and lively "flow-programming".

Leicester's principal Independent Radio station - *Leicester Sound FM* - first acquired a commercial franchise in 1981, owned and operated by GWR Group plc, a Swindon-based publicly quoted company which also runs another 20 or so commercial radio stations across the country. In March 1994 the station was successfully relaunched as *The New Leicester Sound*, as part of a change of presenting style and consequent change of image. The position of *Leicester Sound* - as part of a plc group responsible to shareholders but large enough to allow a certain amount of autonomy and resources for the station itself - is typically in between a commitment to this brief and the necessity of commercial business success, through attracting an audience to sell to advertisers:

> Obviously as we are part of a group, at the end of the day, we have to provide the shareholders with what they expect (Colin Wilsher, Programme Controller, *Leicester Sound* in interview).

Barnard (1989) suggests that the commercial nature of IR has led to its selection of music becoming far more important than in BBC LR, since the need to attract and then to keep listeners who are turning the dial is paramount. The obligations of IR to the IBA remit produce an anomaly: the stations have to be at once committed to IBA guidelines for programming for a homogenous local audience as well as targetting specific demographic audience groups for their advertisers. This is achieved by splitting the orientation of the speech content of the stations from that of the music that is played:

> An ILR station can retain the 'community' emphasis in its speech content and continue to provide a service of information and even education to the standard required by the IBA's monitors, but it is its *musical* content that determines the age profile and to a great extent the social profile of those listening (original italics, Barnard 1989:81).

Leicester Sound clearly exemplifies this, by fulfilling 'local' requirements, via speech-

based sports commentary and news programmes, whilst tailoring its music to attract advertisers:

> Research tells us that most people choose their radio station based upon music. If you get the music right, you will get the kind of audience that you need. We take it a stage further than that, in the sense that we are looking for an audience that will provide the advertisers with what they want. So we gear the music to attracting a largely female audience between the age of 25-40...It would be ever so easy for a radio station to sit back and just play music all day long. But a local radio has an obligation to serve the community. We have a local news team based here, we have obviously regular bulletins produced locally every hour, we have a news programe in the evening, we have on a Friday evening a local sports programme as well...we have local travel news, we do feature information as well (Colin Wilsher, *Leicester Sound FM*, in interview).

Any deviation from this musically constitutes minority or specialist programming, marginalised by placement in less popular advertising times. The bulk of music played by IRs is therefore narrowcast: contemporary chart hits, classics, easy listening and oldies (Negus 1993:63). In 1995 the main specialist category catered for by *Leicester Sound* was the large student population in Leicester, via a "Hot Seven at Seven" feature, which broadcasts seven contemporary/club hits voted for by the audience (although chosen by the radio station). The rest of the music, as with BBC *Radio Leicester*, is selected by computer software, based on particular criteria. *Leicester Sound* has no music policy for ethnic communities, although there is representation of city events - such as the Caribbean Carnival and various Asian festivals - which are catered for via speech-based programming. The inclusion of different sorts of music is not deemed part of the station sound:

> That's off-air activity for us: because it wouldn't fit on air to carry lots of Asian music for example. But because this is an integrated community, we will talk about it and we will be part of that, but we wouldn't utilise that on air (Colin Wilsher).

Berland (1993) considers the relationship between radio and locality. As a medium which offers more immediate commentary on day-to-day activity than television or

print, she suggests that it can function to represent 'the local':

> Popular radio offers a sense of accessibility to and interaction within its own community, distinguishing itself from television through highly conventional and elaborated strategies of representation. Such conventions work to establish and draw attention to the radio station as a live and local context. They include signposting...styles of interviewing, spontaneous patter, informal commentary on music selections and music-related gossip, station identifications...and so forth all of which contribute to a sense of localness, immediacy and accessibility (Berland 1993: 115).

However, the material played on radio, Berland points out, rarely originates locally, as music is usually nationally if not globally distributed and news services may come from regional or national centres (Berland op cit). Neither the BBC nor IR stations in Leicester offer much evidence of local music communities or scenes, although BBC *Radio Leicester* offers programmes for the tastes of some ethnic communities. Only the BBC station's Friday evening shows, which features local gig listings and profiles of local bands, offers insight into the character of local popular music making by giving out information on local events. The commercial station and the majority of programming for the local BBC station are oriented towards broader audiences and interests, the former in the interests of its advertisers and the latter in the interests of niche programming for public service.

Other commercial stations which broadcast in Leicester include Century 106FM and Sabras Sound. Sabras Sound is a commercial Asian radio station, established in 1995 and broadcasting mainly in Gujarati and Punjabi on medium wave. It features Asian popular music, mainly of the 'light' or film music variety, and also sponsors performances by local and international Asian bands at special events in Leicester, such as the various religious festivals and Abbey Park Festival. It also advertises principally for Asian businesses and products in Leicester and lists music and dance events in the city. There are also temporary Restricted Special License stations, which broadcast for a limited period of time. Examples of these include Demon FM, a student station run by De Montfort University and Hot FM, a community station broadcasting for the African Caribbean community in the run up to the Caribbean Carnival in 1996. In addition to these legal stations, there

have also been a number of pirate (illegal) stations operating in the city. Pirate radio in Leicester is examined below as a case study of a local popular music resource that challenges and influences other radio forms in the city.15

The Internet

Since my research began in 1995 the everyday use of the Internet has burgeoned. This is reflected clearly not only when searching for city-related sites on a computer but also by the reference to web-sites on other forms of media. When first searching for reference to Leicester, and more specifically for music in Leicester on the Internet in 1996 relevant sites were hard to find. In 1999, using a simple search engine I found a network of interlinked sites provided by the City Council and Leicester promotions, a number of sites designated to Leicester music services and a home-grown internet server based at a local recording studio complex (see below).

The above descriptions of key sites for music scene activity focus on consumption, participation and the distribution of music and music knowledge. Other sites for what might be termed 'scene activity' can be found in the city, surrounding music production.

Music production and clusters: recording and rehearsing facilities

Recent literature on creative industries has identified that 'clusters' of businesses with similar interests often appear to evolve and to enhance activity. As thoroughfares for people with common interests, such complexes or clusters can create possibilities through chance meetings and forged alliances made during time out from rehearsing or recording. The advantages of 'clusters' for small-scale businesses have been noted to include: a more dynamic image for all organisations by virtue of their collective entity; interaction between like-minded businesses that enhance profiles and profit; smaller rents offered by a larger host business and moral support and increased access to local knowledge (Porter, 1990; Clancy & Twomey, 1997; Brown 1998b, Cohen 1998, Gilmore 1998). Aside from economic implications they constitute the practices

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15 The work presented here is based on research conducted between September 1994 and March 1995, and presented to the British Sociological Association Conference 1995 'Contested Cities'. See also Gilmore, A (1995) 'Big Up To the Braunstone massives!: an examination of pirate radio in Leicester as local representation and cultural resource', Discussion Paper, University of Leicester

described here as intrinsic to music scenes: inclusivity as well as exclusivity, common goals and a collective identity which adds up to more than its constituent parts.

Several such 'clusters' can be found in Leicester's music industry, mainly consisting of businesses and individuals involved in recording, rehearsing and promoting music which can be found in the same buildings. These are the sites for the behind-the-scenes activities that constitute the 'nuts and bolts' of music production for bands in Leicester. The city has a number of recording studios and rehearsal rooms which serve the local community, including the City Council-supported studio at Fosse Arts (discussed in Chapter 5), a varying number of small-scale commercial ventures and innumerable domestic set-ups, where individuals have recording equipment and rehearsal space in their own homes. The history of such facilities is similar to those of other cities, where cheap space available in old industrial units or warehouses is appropriated by the music community and used for recording and rehearsal. The city does not boast facilities that might attract interest from outside the region, with the exception of the recording suites at the International Youth House (also discussed in Chapter 5); however these are primarily used for training purposes. Running such services for the local population is hence a risky business, and businesses have tended to cluster together in support of one another.

One of these clusters is the Stayfree complex, which is found above a large music shop on Conduit Street near the city centre and which houses recording and rehearsal facilities, two record labels, a cybercafe and newly opened gallery space. Stayfree was set up by a former Leicester musician turned businessman and moved from the industrial warehousing off Frog Island to the more central Conduit Street in 1997. Although there were concerns that they would not be able to stay in the building due to noise complaints, the complex has thrived and musicians and bands can be seen leaving and entering the building in the evening hours and heard rehearsing on the nearby station platforms. The imposing four storey building is of easy access from the city centre and its corridors and foyer offer meeting spaces for those going between offices, rehearsal rooms and studios. It is used by the local Musicians Union branch for meetings, its personnel features a number of ex-members of Leicester's most notorious bands in the 1980s (Crazyhead, The Hunters Club and Diesel Park West), and the cluster of businesses also includes Rideout Records, the label run by the

current Popular Music Development Officer.

Summary

These examples of sites for scene activity cannot claim to include all of the places, physical, in the airwaves or otherwise, that are populated by Leicester's music communities. They hope to serve rather as demonstration of the kinds of resources and facilities that are drawn upon by those making (and consuming) music in the city, which also shape, form and colour the activities which take place. For example, being a part of the 'drum'n'bass' and 'nu jazz' scene that involves city DJs like the Zen Masters might involve finding out about their latest appearance at a club night through a free listings magazine, or hearing about it in Rockaboom, going to see them at the Attik, having met friends for a drink in Sauce or Bossa, who read about the night on a flyer in the Silver Arcade. Forming a new band might involve bringing in the ex-bassist from Molee who was met when recording with Kev Reverb at Stayfree, whose friend can get a gig at the Charlotte because he knows Andy from borrowing a bass amp when putting on gigs at the Magazine. Buying the latest release by DJ SS may have been inspired by hearing it at a blues party attended after listening to DJ T Baron 'talking it up' in 5HQ. The alliances, networks and affiliations that make up music scenes and which bring together music communities emerge in these spaces, and procreate the shared values, meanings and knowledge that form and extend taste cultures.

In the following section, three case studies examine local music practice in more detail. The first considers the recent arrival of Irish theme pubs in Leicester and discusses the use made of these venues by local music communities and ethnic communities and the ways in which an acoustic music scene has shifted to take advantage of these premises. The second considers pirate radio in Leicester and argues that this illegal form of radio has presented audiences in the city with music that is not accessible through mainstream local radio. It also considers the resources pirate radio offers ethnic communities in terms of economic and (sub)cultural capital. The third case study looks at a community business that was established to cater for women musicians in Leicester in terms of the collective efforts of a community formed around sexuality and gender and the problems and successes it encountered.

Popular music practice: three Leicester case studies

1. Irish theme pubs and acoustic music in Leicester

Irish theme pubs have long been established in mainland Europe, and indeed all over the world, as a reflection of the export of Irish culture through the process of migration and as a means of the import of revenue from such establishments. Although there have been Irish-owned and Irish-run pubs all over England for some time, particularly in larger cities with substantial Irish/Irish descent populations, it is only within recent years that British breweries have begun to use this theme as a systematic marketing strategy in British towns and cities. Over the first three months of 1996 three such establishments appeared in Leicester city centre, a small geographical area in a city with a relatively small and disparate Irish community. These pubs have provided alternative venues for folk and popular musicians in Leicester as well as a training ground for acts hoping to play on the national circuit of Irish pubs and clubs.

Molly O'Grady's, Shifty O'Shea's and O'Neills all follow the standardised format of Irish theme pubs replicated all over Britain. In terms of their appearance they adhere to the image of cosy rural Irish shop/pub both internally and externally, which is indicated by the shop front exteriors and by the presence of an accumulation of designer fifties grocery store objects in the bars themselves. Packets of soap powder and tea, tins of tacks and boxes of nails adorn the wonkily placed shelves, weathered cupboards and glass-fronted display units, and buckets, bottles and books are carefully arrayed in an environment of wood and paint techniques designed to appear battered by age and prioritised neglect. All three pubs in Leicester carry these motifs in both their appearance and their names, which suggest the personable affability of pubs owned and run by a single dominating character, who oversees the operations of the business and marks it clearly as part of their family, their clan and their heritage by its nomenclature. Common practice through the ages in Ireland, this is far from the actual background of these pubs, whose fictional names belie their corporate foundations. All three are brewery-owned, managed pubs, although the scale of operations of each within the brewery-ownership nexus is slightly different: O'Neills is part of a chain of 100 O'Neills pubs around the country which are operated by the Bass brewery group,

one of the 'big six' conglomerates and currently in second place behind Scottish Courage; Shifty O'Shea's is also part of a chain of Irish theme pubs and is run by Greenalls, the largest independent brewery in the UK , and Molly O'Grady's is the only Irish theme pub owned by Everards, which is a large but local brewery which owns a large percentage of Leicestershire pubs.

As with most Irish theme pubs all three in Leicester are music venues. Only Shifty O'Sheas has a full music license, the other two relying on the standard entertainments licensing for pubs which allows two performers only. At the time of research, all three had music on an average three nights a week towards the weekend, and used a combination of booking agents and local contacts to find suitable artists. A relatively small pool of local Irish acs was drawn from, as often artists would play two if not all three of the pubs in fairly rapid succession. Bookings at Molly's and Shifty's were made by their female managers, who took pride in obtaining the right bands to play and in the service this provides the customers and the artists themselves and the music scene in the city. Siobhan at Shifty O'Sheas commented how on arrival to Leicester she saw how the pub could fill a gap in a place that was "crying out for live music". The manager at Molly's was more assured of the importance of the pub as a venue:

> I think it has done a lot for Irish music. Even the girls have said to me that it
> has done a lot for the Irish bands, because they can go to places and get jobs. A
> lot of people want to get playing here, because for some reason it is a stepping
> stone to other places (Margaret, manager of Molly O'Grady's, in interview).

Margaret views her pub's role as very important to a particular musical circuit, and has enthusiastically encouraged two of her barstaff who play in what is now the 'in-house' band in their musical careers. A recent Irish festival in Leicester - the first Leicester Feile - which was part hosted by Molly's and part sponsored by Everards, featured the band almost exclusively, and they are seen as very instrumental to the pub's success as a music venue by both the brewery and the management16.As part of this proactive policy for highlighting live music at the pub, Adele, a band member, spent most of one summer employed to sit on Molly's stone steps on the busy street

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16 The pub was cited by Dominic, PR for Everards, as one of the top ten outlets for free entertainment in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. This accolade has apparently been granted by the BBC Radio Leicester's folk programme ,produced by James McKeeffrey who is a patron of Molly's and who is also one of the artists regularly appearing at the pub.

up to the market, playing tunes on her fiddle to attract custom. The pub also has an outside tannoy system that plays music, suggesting a lively session occurring indoors.

The breweries' main contributions to the pubs' music appear to be in financial terms, since only O'Neill's claims direct intervention in the selection of artists. In terms of recorded music played inside the pubs, O'Neills, as part of the largest chain in the country is also the odd one out, since the other two have CDs and tapes selected by the bar staff and management, whereas O'Neill's music is centrally organised by a computer. Each O'Neill's has a software selection system installed by the company Databeat, which offers music that is generated from over 200 Irish music CDs by criteria pertaining to day, time and consequent 'mood' of the bar. The chain also has a staff music policy; staff applying to O'Neills must go through an audition which involves story-telling, singing and dancing and are encouraged to dance to performing artists and even to perform themselves:

> we like them to wind down the evening gently by getting up on the bar and dancing or singing a chorus at last orders (Bob Cartwright, PR Officer for O'Neills).

The Irish welcome is seen as a very important part in attracting and keeping trade, and is much cited as the attraction of Irish theme pubs for customers from both owners and managers. This seemingly inherent friendliness and openness is heralded as peculiarly Irish and seen as an efficient way of combating British reserve in their patronage of the hospitality trade, opening up hearts and minds as well as wallets:

> What we try to do is get people who are by and large not Irish to drop their Anglo-Saxon attitudes and to get involved with the *craic* (Bob Cartwright in interview).

Molly O'Grady's had been a market traders' pub with a reputation for hardened drinkers, black market economy and violence. Interestingly Everards, the owners, decided to refurbish the large nineteenth century building as an Irish theme pub specifically as a calming measure that would bring back trade to the pub. This approach was helped, they claim, by employing the current manager, Margaret, who is Irish by birth, but has been running pubs in Leicester for more than twenty years, and who was well acquainted with the city centre population, local authority politics and

the Irish community in Leicester17.

Irish music is clearly recognised as playing a large part in creating a friendly welcoming atmosphere, as a continuum of a created and creative space, where clapping, toe-tapping, playing the spoons and singing along can all go on without penalty or unease:

> It makes you, it makes your body...it's fabulous when it's done right. Yes. it is invigorating, it is just lively. People just, just watch them, just watch their reaction. Just look it, they are tapping their feet. It gets rid of some of their inhibitions. It is amazing (Margaret, Molly O'Grady's, in interview).

Irishness and Irish music

One of the key referrents for Irishness is that of music. Finnegan (1989) found in her study of Milton Keynes that music approximated a synonym for a perceived cultural identity by presenting an anchor for commonality, or communality, in this particular setting:

> In all these activities, the definition of 'Irishness' was almost always in terms of music (or music-with-dance), and it was this rather than any distinctive local community or shared political stance that linked an otherwise disparate population. Music experienced as 'Irish' led not only to enjoyment and conviviality but also to a shared image of the people involved as participants in a wider and valued tradition. (Finnegan 1989:185)

Both Irish traditional music and Irish popular music have become increasingly popular and economically successful export in recent years, alongside the increasing success of the Irish music industry[18]. Traditional music formerly functioning as localised community entertainment and a medium for social integration has been taken up and learnt all over the world, along with its commodification by recording industries. It has recently become part of a global entertainment industry through shows like Riverdance and Lord of the Dance.

The ability to get people to dance is a much-valued property of Irish music and

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17 Dominic of Everards, telephone interview
18 The economic impact of the rehearsal and recording sector of the Irish music industry is assessed at I£39m per annum, with commentators estimating that the whole industry is worth about I£100m (Stokes Kennedy Crowley/KPMG (1994) Report on the Irish Popular Music Industry: A Summary'

spatially the pubs in Leicester incorporate enough room for dancing. These spaces are in front of low wooden stages, which are without fancy lighting, are carefully blended into the wooden decoration of the rest of the pub and situated far enough from the bar to be able to order pints, but not too far to prevent a rowdy but affable amount of jostling and spillage should audiences get caught up in the atmosphere.

> I think it's just something new for people to do. I don't think it's a coincidence that they're all in the centre of town, they're there for the young, well, it's a combination of students and young townies and I don't what else you'd call them. I've played in Molly O'Grady's on a Friday night when people have been in there warming up to go out to a club and its great because everyone's out dressed up to the nines and they're all dancing and they'll be dancing to us playing jigs and reels all night, which I find really satisfying. And we don't have to play the Fields of Athenry, all we do is just play dance music and they dance to it, looking for a good time, you know (Roger Wilson, local folk musician, in interview).

Irish theme pubs constitute neutral intermediate space for those who don't need or want to be aligned to any particular subculture but still want to hear and participate in (free) live music. They offer a cultural space that isn't thematically related to any particular era, fashion or dress code, but instead contains a connotative reference to an Other place, a place whose main associations are with a quaint friendliness, hospitality to strangers, fun and leisure, and also a physical space which is designed not to forefront the performer but to encourage dancing. Irish theme pubs in the music they present aim to provide unthreatening and unclassifiable locales, where the semiology is loosely applied but not too rigidly bound as to deny a transient custom:

> They are doing well because they are towny type places, they are big pubs that...in terms of if you want to go out somewhere in town and you don't want to go somewhere that is posy, an Irish theme pub provides another alternative night out in town that is not too posy. They don't have chart music or dance music on so it doesn't attract that sort of dance culture, the people who want to dress up in babe clothes and go out and pose, probably wouldn't go out to Irish theme pubs. They might pop in earlier on or on the way to a club (Frances O'Rourke, local musician, in interview).

So, as simulacra of a national asset, Irish theme pubs are depoliticised and deterritorialised: their neutrality is a carefully manufactured context. They are emptied of all politics bar those that will extend and maintain trade. To affiliate oneself with Irishness is also encouraged so long as it is a tourist's Ireland of romance and leisure or a youthful revelry encouraged by secondhand versions of The Pogues' songs. Rebel songs and unadulterated nationalism are however absolutely prohibited. Whereas in the recently defunct St Patricks Social Club, it was a social faux pas to leave the stage without playing the Irish national anthem as it is in most Irish social clubs, in the theme pubs it is important to bear in mind which country you are in, so long as you can smother it sufficiently with enough of Irishness at play until last orders. Theme pubs may want to encourage Irish patronage, particularly of the young or second and third generations but they cannot afford to dissuade any other nationality by allowing controversy to embitter a nights entertainment19.

> We played on St Patrick's day and it was so nice, nobody asked us to play crap songs, and then there was one guy that came up at the end and asked for the Irish national anthem, Maggie wouldn't have it, nobody is allowed to play that in here, rebel songs or anything. It is an Irish theme pub and it's Irish music and it would seem like you could play it but you can't. You've got to be dead careful, it's not worth it: you can't have people thinking that it's a Catholic club, it's an Irish theme pub (Adele McMahon, local musician, in interview).

Leicester's Irish community

In a speech at the opening of the recent Feile, held at Molly O'Grady's pub Cecil Harrow manager of the Irish Bank in Leicester congratulated all participants and deemed Molly's to be 'the Irish Embassy' of Leicester. The function of Irish theme pubs as a meeting place or non-affiliated community centre for Leicester Irish is something that has been proposed by management, since Leicester lacks an Irish

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19 Gerry Smyth discusses this issue in relation to his own musicianship and ethnicity, placed in the context of his experience of playing in Irish pubs. He describes three types of Irishness, which can be determined by the types of requests audiences make and musicians choose to play. These include a sentimentalist but weak-nationalist Irishness, which can be sated by the Wolfe Tones and Daniel O'Donnell songs; an anarchic and heavy drinking Irishness which flaunts the cultural stereotypes of the Irish in Britain through the songs of the Pogues, and a third form of Irishness with which he partially resolves his own identity dilemma, via a serious presentation of Irishness as the artistry of Celtic music. See Gerry Smyth, 'Who is the Greenest of them all: Irishness and popular music?", *Irish Studies Review* No 2 Winter 1992.

centre or main Irish social club, particularly since the demise of the St Patricks Social Club. The Sacred Hearts Club remains, which offers religious classes and is host to the Leicester branch of Comhaltas Eireann, the nation wide society for promoting Irish music and culture amongst Irish people in Britain; however this centre is out of the town centre and appears to only capture a certain sector of the population, dominated by certain families and people from particular geographical areas in Leicester. It has been commented that there is no reception area for Irish people coming into the city, such as students, and no central nucleus for cultural or social events[20].

The Irish community in Leicester is described as disparate and geographically dispersed: the Irish population has been declining in number and in social visibility through emigration from and scattered rehousing around Leicester since the 1970s (O'Connor 1995:55). The population that is visible has also been described as divided, in terms of the general Irish population and a social elite that is represented by the Irish Society, whose membership includes local Irish business people and wealthier families and who opposed the establishment of an Irish Centre in Leicester in the 1980s. This was because they felt sufficiently assimilated into the city to refuse any label of ethnic or racial difference or special cultural provision, instead using their Society as a facility for networking and socialising rather than for promotion of Irish culture per se (O'Connor:op cit).

It has been argued that the new theme pubs may offer services lacking due to the old fashioned approach of Irish centre, to adapt to the changing needs of the young Irish:

> a lot of Irish centres all over the place seem to be doing badly because they are not getting the people in through the door. They are just sticking to this old, a lot of people that go there don't want to Irish centre to change because it is just the same as it has always been for 30 or 40 years, and people like my dad, they would come over in the fifties and they would congregate in a few pubs that then would become Irish pubs because that happened to be where all the Irish people went. But because they weren't Irish pubs they wanted somewhere of

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20 Interviewees response, plus see O'Connor (1995). Since conducting the fieldwork for this paper, a new Irish social club has opened in Leicester at the Gaelic Football ground, some considerable distance from the city centre. This club will operate as a venue and has a substantial music budget, but at present has not began its programming of events due to reported lack of managerial expertise. It will be interesting to see the effect in any that this has on the Irish theme pubs in town and for the Irish community in Leicester in general.

their own to have dances, because most people come from communities where there would be a dancehall where they would go and see the showband and have a ceilidh. So there was a need to have somewhere that would have a hall, where they could congregate. These type of people are now in their 60s and 70s and like to hear dance band music, and young people don't want that now. Young people don't know how to waltz, they don't even know how to do the Seige of Ennis, so the need for somewhere with a big hall where they can dance has gone. So these Irish theme pubs are catering for young people who just want to go and stand and look at the band rather than do a proper figure formation dance to it (Frances O'Rourke, local musician, in interview).

The Irish theme pubs and wider musical practice

Leicester has a certain but obscured folk music tradition, in that there is a significant group of artists that have hailed from the city to achieve success in this field, and continue to play out at folk festivals and nights, including Roger Wilson, Annie Williamson, Pete Morton, Cathy Bonner and Sally Barker. The folk scene in Leicester in the 1960s and 1970s has been described as relatively booming, with folk clubs an events occurring almost nightly, as part of more general folk revival at this time. In the 1970s, the scene started to tail off somewhat and head out to the rural towns, where the folk clubs became more "full of comedians and people just out to make money"[21]. These clubs continued to operate in satellite towns, with a few venues in the city hosting weekly events, and over the years folk clubs in Leicester city have declined, although the recent recovery of acoustic music has encouraged more participation from younger age groups. The acoustic scene in Leicester is the closest that Leicester has as a tradition of music and local singer-songwriters are favoured in local discourse, comprising a distinctive set of music-makers who are looked upon as successful in their own sphere.

In terms of the promotion of Irish music, there is a weekly folk music programme on BBC Radio Leicester, which profiles traditional and folk music in the region, and the city paper the Leicester Mercury contains a folk column with listings in its weekly review section. Folk programmes are mainly held at the city's arts centre Phoenix

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21 Pete Morton

Arts, which also has a Saturday lunchtime folk cafe, along with single events by individual promoters in venues. The mini-scene of Irish music making bleeds over into the acoustic scene, however; in terms of personnel, the two are often one and the same. Traditional Irish sessions are often conflated with more general acoustic sessions, and the two sets of music practice are found in the same locality.

Only the more 'old school' form of Irish entertainment is distinct – that of the single pub performer equipped with keyboard, PA and accompanying instruments, usually voice, whistle and mandolin. With the rhythm track and backing provided by the keyboard, the performer, usually male, can offers a sufficient range of sounds for the least expense, often encouraging the audience to join vocally or percussively. He will need to have broad repertoire of material to fight off any obscure requests and may have a book of songs to hand to help make up an impromptu set. These performers satisfy the waltz and ballad end of the market; they may well have residencies at the non-theme pubs, and can earn a living from performing these sets at venues within travelling distance over the week.

Other types of single or duo performers play acoustic guitars and a similarly broad range of songs: these may be singer-songwriters who want to supplement earnings with the Irish theme gigs. Further up the numerical order, bands usually consist of acoustic instruments - guitar, mandolin, fiddle and occasionally flute, backed by bodhran playing, sometimes a small drum kit or a keyboard. Bands of this size will command less of a fee per person than duos unless they are of a certain stature within the music circuit, as payment for gigs of this size very rarely stretches beyond £200, and is usually around the £100 - £150 mark. Music budgets for live performance are distributed across the week, with more wages going to artists considered to be of higher calibre, at least in terms of attraction and suitability for customers, and who play on the busier nights of Friday and Saturday.

Musicians thus have to be committed, naive or hard up if their primary motivation to perform is for payment, and duos are more common than bands. There are larger outfits, who will travel further for better paid gigs in larger venues, such as the London Irish theme pub venues. These have been established longer, charge an entrance fee which often includes a later license and post-gig disco or club night. Payment for these gigs can go as high as £500 for an Irish covers band at the weekend;

these venues tend to present well-known covers or tribute bands who are on the circuit as well as more traditional music acts from further afield, and command a much higher music budget due to the entrance fee and their primary purpose as music venues, rather than this being secondary to their function as public houses. Entry onto this level requires a certain amount of professionalism as well as equipment, and bands may have managers to facilitate bookings.

Artists who play the theme pubs do not limit themselves to these venues, but also offer sets for weddings and ceilidhs with minimum modification. Rural pubs in the Leicestershire area also offer themed nights, where customers can watch a band, dance a spontaneously learnt set dance and eat some Irish stew for a small fee. Thus earnings can be accumulated in a number of sites, although these rarely total enough to make a living for bands, without prolific travelling and playing. The shortage of musicians with a genuine Irish background because of the small and disparate nature of Irish community in Leicester, is easily compensated by the number of artists from English folk and acoustic backgrounds that have learnt a statutory amount of Irish material in order to subsidise their ordinary income.

Irish theme pubs and the musicians

Musicians who play the Irish theme pubs are knowledgeable about the constraints on their activities, of the patterns they need to follow to fulfil expectations of audiences and employers in order to get the formula right. They are usually equally knowledgeable about the authenticity of the establishments they are playing in, in terms of Irishness, and can be critical about disparity between the pubs' suggested images and the reality:

> They haven't got that personal touch. When you are going in there to play in a session, you don't feel like you are welcome in the same way, you are just another form of entertainment to add to the atmosphere of the pub rather than the landlord liking Irish music and liking a bit of Craic and that. I suppose landlords want to fill up their pubs as well (Frances O'Rourke).

They can also be cynical about standards of musicianship and performance encouraged by the pubs, whilst acknowledging that they themselves are compliant in this process:

I think the music policy in the Irish theme pubs in England, from what I've seen has been generally pretty naff, so its real lowest common denominator stuff on the whole. I think it's the fault partly of the musicians as well, this idea that if you know the right ten songs you can get a gig in an Irish theme pub and you can get away with it and maybe put a bit of your own stuff in as well (Roger Wilson).

Appreciation on the part of their employers may not be an expectation of musicians familiar playing at Irish theme pubs, and so long as this is borne in mind the contractual arrangement is one that is carried off with dignity. One performer told me of how he felt like playing for Irish theme pubs was like being in the

hands of the big corporation - it was like I had come to mend the tap or something (Pete Morton, local folk musician, in interview).

Summary

Musical practice situated in Irish theme pubs in Leicester reveals some of the relations that exist between musical scenes and communities and local resources and social communities in Leicester. The acoustic scene is related to the longer established musical community associated with the (ethnic) Irish community through commonality of musical practice, as acoustic performers have taken up Irish material to exploit employment opportunities in the theme pubs. Irishness in Irish theme pubs is a construct which offers a reliable space for acoustic and semi-acoustic music performances, and as such hosts a music community as much if not more than an ethnic one. It does so on the premise of a socially constructed homological fit between ethnicity and music, where the 'good time' music of the Irish theme pub musicians represents the authentic Irishness which may or may not be present in the venues. The arrival of Irish theme pubs in Leicester has thus aided the economic practice of some local musicians by providing the resources for live performance that were readily assimilated into existing consumption practice.

2. Pirate radio and different communities in Leicester

This section examines an important form of distribution and promotion of popular music in the city – that of local radio – in relation to ethnic communities in Leicester and to the musical communities that have arisen from one type of local radio, that of pirate radio.

Pirate radio

Pirate radio is illegal broadcasting, transmission on air without a license. First popularised in Britain, Ireland and all over Europe in the 1960s, when transmission were often made from off-shore vessels, the influence of pirate radio stations has been noted on mainstream radio, particularly in terms of audience expectation of musical content (Barbrook 1992; Negus 1996). In many ways BBC *Radio One* came as a direct result of the popularity of stations such as *Radio Caroline* and *Radio Luxembourg*, and this first wave of illegal music broadcasters set the tone for pirate radio as the home of cutting edge musical taste, situated outside of the institutional forces shaping mainstream radio (Lewis & Booth 1989; Barbrook 1990; Hind & Mosco 1985). Despite the deregulation of licensing for radio under the 1990 Broadcasting Act, radio licenses are difficult and costly to obtain and involve the payment of musical property rights. Alongside the rise of underground dance music and illegal raves and parties in the 1980s there was a proliferation of radio stations joining in with the already established number of stations playing dub and reggae to urban black communities (Hind & Mosco 1985; Jones 1994). In the late 1990s, in spite of the increase in legal local stations following deregulation, there are still many pirate stations.

The motivations for illegal transmission are varied. Negus (1996) suggests that pirates are set up for reasons ranging from the platform they might provide for particular artists to the ideologies of local self-help and do-it-yourself lying behind community radio. They also provide unregulated air space for music found unsuitable by legitimate radio. Sullivan (1999) suggests that rigid corporate infrastructures pervade independent local radio which is increasingly dominated by large corporations such as Emap and Capital and these have resulted in middle-of-the-road playlisting from stations originally aiming at new or 'alternative' music broadcasting. Referring to *Xfm*, the London-based station owned by Capital and set up with an indie and alternative

music remit but found to be turning towards the mainstream to attract its 15-34 male target audience, she notes:

> Park [the director of programmes for the Capital group] says his goal is to make Xfm the first choice for "vibrant, vital new music". Hopefully, he'll achieve it without alienating his original supporters. If he does, it will send a message to other conglomerates that it's not necessary to tear the soul out of alternative radio to make a profit. If not there are always the pirate stations, a dozen of which have sprung up in London alone in the last year as listeners seek alternatives to the alternatives (Sullivan 1999)

Pirates provide an outlet for music that cannot be heard ordinarily on mainstream radio, and hence the music of the contemporary pirates is in general quite different to that of their neighbours on the airwaves. Since many of the pirates are by origin African-Caribbean, there is a large emphasis on black music such as Reggae, Rap, Hip Hop, Soca, Swingbeat and Soul. New dance music such as Techno and House, originating from black DJs in America, that have caught the imagination of British youth on an underground but substantial scale over the last decade has also become a more predominant pirate sound. British and European variants such as Happy Hardcore and Jungle were rarely heard on mainstream radio in 1995, having been deemed as inaccessible and inappropriate for targeting audiences for advertising by programme producers. However the popularity of the pirate stations has impressed upon existing and more recently established stations, such as *Kiss FM* and *Virgin Radio*, who have mimicked the pirates to offer similar styles and selections of dance music.

Thus, pirate radio has the potential for the broadcasting of individual tastes dictating by the DJs outside of the boardroom; it also possesses the romantic appeal to alternative or 'underground' communities.

Pirate radio in Leicester

At the time of fieldwork research, the number of pirate stations on air in Leicester varied between one and three. Occasionally, raids by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) closed down stations, sometimes temporarily, and new allegiances and internal disputes led to the creation of two rival stations. Pirate stations had been

operating in the region for around seven years: for this research I concentrated on the most enduring station in Leicester, called here *Pirate FM,* which had been on air now for over three years at the time of research, although there had been several changes in management. Operated by DJs voluntarily and transmitted from unknown temporary locations, the whereabouts of the transmitter and the studio were cloaked in secrecy for fear of raids from the Department of Trade and Industry, who have licence to confiscate all equipment and impose fines. This secrecy also protects the equipment from burglary, from both rival pirates and those who know the value of the equipment used: at least one burglary occurred when I was in contact with members of the station.

Setting up transmission for a pirate can be achieved relatively easily, as aerials are cut proportionately to the frequency required and parts can be obtained locally without too much expense. Studio equipment and records are the bulk of the expense; time and commitment to the activity are the other prerequisites to keep a station going. The station I examined was not profit-making in a direct sense. It ran adverts for local businesses, however advertising was severely restricted by virtue of the illegal status of the station: to be advertised on a pirate is also illegal, incurring the risk of a visit from the DTI. Advertising is cheap (the cost of an hourly advert was, in 1995, about £75 per week) and usually taken up by small businesses similarly in the leisure industry - clothing and records shops for example - or by promoters putting on events. There was also a great deal of internal advertising, in that DJs who played on the station made adverts promoting their own events, such as sound clashes and dance parties, and it is this which creates the indirect method of payment and profit-making, as DJs earn revenue from ticket sales and door entry to events.

The promotion of the station itself was similarly informal; jingles with the station's name were frequently played for those who have stumbled across the frequency whilst searching the FM band. Although some tangible advertising took place via distributed flyers which promoted events featuring station DJs, this method was used cautiously and the station mainly relied on word of mouth in its endorsement of events and artists. The importance of a pirate station's name was pointed out to me by one of the station's DJs, when discussing the changes that occur when a pirate gets a licence. Once legal, the station must change its name as well as its frequency and this presents an automatic handicap. Not only is the station no longer located in the same place on the dial, but

also it suffers from the loss of a recognisable "tag":

> You change the name, you loose your identity as a station (*Pirate* DJ)[22]

The music played on the station was a mixture of different styles, commonly lumped under the term 'black' music and originating from Reggae and Dub, as well as some House and Garage programming. At the time of research Drum'n'Bass was becoming known (under its former title of 'Jungle') in the Midlands and the South as the new urban sound, and the station was instrumental in the rise of DJ SS, a local Jungle artist who became well-known outside of the area and who DJed and played regularly on the station. The different styles were identified with the DJs; some concentrated on classic reggae, lover's reggae and 'roots' styles, some focused on Hip Hop and Rap, whereas others played Soca, Ragga Dancehall and Swingbeat. Negotiating oneself around the different musics came only from regular listening to discover who preferred what, although there were various attempts at regular programming, including scheduling 'lighter' sounds such as Soul and Gospel for Sundays and in the afternoon and Reggae for the late night slots. At less accessible times (and when DJs failed to turn up for their allotted times) pre-recorded compilations of similar tracks were played, made noticeable when the tape ran out and left silence on the air or when the same track was repeated after 90 minutes.

Despite or perhaps because of this haphazard approach innovation had a firm hand in some of the programming. Live DJ sets (where records are 'mixed' with each other rather than merely played) were common and DJs often toasted and rapped along with records. The space for new untested music was secure on the station so long as it had common roots with the other music played: one memorable show announced the beginning of 'Bungla', a mixture of Jungle and Bhangra music. There was not one homogenous style to the DJing or the music played; however certain common aspects were apparent. Speech and commentary were conspicuously restricted, in comparison to the disc jockey style on mainstream music stations, and other speech-based features such news, weather, competitions and interviews were few and far between. These items would have cost time and money to produce, may have relied on outside allegiances and more importantly, according to those I spoke with, would detract from

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22 All interviewees and contacts for the research on pirate radio have been kept anonymous, and the name *Pirate Fm* is a pseudonym

the main impetus of the station: to supply the city with the music the DJs loved to play.

Pirate DJs as community representatives

When asked why the station was first established one DJ told me that the main motivation was to provide a service for Leicester:

> Pirate stations are all about being heard...Leicester needed a street station with a good credibility (*Pirate* DJ).

Station DJs consider themselves as providers of a service for certain city communities, particularly those underrepresented in other forms of media. The station was described to me as a "street community radio station", with an emphasis on youth and ethnicity, targeting "its own sort of people". This provision is overwhelmingly in a musical sense: records were often played back-to-back, rarely interrupted except for information on what is being played, events going on in the city, 'shoutouts' and requests for friends and supporters and the occasional competition to win tapes, CDs or tickets to a forthcoming event.

The majority of DJs were black, from Leicester's African Caribbean community, although there were also white and Asian DJs featured on the station. Radio cloaks the DJ with a certain amount of personal anonymity, allowing jockeys to choose which aspects of identity they wanted to portray on air, leading to a combination of styles and signifiers which comprise the station as a whole. As with any other radio station, creating and maintaining an identity was an important element in attracting and keeping an audience within a climate of fierce competition. Much of this identity stems from the music played, but other factors contributed such as the name of the station, DJs' 'handles' (names) and jingles. These reflected the 'street' image of pirates; jingles boasted the station's general capabilities in a sexy Ragga style as a deep male voice in the manner of Barry White urged listeners to "tune in and rip the knob off!", and the DJs' names are awash with macho confidence, often prefixed in reference by the words "the man-like...", or by the titles "Doctor" or "Daddy"[i].

This overt machismo is described by Skeggs (1993) as a central tenet of the cultural expression of black masculinity, originating as a strategy of resistance against the pathologisation of black males in colonialism and slavery. Skeggs writes about female musicians who disrupt and contest the social order created by both colonialism and

black masculinity as expressed through rap music. Referring to the fear of black sexuality and its consequent fascination for the white colonialist Skeggs considers how the myth of black sexual prowess is turned into a way of gaining power through performance, when access to other forms of power (economic, political and social) were so concretely unavailable:

> It is this legacy of competition between male sexual performance that continues today, making women the receivers of (and critics) of that competition. Michele Wallace...illustrates how Black men were able to use the myths that legitimate their oppression as a form of resistance against racism. If we look at the cultural capital that Black men have, it should not be surprising that they emphasize their sexuality. They use it to resist oppression, to construct dignity and self-esteem. And, as popular music has shown, through the fear and fascination of the white audiences/consumers, racist myths could be very easily be converted into *displays* of Black male power and control. (Skeggs 1993:304, original italics)[23].

The aura of competition, of claiming to be better than the rest, is part of the struggle for supremacy of the airwaves, but is also suggestive of the Caribbean dancehall and sound system, of the aggressive assertions of superiority that are commonplace in 'toasting' and 'rapping' culture. It is a recognisable but subtle reference to the prescriptive and boastful characteristics of this music culture, offering interpellations of authenticity and (street) credibility to Leicester's African-Caribbean population.

This construction of 'blackness' is not the preserve of the African-Caribbean community alone however. Youth from the Asian communities in Leicester also use pirate radio stations as a form of representation - 'shoutouts' to listeners on the pirates are very often for Asian names, and on another station, which set up in competition with *Pirate FM*, there were shows featuring more new Asian youth and fusion music and more Asian DJs. The use of music of black (African-American) origin, such as Swingbeat and Soul, by Asian youth and Asian influence on new British music

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23 At the time of research there was only one female DJ on *Pirate FM*, an indication of the male domination of pirate radio and Djing practice in general. Pirate radio is, on the production side at least, overwhelmingly a man's game, and there are many issues concerning gender and sexuality that are raised by considering the structure and content of pirate radio. Due to constraints of space I do not examine gender issues further here.

movements like Jungle and British Hip Hop is evidenced in Leicester, and challenges the preoccupation that policy makers have with Bhangra, the traditional indigenous music of the Asian communities often cited as the requisite cultural resource for young Asians in the city[24]. The increasing participation in these other cultural forms by Asian youth has altered the racial boundaries drawn implicitly around the music, questioning the notion of homology and ethnicity and suggesting new homologies between urban ethnic populations and popular music. It has also proved problematic for some involved. This extract from a conversation with an African-Caribbean DJ reveals a contested terrain and competition over cultural capital:

> There are some people that aren't too keen on the Asians - they feel they are taking over. But that's an inferiority complex...the truth of the matter is that some black people don't like it, because they are taking over our scene...As long as black people are so frightened, feel so inferior, they will always be where they are at...All I'll do is stand in the background or join in. All that they [Asians] are doing is enjoying themselves. They are doing what we did years ago; they are coming out of their shells and enjoying themselves. I don't see why we shouldn't be able to join in (*Pirate* DJ).

This suggests a conflict over the rigidity of community boundaries exacerbated by competition for cultural capital. Those involved in popular music, through making tracks or Djing on pirate radio, find that the facets of identity they have in common with fellow musicians and DJs are subsumed to their ethnic background. The boundaries of musical communities, or communities of interest, seem weaker or more flexible in this instance than those of communities of heritage and background, so that barriers to entry and inclusion are invoked should activity threaten the ownership or identity of cultural resources. That Asian DJs are playing 'black' music on the airwaves, that 'they are taking over our scene', is enough to produce a defensive reaction in a community based on resistance and the protection and promotion of

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24 From my ethnography of the city's music venues and clubs I observed the substantial Asian audiences for Soul and Swingbeat club nights, as well allegiance to particular clubs which featured House and Garage (this was in comparison to the relative absence of Asian faces in the rock and indie-oriented live performances venues). Further research into the different ethnicities of audiences and participants in dance music in the city would explore these issues and contribute to the growing interest in and literature on Asian participation in popular music.

minority tastes within a dominant culture[25].

Pirates and motivations: the romance of the 'street'

Challenging the status quo, to the extent of illegality, appeared to act as part of the appeal for pirate broadcasters. The risks involved of operating illegally - arrest, fines and disruption to the service - were counterbalanced by other factors that make piracy attractive. These included foremost the lack of regulation that pirates undergo. The freedom to present any format and any music the DJ wished to play and the lack of pressure to be on air at any particular time added to the informality of the station, allowing the DJs to contribute as and when they want to and lending the format an underground "for the people" air. During the time of research, *Pirate FM* considered applying for a licence and hence moving over to the legal mainstream. This was revealed on air in changes in DJing style, as a certain professionalism was transmitted, defined more by the lack of technical hitches and more consistent programming including day-time and drive-time slots than by any specific change in format. I was also told of a growing regulation of the DJs by the management, as DJs were 'dissuaded' from previous tendency to 'party on air', as drugs and alcohol and an accompanying posse of mates are often part of studio practice.

The attraction of working on pirate radio is that it offers the potential to play music unregulated by programme editors or pluggers, to select one's own 'street' sounds rather than those that pass through the careful selection procedures of more conventional radio. Programming can therefore be more specialised and personalised and selection of music an expression of a commitment to Djing that faces the risk of prosecution and fines. This commitment is exemplified clearly by one *Pirate* DJ who described the "risk factor" and wariness needed in DJing for a pirate station, but countered this by expressing how the love of the music overrode any misgivings:

> There is always that element there, when people are being seen at certain times of the day, or week, and you just know that something weird is happening that shouldn't happen. There is always that risk factor. It's always in the back of my mind...But I get paid for it: my payment is my

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25 This notion of ethnic community in contrast to and distinct from music community is considered further in Chapter 7.

enjoyment. I go up there and I enjoy it. There are times when I feel really down. I'm so pissed off I don't even want to go in there. But I go in the studio, I'm programmed to go in studio. I'd be lost without it...In the last half hour, certain records that I've pulled out the box, put them on the turntable and they start to bring me round. I start to get jolly and then I've got to come off the air. I do it basically for the love - the love of the music keeps me there (*Pirate* DJ).

The voluntary commitment to the music also contributes to the lack of traditional celebrity smugness found in other DJing styles. Some of the music played on pirates, as mentioned above, is rarely interrupted by DJ patter, creating an almost anonymity of style: Ross Jones suggests this is pirate radio's most appealing factor

> ...and what ultimately separates it from the corporate competition. What drives the pirate DJ to get up at 11 o'clock in the morning, drag himself to the top of a urine sodden tower block, and sit in a smoky room for hours on end is a love for music that can't be sated in any other way. He's there to play records, and this is why it isn't unusual to find yourself listening to a full arid hour of drum and bass without so much as a peek from their selector (Ross Jones, *The Guardian:*31 July 1994).

This is not to suggest that pirates are devoid of egos; I was told of the avid competition between DJs, as they judge each other by experience, knowledge and style. The unorthodox style of the pirates' presentation highlights the romance of the situation, as well as the possibility for democratisation. Pirate DJs pride themselves as coming from the streets and being able to present their music in a way familiar to those who listen to it, and reminiscent of the blues dance parties, sound systems and other pirate radio stations that they grew up with and that contribute to the music culture. Tim Westwood (ex-pirate DJ, now associated with *Radio One*) wrote in his forward to *Rebel Radio*:

> The radio pirates shared the same music, language and behaviour as their audience; through the adverts they shared the same nightclubs, fashions, clothes - even food and cosmetics (Hind 1985:ii).

The basis of common experience at the periphery of mainstream culture is part of the

romantic underground appeal; the DJs view themselves as part of the community, as 'coming from the same place' as their audiences, although they simultaneously have the status and the prestige of media figures on a local scale.

Pirate radio and the city: music as representation?

The covert nature of pirate radio has resulted in a lack of information on who and how many actually listen to it. Other forms of radio require regular surveys, audience diaries and other forms of research to monitor their audiences, usually compiled by the Radio Industry Joint Audience Research (RAJAR). The evidence for audiences in this research has been derived from participant observation at events connected to the pirate radio stations, such as blues parties and the Caribbean Carnival, and on the basis of shoutouts, requests and phone-ins on the radio itself. The unmistakable sound of the station I focused on could also be heard blaring from cars and from the open windows of houses in Highfields. From the requests and mentions made on the station itself, the reach of the station could be ascertained: New Parks and Braunstone regulars showed that the station (although broadcast from the inner city Highfields area) reached the city boundaries and shout outs to inmates in the young offenders institute at Glen Parva to the south of the city were common. Occasionally, pirate radio in Nottingham could be tuned into in Leicester; the reverse however was not possible.

Pirates in Leicester have created a stratum of sound not available on the legitimate formats of radio in the city, providing the opportunity to hear music that rarely filters up to the mainstream. In this sense they represent the minorities as a counter-hegemonic force, not least since they are run locally by members of communities that traditionally have little access to representation and little power within the media. They not only sustain themselves but are also supportive of whole networks of underground music use, involving clubs, events and parties, music promoters, producers and retailers.

The selection of music is thus crucial in defining who the station represents, and as with other forms of radio, the scheduling of different programs and individual tastes of DJs have consequences for the feel and appeal of the station. The music played references alternative discourses, involving black cultural and political issues, street talk and allusions to the pleasures and pains of youth and urban existence, which

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function to sustain communities of interest. In the lyrics and the connotations and associations of the music played, global (in the sense of non-local, rather than universal) cultural codes are drawn upon. The claims of Rap and Hip Hop, originating from black America, and the allusions of Reggae to Rastafarianism claim resistance to hegemonic structures – from colonialism and white power to global capitalism and the tyranny of music industry moguls. Their appeal to local audiences is both on a discursive level and on a practical economic level in their role as creation and maintenance of alternative markets and audiences, producers and consumers. In this way these soundscapes cater for communities based around musical interest and the experiences of (inner) city life and ethnicity. These experiences are overlapping and feed into each other, building bridges of commonality and producing as well as eroding boundaries.

The music is characterised by its 'street appeal'; the artists involved are not general household names but comprise a specialist knowledge, known to those who have grown up around sound systems, dance parties and white label record shops, or to those who have the inclination and commitment to learn. The older genres, such as Reggae, have established traditions and histories, whereas the newer Dance musics have ever increasing histories of knowledge, gleaned from specialist magazines, other DJs and hours of listening time at home and in clubs, in order to know, for example, who are the best mixers and producers and what are the current most popular sounds. This informal database is created and drawn on by DJs and audience alike, and involves special language for reference to different styles of music. Pirate radio is an important resource for these genres, both in terms of access to the music, which as mentioned above has limited airplay in the mainstream, and in terms of the genres' definition, as DJ references and selection of material reflect, construct and disseminate the language and parameters of the styles. An example of this would be the reference to a particular Jungle track as being 'dark' - a description that is part of the established discourse of Jungle, which for those who engage with this genre has connotations for the mood of the track, the particular sub-genre of jungle it is aligned with and the actual musical structure of the track itself.

Other aspects of broadcasting showed the delicacy with which ethnicity and music are intertwined, so that other cultural references were also important to the construction of

communities as well as their representation. For example, the audiences' understanding of references in the station's jingles could inform them of what music to expect to hear on the station. A contact described to me how at one stage there was an internal debate over what accent station jingles should adopt, since management was concerned that audiences may be alienated by jingles that suggested one sort of music was prioritised over another:

> I'm not saying people don't understand. I mean black people first came over, you know, you could talk Patois or Antiguan or whatever and nobody could understand. With the station going the way it was, with the Reggae jingles etc., I'm not saying people don't understand – of course they do – what I'm saying is it just sounded too black. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with sounding too black, but some people don't like Reggae, certain people don't like Soul. So they changed it – not to English sort of jingles, like American whacky silly accents, but instead the jingles became more attractive. Instead of the jingles being that way, they were more of a Rave tip. (*Pirate* DJ)

In contrast to the other forms of local radio and via the concentration on certain forms of music, *Pirate FM* presents communities not as specialisms or minorities, but as the norm. The format of the station, which is divided into programmes catering for the different styles of music, allows listeners to tune in to the style and DJ of their choice in the context of music preference, rather than being targeted as a particular need group or as a commodity to be sold to advertisers. The lack of interruption by DJs facilitates this, and is in fact even boasted of, as a particular bonus of listening in:

> While the others keep talking, we keep rocking (a jingle from *Pirate FM*).

The stations operate at a local level, with frequent reference to local characters, events and areas: this could be considered as creating an informal environment that encourages people to think of the radio station as community-based and grounded in the city, rather than based in loftier climes. The provision for requests and shoutouts (usually a mobile phone) gives people direct access to the DJs: 'rewinds' can be requested, where a track is taken back to the beginning, giving the caller direct influence on the content and format of the show, albeit in a limited way. This is freely

encouraged by DJs, and highlights the more flexible approach to format of pirate radio. Requests are often made on behalf of local 'massives' or 'crews' - groups of youths who frequently label themselves according to their local area, and the frequent allusions to Leicester, both as a city and its' contents - workplaces, venues and areas - and the call of "represent!" are often heard.

On another level, pirates also provide a platform for local artistes, having connection with the local music industry through contact with studio and record agencies. There are promotions of local singers as well as the day-to-day self-promotion of DJs, particularly when local artistes are released on record. This produces the possibility for creating record sales that may make or break a new artiste, as well as the benefit to local record shops and studios. A recent example of this is Leicester's own Mark Morrisson, from the Highfields area, who has recently made the national charts on two occasions. Although *Pirate FM*, who constantly played his single 'Crazy" in the summer of 1995, cannot claim sole responsibility for his current success, they were certainly instrumental in helping his career in earlier days and had been briefed by the artiste on when to play his record.

It is the 'street knowledge' and common grounding of the pirate DJs that allow this close connection with local music scenes. Their embeddedness in the city, or rather in their city as constructed by their local knowledge and practice, and the ways that is revealed in DJ patter and commentary as well as music selection offer the opportunity for a more intimate relationship with a similarly knowledgeable local audience than the other examples of local radio.

> To put it with complete cynicism (meaning only partial truth), radio's atmosphere of local involvement is designed to attract the highest possible proportion of listening hours for sale to local advertisers, and thus to maintain and promote the particular local 'feel' that can attract both listeners and advertisers...In this context the DJ serves to personalize and thus to locate the station as more than an abstract mediation of records, advertisers and listeners. DJs are increasingly disempowered in terms of programming and make fewer and fewer decisions about music and other content. But it falls to the DJ's voice to provide immediate evidence of the efficacy of its listeners' desires. It is through that voice that radio assumes authorship of the community, woven

into itself through its jokes, its advertisements, its gossip, all represented, recurringly and powerfully, as the map of local life. (Berland 1993:115-6)

The context Berland discusses is North American and Canadian network radio, the structure of which is closest to commercial independent radio in Britain. Thus some characteristics of pirate radio – low regulation, high levels of DJ autonomy, an informal (illegal) relationship with advertisers and high levels of political commitment, despite low levels of immediate economic return – suggest greater potential for representing the local, whilst others – high music content, taped shows, lack of generalised local news – flag up non-local concerns which I suggest here are targeted at ethnic and diasporic communities.

Summary

This case study has looked at the relationships between local audiences and music broadcasters through the example of pirate radio. It has considered what the practice of one pirate radio station in the city reveals about the relationships between communities based on ethnicity and communities of interest based on lifestyle, music taste and 'street' knowledge or, following Thornton (1995), subcultural capital. It argues that the lack of regulation of pirate radio has allowed a greater freedom to represent particular communities through popular music, using 'non-locally' produced records in the context of 'the local'. The local knowledge of the DJs is transmitted on the air to serve their audiences by playing their music, whilst promoting their own livelihoods, through blues parties and club nights. Pirate radio in Leicester constructs a very different city to other more dominant forms of representation. However other factors such as the competition for cultural resources amongst ethnic minority groups and the claims of 'ownership' of particular styles of music by particular ethnic groups expands the notion of homology in relation to ethnicity and popular music, whilst leading to conflict over the boundaries of what the pirates have themselves termed 'the street community'.

3. Women In Music: Gender, sexuality, self-help and separatism

> 'Black music' is much more common than 'white music'; just like the terms 'women's history' or 'women's music' cause fewer eyebrows to be raised than 'men's history' or 'men's music'. Such terms are relative to the hegemony of the culture of their user, so 'men's music' and 'white music' will sound stranger in a culture dominated by white males than 'women's music' or 'black music': they (blacks and women) are the exception and we (whites and men) are the rule. (Tagg 1989:286)

As the social stratification of race and ethnicity divides music practice and creates hierarchies over the access to resources, so gender also acts as a pivot for unequal treatment and inclusion. This case study looks at the organisation of a music community based on gender, and its attempts to access resources in the city to improve the status and profile of women musicians in the city.

The experiences of women musicians

It has been recognised in the growing literature on women musicians and their treatment and status in the music industry that women have quite different experiences in music practice to those of men (Steward & Garratt 1984; Bayton 1990, 1992; Evans 1994; Raphael 1995, Rumsey and Little 1989). Ethnographic studies at a local level, such as Cohen (1991), have also commented on the very different position of women in local music scenes, as they have found themselves excluded from bands or when established in groups are treated as a novelty or gimmick. Across the entire spectrum of popular music, women are less in number and have had more difficulties in achieving a parity with male success in the business. Arguably the recent rise of dance music has had implications for music consumption by reasserting a more equal gender balance on the dance floor and creating better conditions for women to go out and enjoy music (Pini 1997). There are still far fewer female DJs playing in clubs, however, and those who do face similar problems to their rock counterparts (Marshall 1999); other women involved in dance music are vocalists, used on a sessional basis. In terms of music production, in rock, pop and dance the balance of power remains with men, and the recent successes and claims of 'girl power' of groups such as TLC,

All Saints and the Spice Girls have in some ways reinforced women's roles as 'singers' rather than 'musicians'.

Bayton (1990) notes how women may have different motivations and initial experiences to those of men, when forming bands. She finds that they are much less likely to play an instrument before forming a band, and have more flexible and less individualised attitudes towards which roles they play, for example in the instruments and styles of music they take up:

> Male musicians are usually drawn together to play a certain style of music. This is not necessarily true for female musicians. Again, the small size of the "pool" of players is a determining factor here. For a lot of the women I interviewed the desire to play in an all-women band was far more important that the style of music itself – at the beginning, that is (Bayton 1990:239).

She notes the encouragement and support her women interviewees offered each other in music making, and also describes the obstacles they needed to overcome, such as unfamiliarity with the traditionally 'male domain' of electric amplification, a tendency to group equality at the expense of firm group leadership and the hassles of finding childcare when rehearsing and performing.

The experiences of women musicians I interviewed echoed these comments. One who went on to coordinate women's music workshops and run her own record label talked of the compromise between style of music and style of working:

> Po! was at one time an all-female band, which was what I wanted, I wanted an all-female band. But at time went on I realised it was very difficult. For a start there were so few female musicians, but then to find female musicians that you get on with personally and who share your taste in music, was even more difficult. So you either compromise one or the other - you either go for an all-female band and a style of music you don't like, or you play the music you like but with men or musicians you don't like! (Ruth Miller, local musician, in interview)

Another, who was central to the organisation Women in Music discussed below, felt that even though her all-female band had more success than mixed and male bands in Leicester at the time they were still treated as gimmicks, who had achieved success

through sex appeal rather than talent:

> When I was in The Shapiros, I mean, really glamorous women, OK, the band wasn't that brilliant, but the first band ever to be signed from Leicester by Virgin, and we were signed by several independent record companies. And everyone said, 'Oh you are only doing it because you're women, you only got there because you're girlies'. And you are thinking ' no, heh, we got there because we write good songs and we play good music'. but you are continually having to prove yourself, and at the end of the day, you just think, 'oh god forget it! (Jan Fraser, local musician and co-founder of WIM, in interview).

She also told an anecdote to support the fear of amplifiers and heavy lifting women musicians are supposedly notorious for:

> I came across this woman, well she had had a sex change, and I didn't realise this and when I did this gig with her, and she was acting all girlie: 'I don't know how to set the PA up, and can you plug this in for me, and plug that in for me' and I just said 'For god's sake, get a grip, you are a singer-guitarist-songwriter, surely you know how to plug in a PA?' " Oh I know I don't'. But she told me afterwards that she used to be this bloke in this heavy rock and roll band, and she took her role model from the women, the singers, who turned up and said they didn't know how to do this and how to do that! So it is like this is how men see women, and that is how women act. You can't blame them - I used to do it with my drumkit - you just think after a while, sod it I'll join them! (Jan Fraser)

Women In Music

In 1994 Women in Music (WIM)[26] was set up to advance the position of women musicians and women's music in Leicester – the organisation came out of a substantially lesbian community, who knew each other socially and through their involvement firstly in music and secondly in community work. There were two main thrusts behind the formation of the organisation: the need for resources for women musicians in Leicester and the need for social space for the city's lesbian community.

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26 There is also a national organisation based in London with the same name which has similar aims to those of Women in Music: these organisations, although in contact with one another, were completely separate from each other.

The lesbian community had had quite a strong social scene in the city's gay pubs and clubs and the core members of the group had known one another for some time. Since the closing of the Leicester Women's Centre in 1989 however, there was a perceived lack of venues catering for gay women, and specifically for women only; there was also a need for a space that might encourage more performance from women musicians.

One of the founder members of WIM who had been a professional and semi-professional rock and pop musician for most of her life had been busy giving friends and colleagues advice on a informal basis, but felt that a formal infrastructure to challenge the domination by men in music in the city would recognise and promote the achievements of women:

> We wanted to create a database of women musicians, and equipment hire for women that didn't have their own, and to run rehearsal spaces and workshops so that women could become more confident. Also we wanted to employ women to run workshops, so that they would be getting paid for what they do best, playing the drums or guitar or singing. And also to have an agency whereby you can book female acts (Jan Fraser in interview).

There had been previous schemes aimed at women musicians, mainly stemming from the Multiplex organisation, and a number of women artists, such as Carol Leeming, Cathy Bonner and Sally Barker had achieved notoriety as role models for younger musicians. However, this was the first coordinated effort to establish an business for women to train and perform in the city.

There were two main strands to WIM – the creation of training and employment for women in community and arts-based work, and the opening up of local music activity to embrace, encompass and advance a women's music scene. The project received funding as a community business in a City Challenge area in the city on the basis of its aims to create and sustain employment and through the skills and experience of one of the key organisers, Christina Brown, who has a background in community development and training. The organisation sent some of its core committee on training events and held a number of workshops in arts promotion and various aspects of music production. It successfully hosted a number of events for women in Leicester

and its major achievement was running Women in The Spotlight – a regular night which profiled women musicians to a mixed audience.

Women in The Spotlight supported and promoted local female musicians, featuring 200 different women artists in its two year history, many of whom were new to live performance, and bringing in bands from outside of Leicester. The night began in an upstairs room in the pub The Magazine, a venue that was felt particular conducive to the organisation's aims since they matched the pub's own espoused political and social convictions. Female musicians, mainly vocalists and guitarists, performed 'spots' in an atmosphere of mutual support and allegiance. The music was primarily folk and rock-oriented, reflecting the women's guitar-based training and the size of the venue. The club was able to operate on a small door charge, subsidised by the business' funding for paying larger acts and by the lack of pay-to-play policy at the pub, so that it created an income that allowed larger events such as concerts and balls. Problems began to emerge however for the club, when the culture of the venue altered with a change in management. Problems began to arise over the women-only basis of performance and the new management did not place the same emphasis on creating conditions to satisfy the separatist ethos or allay fears for safety for women coming to the venue alone. The night moved to a different venue, which was situated in a part of the city centre that was perceived as less accessible and which was also more expensive in terms of alcoholic sales.

There were also internal problems based on a conflict of identity for the organisation. Whilst Women in Music had stemmed from a mainly lesbian group of women, it was emphasised at committee level that sexuality should not intrude on the aims of the organisation, although equality for all sexualities and the provision of cultural space for lesbians and bisexuals to socialise should be achieved. The attendance of Women in the Spotlight was however in the majority lesbian, and a split occurred between those who were using the night to promote women's music and a core group of separatist lesbians who wanted the night to be women only and to be chiefly geared to lesbian social events. The club thus became a contested space, and attendance numbers dwindled, leaving those whose primary interest was in the music dejected and cutting down the money made from the door.

I think a lot of it was to do with the venue change, but then you also have the

conflict with the lesbian side and the feminist side. All I was trying to do was say 'look it is for musicians, it is not just for lesbians or whatever.' There was a decline in the number of musicians, plus the lesbians tended to take it over towards the end, seeing it as a night out for them, rather than supporting whoever was playing. A lot of women got pissed off with that (Jan Fraser).

At the same time, the umbrella organisation was having problems with its funders, who wanted to see outputs in terms of more traditional indicators of community economic development and who were not sufficiently knowledgeable of the cultural side of the enterprise (both in terms of music and sexuality) to provide support or flexibility:

> The funding by City Challenge was complicated and we were the guinea pigs. City Challenge in itself was a new organisation...the staff were new, the systems were new, nobody had a previous understanding of how it was going to be implemented, then we came along, not with a nice, neat, clean, tidy project. So we were the test for it, and I don't think we were the type of project that the Project Officer wanted to see. I think they wanted to see something that had more of a direct relationship to the new buildings that were going to be taking place in the City Challenge, as opposed to something that a group of lesbians were involved in! (Christina Brown, co-founder of WIM, in interview)

Eventually, as some members of the committee left to go to paid jobs and Women in the Spotlight became unfeasible, the organisation was disbanded. It was not without its successes however, the main being the support of women in the cultural professions and the prolonged activity of Women in the Spotlight, which was a training ground for a substantial number of women performers in Leicester. As an attempt to provide a space for women musicians the project was extremely successful, pooling as it did the available resources (from the Magazine pub, the City Challenge scheme and the skills and experience of the women themselves), the political will that resided in the local community and the musical interest that existed in the lesbian scene. Conflicts arose however around the issue of which community to foreground: music, gender or sexuality, and the attempt to redress the balance of the patriarchal music industry was thwarted from inside.

The heart of Women in the Spotlight was about promoting a place for women to perform to a mixed audience, but because of other things going on in Leicester, especially lesbian venues – the Women's Centre isn't here anymore, and the high lesbian presence isn't the case in the gay clubs in town – where do lesbians go to meet other lesbians, and do they want it to be separatist? 'Yes, they do' is generally the answer. Are those people going to promote women's music elsewhere? No, they are not - it is men in general who promote music. And that is where the push-pull is. (Christina, in interview)

Since the demise of Women In Music there have been several events aimed at showcasing women musicians in the city as well as music training programmes targeted at women. The Music Project at Southfield Colleges runs a women-only course for sound technology and recording, and drumming and singing workshops have been held in the city, conducted by former members of WIM. A women-only drumming group The Bangshees have achieved notoriety, not least for advertising in the *Leicester Mercury* for lesbian-only recruits, and there is also a women-only samba band ran by Soft Touch Community Arts. Two events in 1999, *SheBop* and *Female Fronts*, highlight the continuing perception of a need for positive action on behalf of women in the local music community. Both were promoted by students and brought in acts from outside the region as well as local artists. The apparent difference between these events and those connected with WIM however was the lack of feminist ideology propagated in the proceedings: in both cases the music was foregrounded, although supported by a strong sense of self-help and do-it-yourself associated with some feminist thought. As a reviewer of Female Fronts in Hybrid magazine comments:

The criticisms of this evening are obvious – that by drawing attention to gender, and by pointing out that some people may not consider it feminine to pick up a guitar or get involved with anything technical, this could be feminism shooting itself in the foot. Perhaps by writing this article I am doing the same. Should we promote them as women or musicians? If music is such a progressive and liberal form, then gender should be irrelevant, but unfortunately it is still very relevant. [Sam Coffield, *Hybrid*, No. 11, June 1999]

Summary

This case study has looked at an important but short-lived music scene in Leicester that was purposively constructed in order to better the lot of women musicians in the city as well as serve audiences who found that other sites for music consumption and leisure did not meet the ideological tenets of their community. It brought together lesbian and straight women under the banner of an organisation that sought public sector funding to achieve their aims and promote women participating in popular music proactively. The skills and experiences of those running the organisation were pooled in an attempt to combat sexism in the local music industry and in music practice in general and although the organisation eventually folded, the ambitions, abilities and confidence of those involved were enhanced both in the field of popular music performance and in through their experience of organising cultural events. Although making music was the organising factor, its structure and content and the musicians' styles and abilities were subsumed under the overreaching aim to provide a space and atmosphere for cultural activity and learning, to make something happen that was both political and sociable.

Section Summary

In this section I have examined the structure and resources of popular musical activity in Leicester and suggested that there are particular sites within which key practices take place and which function to facilitate local music scenes and communities. The case studies I have examined support these arguments in that they highlight the importance of music performance and distribution, through local venues and local media. These are the sites in which production meets consumption, when the music made 'goes public' and tastes, opinions and affiliations are formed. In contrast to the national music industry, where 'shifting units' is the ultimate goal, local music industry in Leicester is embodied in these scenes and practices are geared more towards other forms of distribution and economic generation than record sales. The musicians I have examined here earn their money from playing gigs in pubs or Djing in parties: the more optimistic, ambitious or talented may also have recording contracts or sell records through their own distribution in the dance market. For the majority however being signed and gaining an advance is something that happens to other people, outside of the city.

I have also concentrated on the notion of different sort of communities being connected by musical practice, and tentatively asked about the relationships and hierarchies created between these communities. In the case of Irish theme pubs, these venues act as spaces for the interaction between localised music consumption and wider music communities and tastes (cf. Finnegan 1989). Irishness as a diasporic but adaptable commodity is portrayed in the music played in these venues and effectively plays host to Leicester musicians who want employment and the opportunity to perform in the city. In the context of this research I have examined the ways in which local musicians have utilised the opportunities presented by the theme pubs which constitute a music scene with an Irish theme, with or without the cultural background to this practice.

Pirate radio in Leicester also reveals how diasporic communities have used music for local representation, drawing on music made in majority outside of the city to serve local interests and to generate capital within the community. A music community also surrounds pirate radio, which acts as a resource for music unavailable in the

mainstream used by local audiences who have grown up around sound systems or who have adopted the shared tastes, meanings and values attached to dance and dub-oriented musics. It also highlights the contradictions between music and ethnic communities however, as in the case of rivalry between African-Caribbean and Asian DJs. When access to economic and (sub)cultural resources was threatened (by another ethnic group) some pirates became protective of 'their scene', so that ethnic background was prioritised over musical interests.

The Women In Music case study is less concerned with representation of locality through music and more with maintenance of a city scene based around a particular community organised around gender and sexuality. The ideologies of this community brought the organisation into being, and served as an important resource for women musicians in the city. However, there was conflict over the role of the organisation and the space for music performance became contested, so that eventually the scene became fragmented and musicians and community members moved elsewhere.

This chapter has examined three different case studies, to consider how musical practice is organised around particular sites and nodes of activity and how the structure of this practice might relate to music scenes and communities. It has suggested that certain events, occurrences, resources and individuals in the city contribute to local music scenes and also effect the surrounding climate and resources for popular music practice. In particular the case studies have emphasised the potential in popular music practice for representation of (and competition between) social groups in the city that are organised around aspects of identity such as nationality, sexuality and ethnicity. To quote Straw:

> The drawing and enforcing of boundaries between musical forms, the marking of racial, class-based and gender differences, and the maintenance of lines of communication between dispersed cultural communities are all central to the elaboration of musical meaning and value (Straw 1991:372).

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Chapter 5

The public sector and popular music in Leicester

This section discusses the ways popular music is supported and facilitated by public sector agencies in Leicester. As indicated in Chapter 4, popular music practice in Leicester involves a range of agencies and sites, including training and support organisations, local media, venues, rehearsal and recording studios, and the key figures and groups involved in the activity in the city. Public sector intervention into this practice has involved the targeting of particular resources towards these activities, and the formulation of strategy and policy with which to organise and advocate this targeting. It also involves the regulation and coordination of cultural activity. Many of these interventions are aimed at the process undertaken to start off, survive and 'make it' in pop music with the hope of economic and social success.

Public sector support for arts and cultural activity is the preserve of the local authorities, educational and training establishments, regional arts board and community-based organisations, the Arts Council and government ministries. These agencies are considered in terms of the role they play in supporting popular music in the city and the facilities and initiatives they provide. This section examines the history of attempts to support local music scenes and industry and the political and strategic approaches by which they are informed.

In this chapter I examine the support for popular music in the city of Leicester, by examining the provision of music industry services and musical events by the non-commercial sector. I outline the background and history of this provision and continue with an examination of different forms of public sector support, with particular focus on the creation and role of Popular Music Development Officers in the city.

In the following chapter I examine public sector cultural provision more generally, looking at the recent developments in national arts and cultural policy. I also examine urban cultural policy with particular reference to initiatives and approaches which have drawn on and promoted popular music as a strategy for urban development and renewal. These examples offer a framework with which to consider the relationship

between popular music and the public sector in the city.

Popular music policy and provision in Leicester

Early local authority support for popular music in Leicester

Popular music provision has a very short history in comparison to the support of orchestral, choral and brass band ensembles in Leicestershire and the service record for music education in the county has been heralded as exemplary in terms of classical music [27]. The reorganisation of local councils in 1974 placed music provision for the whole of Leicestershire under youth service provision of the Leicestershire Arts and Education department of the County council, with some developmental work falling under the remit of Museum and Library Services[28]. Local state provision for popular music in the city of Leicester can be traced to 1980, when the Arts Development Unit was established at Leicester City Council. Music development was considered one of the core services provided by this unit, which began as one member of staff and the hire of a PA system, as part of youth provision for the city. These services were gradually extended to include the management of events, such as concerts and workshops and the provision of a wider range of equipment.

The City Council began full-scale youth activities within the Community Services division in the 1980s, which led to the expansion and formalisation of musical activity under the heading of Spartrek, a service providing sports, arts and leisure activities targeted at city youth. This rapid improvement to youth service was in part provoked by disturbances and rioting in the inner city over consecutive years in the early 1980s, along with many other cities in England. Following the Scarman Report in 1982, local government sought ways in which to improve inner city conditions and contain the causes of frustration and deprivation revealed by the wide-spread rioting. An emphasis on economic regeneration and social inclusion encouraged attention to cultural activities as well as industrial and training based initiatives and state provision of leisure and recreational activity. In Leicester, a number of open meetings were held by

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27 Interview with John Ridgeon
28 The split between the city and the county in terms of local authority services caused some problems with uneven provision for rural Leicestershire and confusion over responsibilities to the city; this situation has however been resolved following unification of services for the city under Leicester City Council in 1997 (Interviews with Pete Bryan & Jon Knight).

the council to assess local interest and discuss what changes were needed in the city and a budget was found to fund schemes concerned with popular music, amongst other activities[29].

Also at this time a partnership between Leicester Education Authority and the BBC Radio Leicester resulted in the youth programme Prime Time. This began with six hours of programming spread throughout the week, aimed at reflecting and engaging local youth interests, and featuring local gig guides, music reviews and interviews. This programming built the cornerstone for local music programming on Radio Leicester, which continues today in the current Friday night show, Friday FM[30]. The interest aroused by the radio programme, the need for more collective effort amongst those who wanted to develop Leicester's music industry and scenes and the growing emphasis on cultural activities as a part of youth provision, crucially including a substantially budget, led to the formation of Multiplex in 1983. This company consisted of a core of people involved in the local music industry, whose collective aim was to provide services for music and music-related activity, to encourage city-wide participation and to secure support from the local authorities in terms of resources[31].

The original focus of the group was to campaign for a multipurpose building to house a venue and rehearsal space as well as facilities for other art forms and activities. The group underwent some changes after the failure to obtain funding for a building from the Inner Area Programme; however, the organisation continued for several years mainly funded by the City Council, and managed a volume of projects. These included music business seminars and sessions, focussing on various aspects of the industry, from publishing to recording contracts, and workshops and training events and programmes on the technical skills of performing, recording and producing. It was also involved in the promotion of a number of events, including roadshows, a protest concert against rate-capping in the Town Hall Square and the Abbey Park Festival, which remains Leicester's key annual popular music event today.

Multiplex was originally formed some seven years ago in a climate crucially

29 Pete Bryan, former Arts and Leisure Services Officer, in interview
30 Teri Wyncoll, founder of Multiplex, in interview; BBC *Radio Leicester* promotional literature
31 *Multiplex aims & objectives statement* 1985

different in three respects from that in which we now operate. Firstly it was the era of Rock on the Rates, a time when the position of the local authorities was somewhat different from their current straightened and embattled position. Secondly, it was a time of comparative openness and enthusiasm with regard to popular music as audiences and record companies respectively admonished and wrong footed by the developments of the late seventies, sought to catch up. Thirdly, Multiplex itself was a new venture...For seven years, Multiplex has channelled financial support from the local authorities into the local music industry through a wide range of services and activities. The Abbey Park Festival is one of its many successes...However the event as from 1990 is under threat. Councillors and Officers of Leicester City Council not only want to change the event but also want to take over the organisation from the community (Publicity for Abbey Park Photo Exhibition, 1989).

This music collective represented the most cohesive public effort to coordinate the local industry and lobby the local authorities, then and since. Many of those involved in the initial projects remain in the Leicester music scene today, having learnt and developed skills as part of Multiplex which they have gone on to execute in local production, performance and training.

We started to do production work, moving on from training, because people like Rob and other people who were working with us were now developing as technicians and as production people where they came in as music workshop people, just to teach instruments. They were actually developing themselves as professionals, so we were getting in new blood who were coming into teach the workshops, and the people who were doing the workshops were now developing into full-time guitar techs, and production people. We were picking up local tours, bands who wanted to go abroad and needed guitar teching for example (Teri Wyncoll, founder of Multiplex and licensee of Abbey Park Festival, in interview).

Multiplex is part of a tradition of music collectives that grew up in the 1980s, to support popular music in cities and towns, primarily by raising funding from local authorities. Other similar initiatives were going on all over the country, for example, Norwich and the Waterfront, Northampton Music Collective and the Roadmenders

venue, including the developments centred around the Leadmill venue in Sheffield and the many projects and initiatives connected with the approach of the Greater London Council. The close partnership with the City Council in support of popular music was a particular strength of this initiative, however, and the Multiplex project has had a lasting impact on Leicester music scenes over the years, not least from the volume of local industry personnel it has spawned. A significant number of individuals holding key positions in the local scene from band managers to label and studio owners, festival promoters to technicians have come from the Multiplex nursery. Also, the support of Multiplex to such initiatives as Abbey Park Festival and the Sound Panel, where bands and acts could apply for grants and loans for equipment from the City Council, has underpinned the main resources available to Leicester musicians today.

Festivals and Carnivals in Leicester[32]

Outdoor popular music events are now standard fare, after the legacy of Woodstock and Glastonbury, and now overpopulate the British summer, with a range of different festivals to choose from every weekend from May to October. In some genres, for example folk music, this choice is even more expansive, and in recent years the commercial festival has taken off, as promoters have backed and created more and more events until the market is saturated, leading to obverse competition between festivals all vying for the festival-goer's £60 plus entrance fee. In the summer of 1998 two major festivals - Universe and the Phoenix Festival- were cancelled due to poor ticket sales, aided by the added attraction of the World Cup.

The city or town pop music festival follows more the tradition of the village fete or town show, however, as local produce is displayed in an annual celebration for local denizens, although some of these events have been picked up and commercialised, drawing in major interest from outside of the local (for example, the Brighton festival, which grew from a local event to a commercial national venture). Local festivals can be promoted with the specific purpose of drawing in talent scouts from the national music industry, and this often influences the enthusiasm of the bands performing. Operating as show-cases they may comprise of series of concerts and seminars held

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[32] A map showing the location of main sites for Leicester music festivals is included in Appendix 3.

city-wide which profile local acts and encourage discourse on and about the music industry, to 'hype up' a region or city as the new scene and to provide information for youth and beginners from visiting seasoned experts and industry specialists. Such events have also been recently popularised and picked up by national media, in particular BBC Radio 1, for their provision of on-location air time and the discovery of new talent in the making. This is a process which has stressed the links between music and locality, as towns and cities have competed to host the travelling events such as In The City and Sound City, whereas some, such as Liverpool Now, are fixed in their localities.

Abbey Park Festival

The Abbey Park Festival began in 1981 as an event called 'Bands on the Park' funded by a £250 City Council arts grant for public events, hosting 6 bands none of whom managed a cohesive performance due to bad weather. The following year the marquee used for the City of Leicester Show was used as support in kind from the Council, since it was erected two weeks prior to the Show, and the event passed off with success, attracting higher levels of funding for the next year and the involvement of the newly formed Multiplex. Over the years, the festival has grown from one stage and four hours of programming to a sprawling multi-stage event, which takes over the entire park for ten hours. As the event grew and attracted more attention, it became more formalised, accruing more costs. Entertainments licensing has meant more expense to satisfy statutory conditions, the growing attendance required more site facilities and security as did the alcohol license which was finally hard-won for the first time five years ago. The event now involves a small entrance fee — a development that has encouraged much criticism, since despite the large size and attendance (c. 20,000) of the festival, it is considered a local subsidised event by Leicester people, a city alternative, rather than competitor, to the growing number of commercial festivals available.

With this formalisation came the need for appropriate structures of management, and the festival organisers transformed from a motley crew of volunteers, attempting to harness free PA equipment for the bands, to boardroom status, as it learnt to lobby for funding and conditions, and also required its own discursive space for internal

arrangements, negotiations and disputes. In latter years the question of accountability for the festival led to its placement under an elected committee of various representatives of interested parties in the city, as it was also incorporated under the banner of a wider umbrella festival, running a week long programme of events across the city. In 1996, this move prompted some concern for the original organisers, who despite appreciating the recognition the music festival was receiving, felt that control of the festival was being wrested from them and dissipated under corporate conditions. The chief festival organiser, despite being incorporated into proceedings and also receiving much criticism herself for the change in power structure, also found problems with the arrangement:

> All Leicester Live! was a group of local professional business people, who sat around a table in committee but have nothing to do with the running or organisation of the Abbey Park Festival. The festival is run by a group of young people who came in 15 years ago, some coming in, some who've been there for 15 years, some we've picked up as the years go on...And that is the bit that a lot of people forget about. There is a huge team out there of faceless people who don't want to be in a committee, who don't want to be in organising committees and be accountable in running the festival...It [Leicester Live] was a corporate identity set up to initiate if you like, or promote a week long music festival in the city which included the Abbey Park Festival; and it was also a vehicle for money from the local authorities, because politics obviously and accountability have changed over the years. Politics and administration and policy changes, and the policy at Leicester City Council changed, where one person no longer could do this. It had to be a formalised group of people. [Teri Wyncoll in interview]

The infusion of representatives of different cultural interests presented a threat to the organiser who felt personally responsible for the Festival due to her pivotal role and long-standing relationship to the event:

> Now because I was the licensee of Abbey Park Festival I was encouraged to take a high profile role within Leicester Live! and was offered a directorship. And I took it but then found that the rest of the people on the committee, although they were very enthusiastic in the first instance, came with perhaps

too much self interest. We had representatives from Leicester Promotions, from Access to Music, from the crew from Radio Leicester - a variety of individuals - and we found that they were actually sitting on this committee to pioneer their own interests of their own group. Rather than the interest of the weeklong festival. So it became very untogether. (Teri Wyncoll)

Further problems have been caused by decreased funding from the City Council, following the unification of the authority of Leicester City in 1997. Public discussion of the future of the festival, including the possibility of Lottery grant applications, took place and the search for private sector support was mounted including the approach of HMV and Virgin record stores as well private individuals who may have personal reasons for supporting the local industry, such as Mark Morrison. However the Council has shown its commitment to festivals within its cultural policy through £10,000 funding for the 1998 event, a significant reduction from previous figures of £55,000, from a designated Festivals budget.

The event continues to be the key event of the year for the majority of local acts, however, and the run-up to the festival is always a frenzied time, as promoters and musicians attempt to get past the strict gate-keeping by Festival management to appear on the bill. It also represents a key part of the relationship between the City Council and the Leicester music scene, due its longevity, profile and compatibility with the Council leisure and cultural policy of outdoor events and the Summer in The City programme. This relationship is mainly embodied in one person, the festival license holder, whose position of trust within the Council and length of experience in the field has earned them the role of gatekeeper between City council and the local music scene with an office in the Arts and Leisure department, as well as a good deal of criticism and suspicion from the local industry.

Music and arts events held in public constitute a significant part of local authority policy, particularly in the summer. In 1998 a Council Officer was specially designated for coordinating and liasing events in parks and public spaces in Leicester, with this Festivals and Events Unit growing to a team of three by summer 1999. The emphasis on the outdoors reveals a sense of pride in the many Victorian parks in the city, as well as reflecting an environment-friendly bias. Outdoor events also satisfy local authority policy to publicly represent communities and supply them with platforms for

expression, giving the city population a sense of both inclusion and display.

The Caribbean Carnival

The Caribbean Carnival in Leicester is the major event for the city's African-Caribbean community. It is the second largest in the country after Notting Hill in London, and has now been taking place annually in the city for 15 years, having begun as an 150 years anniversary celebration of emancipation of the British West Indies. The event has seen council support fluctuate over the years, and was recently jeopardised along with other festivals, at the time of the move to unitary status in 1997. The event was however given a reprieve, and secured nominal City Council funding. It also secured a Lottery grant of £81,000 over three years in 1997, allowing the Carnival to continue at its present scale[33].

The Carnival involves a range of activity in the run up to the event, as African-Caribbean community groups throughout the city prepare for the day in August by making costumes, rehearsing moves and planning music and dance displays. The day itself involves a parade around the city centre and through Highfields, the city's area with the highest African-Caribbean population, ending in Victoria Park where there are stalls and stages offering examples of Caribbean culture and fare. Festivities continue into the evening as carnival goers are drawn to the satellite events, and accompanying official Carnival dances and unofficial blues parties, that take place in black venues, such as the Imani Ujima, LUCA, and Highfields Community Centre. Local DJs play these events and can also be heard on pirate and official local radio; in 1996 and 1997 the council part-funded a Restricted Special License station for a four-week run up to the carnival.

The Carnival is the focus for City Council cultural funding for the community and is recognised as a time when people come back to their community, networks are established and remade and old affiliations confirmed. Musically, it is a time when members of Leicester's African Caribbean community take their place of reckoning. This is reflected by the bands that play the park, often comprising local musicians who have worked together for years, may have moved away from Leicester and from a music career, but will form a seemingly cohesive outfit at the drop of a hat to play for

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33 Promotional magazine for the Carnival 1998

the Carnival[34].

Selection of the musical content of the carnival is made by the committee, aimed at both reflecting Leicester acts and drawing in crowds from all over the country and beyond. Regular carnival goers attend a circuit of similar events across the country, using them as time to connect with friends and family, and visitors also fly in from the Caribbean. The organisers aim to offer a cross-generational and cross-Caribbean range of music, featuring soca, calypso, reggae and dancehall, and often involving Caribbean stars brought over for the event. Sound systems rival each other and Victoria Park becomes a chaotic space, as small stages, large speakers and stalls are cramped together, higgledy-piggledy, spewing out the smells of barbecued jerk chicken and saltfish amongst the clashing sounds of dub roots, reggae and ragga. In recent years the popularisation of sound systems within other dance music cultures, originating at raves and free parties, has led to white sound systems blaring techno and gabba being allowed to set up alongside reggae, ragga and dub systems, although usually on the periphery of more traditional African-Caribbean proceedings.

Commenting on Notting Hill Carnival, Mikey Massive notes the importance of sound systems. Since their introduction to the Carnival in 1974, at the brink of (subcultural) reggae popularity in Britain, numbers attending rose sharply, forcing the event more and more into the public eye. Sound systems are an important part of heritage for immigrants from the Caribbean islands, whose separate and distinct island identities have been subsumed in immigration by the terms West Indian, Afro-Caribbean, African-Caribbean or simply 'black'. The sound system acts as the focus for competition between different islands, blasting out the music originating from them. Reggae however has become the dominant music of the sound system, associated most strongly with Jamaica, the dominant island, and has become the sound of the Notting Hill Carnival. Massive argues it has also increasingly become a mobiliser of multicultural audiences, and more people join in the celebrations of the event drawn in by the sound system[35]. Whether it is their mass appeal, their ability to stop traffic and block entrances with captivated dancers or their semiotic opposition to 'Babylon', in the case of Notting Hill their significance is felt to be more powerful than other

34 George Johnson, local musician, in interview
35 Mike Bygrave, 'Movement of the People', *The Guardian*, 20.9.94

elements of Carnival, from mas dancers, to soca, calypso and steel bands.

> Mike Phillips says ' the multi-racial society we hear so much about in Britain is really just a rhetorical cover for what we've got: a society that continue to be under the control of whites. Except in the case of the Carnival. I've noticed as the years have gone by that it is more and more common for white people to enjoy the Carnival in the same way black people enjoy it. Because of the space it takes up. Because you can't avoid it. The Notting Hill Carnival is one of the very few things in this country that is genuinely multi-racial'36.

Leicester's Carnival is also a multi-racial event, with a growing number of floats and sound systems representing interests outside the black community every year. The emphasis on city participation (of schools, colleges and community groups) in making costumes and setting up floats means that the parade is as popular amongst all ethnic groups as the static event in Victoria Park. It remains a celebration of African-Caribbean history and presence in the city and a key part of the City Council's (multi)cultural policy.

These two festivals, both within a week of each other in August are pivots for musical performance in the city by Leicester musicians. There are also other. less music-based festivals which feature local artists: these include the festival for Asian communities in Leicester, the Leicester Mela, and various family and community 'days out', such as the Castle Park Festival and the Riverside Festival. Aside from festivals and carnivals, there are a number of other ways in which the city supports its local music makers year-round; these are discussed below.

Other forms of popular music support from Leicester local authorities

Material resources

Providing physical and material resources to house and facilitate popular music activity is one of the most visible and irrefutable means of supporting local music scene. It can be executed through economic subsidy to allow places to stay open or through the actual initiation and construction or allocation of civic buildings and

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36 op cit

spaces to musical activities. The Picket in Liverpool, The Waterfront in Norwich, The Junction in Cambridge, and Riverside in Newcastle are examples around the country where public sector support has been given to popular music venues. Other examples include the support of community studios and rehearsal space.

Public sector involvement in initiatives such as recording studios and venues grew out of Labour council approach in the 1980s, influenced by a combination of developments in the GLC, lobbying for funding by musicians and practitioners at a local level and an interest in finding new employment opportunities in the service sector. Of the 4 forms of municipal support identified by Street and Stanley in a nation-wide survey at the end of the 1980s, 2 were in the form of material support (Frith 1993).

In Leicester one of the first examples of material support for local popular music was through the Fosse Community Centre, a council run arts centre which featured a number of facilities including design technology, instrument hire, video production and a recording studio which offers subsidised rates for recording. The DIY culture of young local bands that had originated with punk and the post punk scene that prevailed in the city throughout the 1980s was well-served by such facilities:

> Fosse Community Centre was a big player for us. At the time we did all our own T-shirts, we put singles out ourselves and used the screen-print facilities down there to print the sleeves, did everything through the Fosse Community Centre. So that was a massive help at the time. We hired equipment dirt cheap - videos and percussion equipment for gigs'. (Gaz Birltes, local musician and former studio manager, in interview)

Other initiatives include the council funding of venues like the Phoenix Arts Centre and De Montfort Hall. The latter was a popular venue in the 1980s when it consistently programmed major national and international bands as well as offering local bands the opportunity to support. The music programming of the hall has been heavily criticised more recently, however, notably after the hall was refitted in 1992. The state-of-the-art concert hall has featured less popular music and less access to local musicians since this £2million investment and internal disputes over

programming caused one music programmer to leave in protest[37]. One explanation for the decline in use of the venue is that unrealistic expectations have been placed on the hall in terms of its architecture. The refit of the hall's stage and flooring was ambitious and has proved unsuitable for mixed programming the hall hoped to attract (e.g. dance, theatre, opera and popular music). Audiences also find the venue expensive, and local promoters cannot afford to put on events there[38]. One solution has been to extend the hall's facilities by using the natural amphitheatre in its grounds. This site hosts a Shakespeare festival and several classical concerts in 1999; however the popular music festival 'Turning up the Beat' which was held over a weekend in 1996 caused dissent due to complaints from angry residents of the noise levels and pop music promoters have not used the site since.

The Phoenix Arts Centre offers mixed programming of music, dance, theatre and cinema with an emphasis on independent films, touring theatre and dance groups and folk and 'ethnic' music. The Guildhall and the City Rooms are two further council-supported venues with intermittent programming of mainly music events. Both historic sites in Leicester, these small venues tend to be used by acoustic, folk and early music acts.

Grants, funds and loans

The opportunities to fund popular music projects with public money are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter and in Chapter 6. This category involves public sector funding and subsidy, private sector sponsorship and the attraction of private sector investment through public support to provide loans, awards and revenue for those involved in popular music. A particularly successful example in Leicester was Sound Panel, operated by the City Council (1985 – 1989), which loaned bands money to buy equipment, which became the bands' own after a period of time. Musicians had to prove that they were active in the music scene initially and then periodically afterwards to retain the equipment:

> I got a grant for a guitar, and I had to go and audition in front of all these councillors! It was a fantastic scheme, because if I think of all the musicians

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37 Rob Melville in interview
38 Nick Murphy in interview

that I know in Leicester probably all of them benefited from that scheme. At that point it was like 'they are giving money for instruments' – a real talking point. (Ruth Miller, local musician, in interview)

Economic resources that are available for popular music practitioners vary according to locality, and include national schemes, such as The Prince's Trust funds, Arts Lottery grants and the recently debated unofficial subsidy through social security, now being developed as the New Deal. Local authority budgets for individual projects are small, but what can be offered is appropriate advice and access to funding through Arts Advisory services and regional arts boards. Some popular music projects in Leicester have also found limited funding through the City Council Community Grants fund (up to £200), however these projects must be tailored to advancing provision for specific communities, for example the African-Caribbean community or women musician in Leicester[39].

Education and training

Education in popular music has become substantially more popular in Britain in the 1990s, and the country now has over 100 recognised courses in various aspects of popular music[40]. In Leicester, workshop and seminar schemes were offered by Multiplex in the 1980s, a Rock School was also held in the College of Music in 1990 and the local branch of the Musicians Union held a seminar series in 1996. Local colleges Charles Keene and Soar Valley Community College also offer industry-oriented courses in technical production and performance and De Montfort University now has a growing Music technology department, which began a degree programme in the subject in 1999.

The most influential music industry training organisation in the city is however Access To Music[41], an education, training and support organisation established in 1992 in Leicester by a former Senior Music Advisor to the County Council. The organisation offers two main forms of training: foundation courses in contemporary

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39 These examples have both recently received funding this way: *African Night Bush* promoted a series of music events funded by community grant in 1997, and *Shebop* put on a weekend festival featuring women performers in Spring 1999
40 BPI Music Education handbook, 1997
41 Most of my respondents were aware of Access to Music's presence in the city and many of them had had direct contact with the organisation either as teachers or students.

and popular music and teacher training for peripatetic teachers in popular music. These courses were initially funded as training for work programmes, open to the unemployed and eligible for TEC money, as NVQ accredited courses. They then moved into funding through the Further Education Council and accreditation through local Universities and Further Education institutions as Access To Music expanded to set up similar courses all over the country. Access To Music now has corresponding centres in Colchester and Manchester as well as courses running in over 20 counties. The popular music teacher training course has tapped into the need for part-time, flexible popular music teaching across many institutions, that can adapt to changing National Curriculum standards. The organisation offers placement for teachers in schools as part of their training, and also acts an agency for workshop and seminar teachers. It has unfortunately been criticised however, for failing to prepare teachers adequately for their experience in schools, perhaps reflecting the low status and priority of popular music teaching in schools.

The organisation now aims to expand locally into community provision, via a large project based near the city centre by the Grand Union Canal. This scheme is part of the Single Regeneration Bid 2, and involves a partnership between Access To Music, Leicester City Council, Charles Keene Community College and the Arts Council, through an Arts Lottery Bid. The project is to build a large complex housing training programmes, recording and rehearsal facilities and a 2-400 capacity venue as well as a larger performance space stretching across the canal. The project is rumoured to be the lynchpin for urban development and regeneration for this particular area in Leicester, and it looks likely to draw in large sums of money and attention through proposed £12 million package. It has created a sense of panic amongst smaller businesses and training concerns in the city: local studios and rehearsal rooms are worried that their business is being duplicated in a manner with which they cannot hope to compete[42].

Other training in the city also features as part of City Council policy, if not actually falling under its provision. Southfields Community College recently won a Lottery bid

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42 The current popular music development officer felt moved to campaign on behalf of these services, but his political position as a representative of the City Council, major partners in the project prevented him from being visibly involved. A number of music businesses began to organise in protest to the project; however the results of this protest and the bid for Arts Lottery money were still pending at time of writing

to create the International Youth House Project, an extension of their youth community centre that features a studio, as well as sporting and other arts facilities, aimed at trans-European youth projects. The new studio, which operates sound technology and studio management courses, is state-of-the-art, rumoured at £2m million in equipment costs alone, but is not considered the same form of competition by the local music industry, since it is felt to have priced itself out of the market for local private use through inflated hire rates[43].

A further scheme featured in Leicester City Council policy, and again looking for Lottery money is that of extending the Abbey Park Festival into a year-round concern, which provides training in technical stage and event management[44]. The city has also run schemes such as 'Raw Talent', a youth programme in the summer holidays which holds arts workshops and events in the city centre. Beginning in 1998, the scheme is aimed at school children and proposes to bolster arts and music provision undercut by decreased content in schools and colleges by meeting National Curriculum standards.

Spatial intervention in the city

Another increasingly popular material form of support of arts and culture in cities is intervention by city councils in the city's physical structure through the creation of cultural quarters. An integrated approach, which usually involves a number of partners (local authorities, government regeneration agencies such as English Heritage, local developers and other public institutions such as colleges and museums) as well a number of different aims and motivations (increasing commerce and participation in city centres, regenerating derelict building stock, creating employment, providing cultural animation) and a number of different strategies. Leicester City Council is now in negotiation over the integration a number of different facilities and initiatives into its Heritage and Arts Quarters, nearby to De Montfort University. This development features the extension of the Phoenix Arts Centre and the regeneration of a building now known as Phoenix Yard, which offers units to let to small businesses.

Less integral but nevertheless important forms of physical facility include transport

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43 From discussions with Dawson Smith, Diva Music and local musicians.
44 This development was mentioned to me in interview with the director of Arts and Leisure Services, as evidence of support by the City Council of industry training. At the time of writing the status of the application is unclear.

systems, pedestrianisation and allocation of space on temporary basis, for example for festivals and events in public parks. Leicester City Council has more recently laid more emphasis on this by funding an officer to co-ordinate the 'Music in the Park' events round the city in throughout the summer.

The above examples of popular music facilities and amenities are concentrated on the history of involvement of Leicester City Council and local education authorities. The following section examines the opportunities offered for local music makers and industry members by the regional arts board, and focuses on the partnership between this organisation and its surrounding local authorities in an initiative called the Rock and Pop Network (latterly the Popular Music Network).

The regional arts board and the Network

East Midlands Arts

The second main form of formal public sector provision for popular music is from the regional arts board, East Midlands Arts (EMA). The board has a Music Officer and Contemporary Music Officer who operate from within the Performing Arts department. The funding and support for popular music takes two forms: EMA offer targeted recording grants plus small touring support grants, which can be applied for on an individual basis. Applications can also be made for money to promote performances for new works and audiences. These applications average about 150 music applications per year, spread over the region and over different musical genres[45]. The remit of the regional arts board is to provide only for professional artists, however, a definition which becomes difficult in the area of popular music. Popular musicians who consider themselves to be operating at a professional level are less obvious candidates for Arts Council funding, whereas those who are in need of support, may not be considered professional by the arts board:

> It is a kind of hazy one; we can't support anyone that is in full-time education. It needs to be someone that has really made the arts, or music, their primary interest. We fully appreciate that if you are a jazz promoter, you are going to have a job as well, because you just sustain yourself on that alone, but it is the

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[45]Karl Chapman in interview

commitment to the arts and if you are professional in your approach and you are making money out of it and you are being paid doing your arts activity. What I normally say is 'people earning their living from making music', but that is not always possible and you have to look at the individual case. (Marcel Jenkins, East Midlands Arts Music Officer, in interview).

The second form of support is through a commitment to the regional Rock and Pop Network which began initially as a 3 year programme of £15,000 p.a., in conjunction with the region's local authorities. This is the main form of provision for popular music in Leicester by East Midlands Arts, in partnership with Leicester City Council: this next section examines the Rock and Pop Network and the role of development officers who form the Network.

The Rock and Pop Network deal with non-professional artists, but that is part of our commitment to rock and pop development around the region. That is where help is needed, that is what needs developing, so they deal with that kind of stuff. (Marcel Jenkins)

The Rock and Pop Network

In 1993 a partnership was formed between East Midlands Arts and the local authorities of four adjoining counties in the East Midlands region: Leicester, Nottingham, Northamptonshire and Derby (excluding the High Peaks). This partnership established the posts in each county of Rock and Pop Development Workers, funded by a combination of local authority and Regional Arts Board money. Leicestershire benefited from the dual status of its local authorities, since for a period of time until unification in 1997 it had 2 posts (one funded by the County Council and one by the City). This scheme was a new and radical development for a Regional Arts Board; at the time, no other RAB in the country had channelled money into regional rock and pop activity through such a project. The scheme represented a coordinated approach to development of regional popular music activity and music industries, with emphasis on sharing information and initiatives across the four counties.

The post of Popular Music Development Officer for Leicester City was established under the auspices of the Arts Advisory division, following a difficult period when one Rock and Pop Network worker had been employed by both county and city to

serve each on a half-weekly basis. The Arts Advisory division had responsibility over general arts provision and policy, involving four area teams working around the city with youth and community services, and specialist teams with responsibility over areas such as Asian Dance, the Living History unit, the council-supported venues - the City rooms and the Guildhall - and popular music. The management of the post later moved to the newly created Arts and Entertainment division in 1997, which holds a similar remit.

Following its recent review this Popular Music Network has been constituted although it remains unincorporated, and it is advised by East Midlands Arts Board, under the Contemporary Music Officer. The workers have the responsibility of developing popular music in their localities as they see fit, meeting as a regional network periodically. Leicester has also developed its own city-wide Network, chaired by the City development officer, which grew out of a series of public meetings from February 1997 aimed at bringing the city's private sector into a more sustainable partnership with the already established East Midlands Network.

The network was set up to support popular music across the East Midlands. Much of the initial work was involved with promotion of the service itself, and with developing information on public sector funding, finance not normally associated with rock and pop music. Finding money for local bands and acts does not constitute all of the work of the partnership however, since much of its purpose lies in providing information and advice, support and promotion for the local music scenes. Workshops and seminars on popular music practice and the music industry have been co-ordinated in the region, and projects such as the production of compilation CDs, work with schools and colleges and the showcasing of up-and-coming bands in local venues are supported by the East Midlands Popular Music Network, as is a designated stage at Abbey Park Festival.

A further strategy is that of partnership with local media. After a series of meetings to establish a city-wide forum, confusingly named the Leicester Music Network, an integrated strategy was devised in partnership with a new magazine, *Hybrid*, which was started up with funding from Leicester City Council and East Midlands Arts. The Network now has a section of magazine to promote its activities and report on the educational seminars which it runs monthly on aspects of the music industry, and the

magazine receives in return in-kind support from the City Council in the form of office space and communication resources.

Hybrid follows a long line of Leicester magazines, including *Printhead, Into, LE1, CLAG,* and its current main competitor *Hype,* which has been going for 3 years. The turnover of different magazines and fanzines reveals difficulties in managing the fine balance of financial support of local magazines, attraction of investors, advertisers and readers, emphasis on information and listings, glossiness and glamour, and appropriate levels of editorial control. Some of the longest running have been small-scale concerns - *CLAG* was the work of one person, and *Printhead* had a fanzine format, which was cheaply photocopied and reputedly repetitive and biased in its support of particular bands. Such publications, low budget and with tight editorial control, are open to the accusation of being petty empires, however, or criticised for being without the glamour of non-local publications.

The print medium is traditionally a strong arm of local music scenes, as most cities feature at least one locally produced magazine that features reviews and previews of local acts and lists events and venues. These publications are usually financed by advertising and thus tread the line between producing copy and chasing advertising to cover printing and distribution costs whilst operating in the context of competition with mainstream music press. The capital risk involved is difficult for individuals and many magazines are aligned with an umbrella organisation, such as a local newspaper or firm, which advances or covers running costs but may prohibit the independence of the publication. The reliance on local business for advertising also places pressure on editorial control, as the editing staff of *Hybrid* report:

> Zoe: We had a background in journalism and graphics and all that but we didn't really have any business background. So although we prepared as much as we could in our minds, we actually weren't at all, we know that now. There isn't really market, or not for, there perhaps is if, there is in a certain way, with the amount of money coming out of entertainments-based things, but only if you are prepared to compromise completely to the advertiser. Which is the whole reason for doing it anyway - to not be biased, and not to do it for the money. Because we won't just fold to the person who is saying 'buy our product' they don't want to know. It is annoying, because we don't give a shit

about making money and we've only just discovered that.

Steve: We get so many ultimatums about 'if you write about us then we will give you an advert'.

Zoe: ...and 'we'll pay for the editorial' and we're going 'that is not the point - if you pay for the editorial you might as well not have a magazine, but just one big advert' and they just don't get it, because obviously the editorial, particularly in a magazine like this, comes across as being the truth. An honest opinion, when it is not. And that is crap.

The facilities offered by the council alleviate at least some of the financial burden of running a magazine:

We just wish someone would just pay for it and then let us get on with it! Steve does a lot of chasing of advertising which just wastes most of his time, when he could be doing editorial stuff. Very annoying. The council have supported us a lot - the office space and phone bill must be worth a hell of a lot. If we had insisted on doing it ourselves independently beforehand, we would have had to borrow a lot of money. This way we didn't. It was kind of luck, we were just looking into it and met Dawson at the right time. (Steve and Zoe, *Hybrid*)

In *Hybrid's* case, the local authority input has helped maintain financial independence whilst being kept at a certain distance by the partnership structure with the Network. The magazine has had the freedom to concentrate on writing that promotes the local music scene and industry, thus meeting the agenda of the local authority by fulfilling some of the aims of the Popular Music Development scheme.

The Popular Music Development Officers

Although the Popular Music Development Officers, or Rock and Pop Officers as they have variously been titled, have been encouraged to fulfil their roles according to the needs and conditions of the regions and locales under their remit and also in line with their own personal styles, general issues concerning their role have emerged. These are concerned with the different elements the officers combine in their work and they are discussed below.

The Pop and Rock Officer as public sector A& R and management

In the first instance, their role might be conceived as representative of local musicians to the national industry, as they help acts and bands develop themselves so as to compete for record company attention in the commercial arena, unbound by county lines. By supplying advice on demo tape production, press releases and logos, and by trying to improve the conditions of local music scenes, local pop music support agencies are acting as public sector managers and promoters, grooming regional talent for the non-local stage.

> What it usually boils down to...I am working right the way across the board, from complete beginners - for example, at the moment there has been a project in Coalville I've been working with, some experienced musicians but also some complete total beginners, with the idea that we are developing their playing ability, end of story - right the way through to there is a band, several bands that I am working with at the moment, who are without any doubt ready to be signed by record companies. And they haven't been yet. So my role in that situation is to maximise their risk of being offered the kind of record deal that would be best for them. That is not necessarily the record deal that they think would be best for them - again it is part of my job to advise on the pitfalls of getting the massive record deal, which is not always the best thing. So that's what I do - I develop rock and pop music right from grass roots up to record company standard (Jon Knight, former Popular Music Development Officer, in interview).

In terms of geography, the home of the nation's music industry is symbolically if not physically London, and bands, acts and management look to the Capital as the place where they hope to achieve success. Since all major record and publishing companies are based in London, (apart from BMG who broke ranks in 1998 by opening a regional publishing office in Manchester, a recognition of the strength of the local music industry in the North West) those looking to achieve in the music industry set their sights on the Capital. This includes getting gigs to gain the attention of A&R personnel and media coverage in London venues, and entering the appropriate social circles which might offer access to the elusive record deal with the most benefits. London holds the bulk of resources in terms of industry services (e.g. studios, lawyers,

rights collection agencies), and local industries are often pitted in competition with the Capital if they want to attract and retain economy generated through music business. For cities with developed music industry infrastructures such as Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield, smaller scale businesses can survive to offer an alternative to going to London up to a point, and thus retain local talent and business and the benefits these bring to local economies. Once a certain level of success has been reached however, businesses and bands are usually forced into spending more time in London, since this is where the transactions and meetings physically take place, and will set up home or office there. These migrations from the regions to the Capital are often expressed as drains on the economy or haemorrhaging of local talent, showing the resentment of the dominance of the Capital from regional industries[46].

In Leicester, the local infrastructure is currently growing but is relatively undeveloped, and the relationship between the city and the Capital is somewhat differently defined in its surrounding discourse in the Network camp. Whilst some businesses are already involved in relationships with major businesses in London (for example, local record labels that are subsidiaries of the majors), the relationship is seen as more paternal than competitive, as practitioners bow to the superior status, economies and resources of the national music industry. Leicester is also an hour's train journey from London and more convenient for A&R and other intermediaries to travel to, or bands to travel from, so that relations are hoped to be symbiotic, rather than oppositional. The Network's focus thus is on helping bands prepare for their debuts and forays into the 'Big Smoke', in part by supporting the local industry infrastructure, to help develop Leicester city as a nursery for local talent.

> Again the first thing I want to see developed on this new post is an exit strategy, so that we can actually substantiate the things that are being developed and that is doesn't rely then on a key focus person, or a personality.

46Such sentiments were particularly noticeable during research in Liverpool, where anti-London feelings mixed with Merseyside pride. Some local industry members resolutely refused to move to London and were proud of their role in keeping local talent and capital in the region. There had been controversy within the city some years previous, when Frankie Goes to Hollywood, a highly successful Liverpool band, moved to London at the peak of their success taking their newly earned wealth and economic potential with them. This incident had caused such hard feeling amongst the local industry, who felt abandoned and betrayed by the band, that it featured in Liverpool City Council literature (Liverpool City Council Arts Strategy 1987).

It's nice to get that, that sort of sparkly person who can go off and talk to all sorts of different people about all sorts of different problems, but you do need to work with individuals. We would need definitely to work on. with individual musicians to offer them some form of survival technique. If we are over the next two years saying in Leicester, and in the region, the East Midlands is a wonderful place, we're probably going to attract a lot of record companies and A&R to come to the region, and possible rip off an awful lot of people. So we actually need to think about survival within the industry, as well as if you like providing people with a step on the ladder (Pete Bryan, former Arts and Leisure Services Officer, in interview).

The Rock and Pop Officer as Local Music Scene Intermediary

One core role undertaken by a Popular Music Development Officer is that of provision of information, advice and advocacy for the common good of the local music industry. Here the officers aim to relay information to individuals and organisations gleaned from their own immersion in the networks and activities of local music scenes. Time is committed to research into local activity and the insertion of the Rock and Pop Officer in close proximity to established links and businesses. This involves a lot of groundwork, visiting businesses, venues and events to talk to owners, managers and musicians to build a picture of the extent of activity as well as make oneself known in the city. Previous experiences and contacts are thus valued, although care must be taken to retain neutrality. The current Popular Music Officer for Leicester City was thus chosen partly for his experience working as a local promoter and record label owner, thus having a bank of contacts and relationships already in place to draw upon.

The strategies designed to foster good relations and spread information, following these initial periods of consultation and research with industry and scene personnel, often take the form of print media. The original regional network officer for Leicestershire used a postal questionnaire to survey local interest before producing a news-sheet. Similarly attempts have made to database the current scene and issue a newsletter of network activities. These methods have been slow to pick up interest however, being somewhat low-key and low quality, in comparison to media and information already available in the commercial sphere. Producing a magazine

however is seen as a cost-effective way of reproducing networking activity in an accountable manner:

> In theory, it is a really good idea - probably like Communism, if everybody did it would be great. The whole thing of everyone networking is of great importance. Everyone has got to be involved, because once some people know about it and others don't you get this sort of elitism, which spreads it out even further. Again, that was why fanzines were good in their day, because you could read about what was happening and you could get your piece in about what you're doing. And that is the idea of the Network magazine [*Hybrid*] (Gaz Birtles in interview).

The Rock and Pop Officer as purse-keeper

The Network has little money of its own to finance individual projects and schemes; rather officers direct clients towards known funding sources. These mainly taken the form of East Midlands Arts board grants and Art Lottery grants particularly since the launch of the Arts for Everyone scheme in 1996 (described in greater detail in Chapter 6). The East Midlands Arts board has made recording grants available for popular musicians of £250, aimed at offering the chance for bands and acts to produce demo tapes at professional level. These are judged on the recommendation of the rock and pop officer overseeing the act and then according to the project committee of the arts board. This facilitative role of the Rock and Pop officer in getting money to bands, DJs, promoters and project managers, in accessing public resources, is considered to be the most prominent effect of the post[47].

The Rock and Pop Officer as political intermediary

As field workers within a partnership between different public sector agencies and private sector business, the development officers have the difficult role of bridging organisational culture gaps. This occurs in their relationship with both local agencies

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47From Dawson Smith in interview. Leicester gained £75,000 in grants over the initial 9 months period for Arts for Everyone grants. Dawson considers much of this achievement to be down to the new awareness of such grants though the existence of Network, along with the additional funding attracted from East Midlands Arts of around £10,000 over a two year period in recording grants. The Leicester branch of the Network has also been influential on the community grant section of City Council funding, changing the criteria for application and gaining over £5,000 funding from this section in small grants for popular music in the city from 1996-8. Dawson admits that much of his first year as Popular Music Development Officer for Leicester City was spent learning how to make Lottery applications.]

and national organisations. The development officers have had to negotiate with the culture of the Arts Council of England embodied in the regional arts board, working within a particular framework that reflects the dominant values of the institution. Similarly, as employers of the local authorities, the checks and influences of local state culture and organisation have befallen them.

The development officers intercede on the part of popular music into a social world that remains very unlike the one pop traditionally inhabits, to become the acceptable face of popular music to a variety of overlapping spheres and approaches: for example, those of local state politics, community provision for arts, heritage and tourism, planners and developers. They also have the job of representing a diverse range of interests, as the music sector is not one homogenous group, but is comprised of different scales of economy and parts of the production chain, as well as different values, aims and attributes.

Finnegan (1989) examines the different musical domains mapped out in local music-making, basing this notion of diverse but often overlapping spheres of activity on Becker's conception of the art world (Becker 1982). Here, shared values and conventions offer the basis for commonality amongst practitioners involved in activities which are in turn defined as artistic by these social codes:

> Members of art worlds coordinate the activities by which work is produced by referring to a body of conventional understanding embodied in common practice, and in frequently used artefacts...Their mutual appreciation of the conventions they share, and the support they mutually afford one another, convince them that what they are doing is worth doing. If they act under the definition of 'art' their interaction convinces them that what they produce are valid works of art (Becker, quoted in Finnegan 1989:31).

This conception could usefully be re-applied to describe the separate activities and value-systems of the social worlds at work in arts funding and policy, encompassing activities which are outside of those normally associated with the definition of 'art' but which none-the-less shape and constrain the social worlds in which these definitions are made. Thus the music officers need to consider the different conventions and values of different musical worlds, *pace* Finnegan, as well as the

social worlds which more loosely contribute to the differing values attributed to popular music.

The role of popular music development officer can be considered that of political intermediary in a number of different ways:

1. In their efforts to secure funding to get public sector financial support for pop and rock musicians, the workers need to fit the aims and desires of the musicians to the priorities of the funders. This involves the skills of interpreting the needs of the applicants and reproducing them in the language and time-scale of successful grant application. Projects that hope to gain public funding must undergo lengthy appraisal systems some of these funds incur and stage their deadlines accordingly: very often these will not fit the flexibility and rapidity required in commercial decisions and actions taken in popular music.

   For example, for Arts Council and Arts Lottery grants there are particular criteria to meet, which would necessarily exclude certain popular music projects. For A4E funding there are five objectives against which applications are judged: encouragement of new audiences to experience high-quality arts activity; development of participation in arts activity; encouragement of more young people actively involved in arts and cultural activities; support of new work and help to develop its audience; the building of people's creative potential through training or professional development. Out of these five, three have to be met for smaller size grants of under £100,000 (Arts 4 Everyone promotional literature). Thus a well-known covers band targeting an older audience would probably not qualify for this form of funding, unless the bid was extremely cunning in its application. EMA awarded grants applications go before a committee, advised by a wider group of practitioners and arts workers, but surrounded by the cultural values of the Arts Council and their attendant regulations.

2. In the wider lobbying of organisations, through discussion papers and meetings, one role that the officers have had to take on is that of lobbyist, both for the cause of popular music on a local level and to national organisations and funding bodies.

   My role here I see, in terms of being a development worker, I see it as quite a political job as well as reactive to the local music scene, in that the politics of

the arts funding system against popular music is quite important, and something I want to tackle. Because I see development work as if we don't do that then we kind of quit about half way, because there won't be any funding available long term or round the country nationally. So things like writing replies to Arts Council papers and trying to create a good impression and that kind of thing, I think is quite a big part of our role. And making sure people know we are here from youth arts, national networks and all that kind of thing. (Alison Bowen, former Network Popular Music Development Officer, in interview)

Popular music is a subsector of one of the many arts and cultural sectors: e.g. theatre, dance, visual arts, radio, digital technologies, and so on. Each of these categories may be grouped or represented differently according to the arena in which they are discussed, and each has its own champions in both private and public sector. The context of the public sector is different from the commercial world, as arts and cultural sectors are often pitted in competition with each other for scant resources. Popular music is seen to be less deserving than other sectors due to its relative success in the commercial world.

The other response is that 'this is commercial enterprise: why don't you write to Paul McCartney and ask him for the money?' Because it isn't seen as an art form it is seen as a commercial venture. Why shouldn't the two overlap? If a film maker asks for a grant from East Midlands Arts for instance it would be seen as appropriate. There is a fund for directors, there isn't a fund for musical producers. There is a fund for directors and nobody says to them 'well, why don't you write to Steven Spielberg and ask him for money?' There is a continuum between the funded film sector and the commercial film sector. So far there hasn't been that continuum in the field of rock music. So that's why there is the role of Music Coordinator [Popular Music Development Officer] to provide that continuum and to make sure that everybody's agenda features popular music at some stage' (Dave Howard, former Leicester Popular Music Development Officer, in interview).

Similar findings are related in The Culture Industry (1992), a detailed report of research and recommendations on the arts and cultural industries of Manchester,

which found the need for a formalised post for popular music:

> We recommend the consideration of a post of Popular Music Officer at North West Arts. This would in principle be a specialist post designed to ensure that popular music would not be marginalised within cultural policy for the arts as tends to be the case at present in Greater Manchester (Redhead in Wynne 1992:48)

3. The development officers have also had to lobby on behalf of the public sector within the local music industry. As well as representing local music practice and industries, the job of the music officer also involves trying to convince those they are trying to help of their intentions. Traditionally rebellious, clandestine and commercial in approach, music industry personnel often mistrust or have contempt for the formal bureaucratic face of the public sector and are unaware of the potentials of partnership until convinced otherwise.

> There has always been stuff around, council run stuff, but there have always been so many qualifications before you can use them. Like stuff like community recording studios, things like that, where you can only use them for four hours at a time and you have to fill out four forms just to use them. You can't do anything in four hours, so I thought sod that. For us now, we actually are actively going down the route of getting young bands in, show them how to use the stuff, show them how to program, show them how to get the gig, show them how to promote the gig and everything else, and say 'there you go, you know how to do it now, off you go'. They won't have to have a PhD in form-filling to get on with it (Nick Murphy, local musician and promoter, in interview).

4. The development officers also influence the culture of local councils and the Arts Council by their very existence. The rock and pop development post in Leicester City Council has changed the way community grants are distributed, and also has affected the wider process of local authority support. For example, the creation of the Popular Music Network forum and its success in attracting funding has encouraged communication and collaboration with other associations, and it has passed on skills and information, such as how to apply for grants, to the African-

Caribbean and Asian forum. The Popular Music Development Officer has been turned into a salaried post in the City Council. The presence of the Popular Music post has also encouraged collaboration between this office and others, for example, through involvement in National Libraries Week, when a DJ was employed to play in local libraries.

Particular strategies and approaches under the mantle of City Council policy can also be brought to bear on the Arts Council, through the regional arts board, although as a national institution, change is much harder to effect on a macro level. Popular conception of the Arts Council is that it is heavily biased towards 'high' rather than 'folk' or 'popular culture', stemming in part from high profile media coverage of the failure of high art institutions such as the National Opera despite large volumes of Arts Council funding and consequent criticism.

> There is nobody in the Arts Council that isn't just interested in high art (Dawson Smith, Leicester Popular Music Development Officer, in interview)

The music that the Arts Council has traditionally supported has been criticised as bound by elitist, class-ridden attitudes, being in majority the work of dead classical composers, and relatively unpopular contemporary music. Jazz, now a frequent recipient of Arts Council funding, was not admitted into the 'Arts Council' canon until 1967, and folk music has always remained outside. (Mulgan and Worpole 1986: 66-8). Popular music has therefore been excluded from the work of the Arts Council, and appears to have had more success in initiatives under the remit of local authorities:

> Many of the most radical music policies have in practice been followed by local authorities rather than the Arts Council. Local authorities have mixed two sets of goals: providing live entertainment (the Leadmill in Sheffield, Riverside in Newcastle, the Bass Clef in Hackney, the GLC festivals, Camden's Jazz Festival) and providing opportunities for local musicians to rehearse and record. The beginnings of an industrial approach to music, focusing on the importance of employment and economic viability, have also come from local authorities rather than the national institutions. (Mulgan & Worpole 1986: 68)

Labour councils in particular have aligned themselves to popular music sponsorship, encouraged by initiatives in London and Sheffield (Frith, 1993; Street 1993). This position was backed up by the claims of Leicester City Council:

> I've got it here, the Green Paper on "Striking a New Note" a consultative Green Paper on "Publicly funded new music in England", which is all good stuff, but it is almost as if the Arts Council need to do something - what should we do? In the East Midlands area we've been doing our work for some years now, and I think what we've got is a sort of - we've been breaking new ground over the last four or five years and "Striking a new note" is fine, but look at it in practice. We've actually been doing this. Local authorities up and down the country - it's patchy I suppose, but we've been doing this already. (Pete Bryan, former Leicester City Council Arts and Leisure Services Officer, in interview)

By entering into partnership with local authorities, East Midlands Arts board has invested into popular music initiatives, without having to alter or challenge its own cultural structures, which are governed by its Arts Council funding[48].

Summary

This chapter has looked at the different sorts of provision for popular music in the city of Leicester offered by the public sector. The approaches taken by the local authorities and the regional arts board show particular characteristics, which can be summarised as:

1. A commitment to performance, exhibition and display in public spaces, through an emphasis on the sponsorship of venues and festivals.

2. A commitment to training and education particularly through workshop and seminar, calling in advisors and experts from outside the city scenes.

3. The development of a regional network of intermediaries, who are responsible for advice, advocacy and organisation of regional popular music practice within their own cities and across the East Midlands region.

The provision for popular music offered by Leicester City Council suggest that popular music is considered by the local authority as an activity which can benefit

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48 These issues are further discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

localities, as a way of representing different communities in the city and as an activity which engages young people in particular. The recent development of the regional Network has consolidated this approach and brought the City Council into partnership with East Midlands Arts and with other cities in the region.

Funding one part-time post is a relatively cheap way of recognising and including popular music practice in City Council policy. It should not preclude the possibility of further partnership between popular music practitioners and the public sector. The work of the Development Officer is fraught with difficulties, negotiating between the public and private sector and championing cultural activity traditionally excluded in public sector arts funding, whilst under public scrutiny from both their employers, the local industry and the public at large. Much of the responsibility for results rests on the charisma and approach of the individual involved, despite their public sector employment, and it would be surprising if such an initiative improved the success and profile of the Leicester popular music scene single-handed. The post does hold potential strengths however, in its position as political and cultural intermediary, facilitating and coordinating the interface between arts funding and pop music and centralising information for practitioners within the city.

This chapter has outlined public sector initiatives which have offered support for popular music in Leicester over the last fifteen years. In the next chapter I examine cultural policy more generally, looking at recent shifts in national cultural policy and describing a variety of approaches taken by different cities in England and Ireland.

Chapter 6

Cultural policy, popular music and the city

[Cultural policy is] a set of interventions in popular music practice by local, provincial and national authorities based on conceptions of popular music's cultural value and social meaning (Rutten 1993:37)

Policy (1) n. the course or general plan of action adopted by a government, party or person; Policy (2) n. a contract of insurance; the document containing this (Oxford Paperback Dictionary 1980, Oxford University Press)

The Oxford English Dictionary (Second Edition 1989) 1. An organised or established system or form of government or administration (of a state or city)...5. A course of action adopted and pursued by a government, party, ruler, statesman, etc.; any course of action adopted as advantageous or expedient. (The chief living sense.)

Introduction

This chapter examines the ways that agencies of local governance influence, regulate and promote popular music through cultural policy. Policy is defined here as any form of systemised intervention into organic activity, and hence suggests there are two levels: direct and indirect policy. Examples of direct intervention into the practice of popular music in Leicester have been considered in Chapter 5, and this section considers these examples in relation to the histories and approaches of national and local cultural policy.

Cultural policy is the political mediation of processes of cultural production, consumption and distribution. Street (1997) emphasises three aspects that are central to the formation and character of cultural policy. These aspects are *institutional practices, policy process* and *ideology*. They highlight: the organisations involved in policy making and their structural characteristics, histories and positions within the process; the relationship between policy making and external factors and influences; and the surrounding and driving values, perspectives and ideals behind these practices and processes (Street 1997: 79-83). This chapter considers the recent development of

cultural policy in Britain and considers the organisations that contribute to and structure cultural practice. It then focuses on different approaches and initiatives involving public intervention in the city, examining examples of urban cultural policy which aim to regenerate cities in different ways. It finally looks at intervention into cultural practice in Leicester in relation to these accounts and considers the aspects which may have contributed to the policy approach of Leicester's governance agencies.

Popular music policy

Popular music poses particular problems for policy makers. The commercial success of popular music has meant that policy makers often consider it outside the remit of cultural policy, firstly because it is often assumed that arts and cultural policy equals subsidy, and pop does not require this, and secondly because this commercial bent does not fit with the value systems of policy making organisations:

> To the free marketeers the music industry represents an ideal of cultural practice, a model of giving people what they want. To other observers it is in music, more than any other field, that commercialisation has most successfully destroyed all artistic values and cultural standards. From the music hall through to the Hollywood musical, via big band crooners crying glycerine tears, or alcoholic song-writers pouring out *Weltschmerz* over a tinkling cocktail piano, and right up to modern heavy metal bands dressed in leather and chains, commercialism is seen to have wreaked havoc with all that music most properly stands for: spiritual transcendence, abiding folk values, technical virtuosity, a national inheritance (Mulgan and Worpole 1986: 61)

As an activity, popular music traditionally does not earn the same respect as other forms of music. Popular musicians are seen as less skilled than others such as classical musicians, pop and rock promoters are seen as shifty and exploitative predators, preying on the young and innocent for a profit, and pop audiences are considered to have been duped into wasting time and money on such base pursuits. In terms of urban cultural life, popular music audiences have previously been portrayed as a necessary evil - going to see bands and visiting nightclubs are the prerogatives of youth, and can bring problems into the public domain which need to be contained,

such as alcohol, noise, litter and violence. Until recently, the relationship between government agencies and popular music has been one of control and regulation or at least one held at a distance.

More recently however official culture has embraced popular music in ways which represent an epistemological break in pop's relatively short history. The relationship between politics and pop has previously been most easily summarised as one of regulation and protection (on behalf of the public, by governing agencies, on popular music practice, for example in censorship of lyrics), or representation (as popular music reveals or rebels against political ideology, or when pop stars are used by association to give politicians populist kudos) (Street 1986; Cloonan 1996). This relationship now shows signs of a more substantive rather than symbolic base, as popular music and the recording industry are recognised for their contribution to national economies. Popular music is now seen by both local and national governments to have estimable value, primarily in an economic sense, but also socially and culturally.

One shift in this relationship stems from the development of local government cultural policy, which began to address the 'culture industries' in the 1980s. Local authorities took their cue from the Greater London Council (GLC), whose radical policies re-evaluated the role of popular culture and the cultural industries to include economic development and the support of equal opportunities until its abolition in 1986. Frith (1993) suggests that these changes were influenced by the need to develop service economies in the 1980s, following the decline of heavy and manufacturing industries and the need for the mainly Labour local governments to form alternative policies to the long-reigning Conservative government (Frith 1993:15, Street 1995:321).

Examples of the 'cultural industries' are examined in this section with regard to urban cultural policy. Next I briefly examine national cultural policy in Britain, focussing particularly on the role of the Arts Council.

National arts and cultural policy

The relationship between national government and the arts and cultural industries has strengthened significantly in the last decade. Although the idea of a government department for culture was floated at a Select Committee for Education, Science and

the Arts in 1982 (Hewison 1997: 252), it was not until the Labour government renamed the Department of National Heritage the department for Culture Media and Sport that culture gained such recognition. New Labour publicly heralded the excitement of a 'Cool Britannia' at the peak of confidence in Britain's cultural industries by creating a Creative Industries Task Force made up of government and industry representatives in 1997, and post-election parties at Number 10 flaunted 'Brit Pop' star-studded guest lists.

A Creative Industries Mapping Exercise undertaken on behalf of the Task Force found that 1.4 million people were employed in the creative industries, bringing in a revenue of £60 billion per annum making up 4% of the domestic economy (DCMS 1998)[49]. The music industry accounted for £3.6 billion of this revenue, representing the second highest cultural industry in terms of export value at £1,500 million (publishing being the first) (DCMS 1998). A Music Industry Forum was formed in January 1998, involving representatives from record labels, the British Phonographic Institute and the Musicians' Union as well as government ministers, and the Quality Efficiency and Standards Team (QUEST) was established in April 1999 to monitor best practice in the relationship between government arts funding agencies such as the Arts Council and the cultural industries (Pirie 1999).

These developments attracted much press interest, comment and criticism as high profile industry members, such as the band Oasis and Alan McGee, director of Creation Records and the man responsible for their success, were seen to be colluding with the government without profitable results for the artists. Whilst the recording industry was outlining its needs particularly in terms of the potential threat of on-line digital distribution of music to record and CD sales, there were accusations of being 'Tony's friends' levelled at those in close contact to the process, particularly those perceived to be from working class or more rebellious roots (Yates 1998) Arts sections of the national press and the music press commented on the disparity between the government which championed the success of bands such as Oasis and Pulp, who had contributed so much to the economy through their international popularity, and their lack of policy for supporting individuals during the early years of music-making.

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[49] DCMS homepage: www.culture.gov.uk ; Creative Industries Mapping Document 1998, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Alan McGee called for the recognition of the importance of social security for popular musicians in the presence of government minister Mark Fisher at the 1997 music industry convention, In the City, at Glasgow, and the lack of subsidy for popular musicians in relation to other forms of music was indicated by commentators in a debate over how serious the government's commitment to its' creative populace really was[50]. This latter point was directed at the Arts Council, the other primary national source of funding and support for musicians, which is considered below (O'Rorke 1998)[51].

The Arts Council

The Arts Council grew out of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, an organisation formed during World War Two, which aimed to show the Government's support for artists and cultural activity during the war-torn years primarily under the direction of John Maynard Keynes. The 'caretaker' Conservative government took the decision to perpetuate the organisation, and in 1946 the Arts Council was granted the Royal Charter under Labour, who inherited the ethos of the Council and who were the first government to take financial responsibility of the Arts Council (the original Council was established through funding from the Pilgrim Trust). Performing arts and contemporary arts became a national responsibility alongside museums and galleries and the Council was committed to the funding of arts organisations on an institutional and bureaucratic basis through the decisions made by a centralised committee appointed by the government (Hewison 1995).

Hewison (1995) documents the cultural changes to this organisation born out of the consensus of war, noting that

> until the sixties the Arts Council held to a purely "reactive" policy, responding as it saw fit to requests to funds, but taking no major initiatives of its own (Hewison 1995:80)

In 1965 the first White Paper on cultural funding *A Policy for the Arts*, was released by the Labour government which recognised the need for more cohesive strategy, increased funding and the importance of local organisations, in the guise of the

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[50] 'Watering the roots of creativity', editorial, *The Guardian* 7 January 1998
[51]. According to O'Rorke 96% of Arts Council subsidy, including Lottery money, for music is directed towards classical music projects.

Regional Arts Associations. These latter were voluntary associations between local authorities, institutions and individuals, who elected a governing board to oversee the majority funding from the Arts Council as well as local authority funding. It also established capital funding by the Arts Council for the first time, so that capital grants could be directed towards building to encourage local authorities and developers to invest in projects which 'housed the Arts'. Arts Council funding increased considerably – by 45% in the year 1966/7 and by 26% the following year (Hewison 1995:141). It also attempted to come to terms with the growth of popular cultural consumption by questioning the gap between 'traditional sources' as typified by brass bands, music halls and pop groups, and 'higher forms of entertainment'. The surrounding conditions of the 'swinging sixties' – the counter-culture of Pop Art, the growth of mass media, youth culture and consumption and moral political and legislative change – placed pressure on the institution formalised by campaigning groups such as the Friends of the Arts Council Co-operative, who sought democratisation of the Council by giving artists more power in decision-making. Although younger representatives were appointed to the committee, these attempts were largely unsuccessful in achieving a more open and democratic structure and the battle to move the Council away from its conservative and elitist tendencies continued in the 1970s and throughout the 1980s.

Economic crises during this period, chiefly in the early part of the 1970s and in the mid-1980s, took their toll on arts organisations, and changes to national government and arts ministry leadership effected the political climate in which the Arts Council operated. Despite the efforts of some to democratise the institution, the appointment of council members by the government of the day continued and the lack of representation for the regions and for particular sorts of arts, such as community arts, in Council funded projects was criticised. The emphasis on individualism and private sponsorship inherent in Thatcherite policy in the 1980s allowed the larger heritage-oriented and consumption-led institutions to continue to be foregrounded, rather than individual artists and production-based activities. As economic approaches to the arts, associated with the Policy Studies Institute studies of economic impact (Myerscough 1988), became more prevalent the Arts Council was encouraged to adopt these attitudes under growing pressure from the Tories and budgets that had in real terms

been cut. Structural change eventually occurred in 1991, in a move to take away one of the tiers of the organisation's operations by devolving some of the Arts Council's clients and much of the administrative responsibility and cost to the regional bodies, and replacing the Regional Arts Associations with Regional Arts Boards. These were fewer in number than the Arts Associations, and left the Arts Council in London with the remit of its national and touring companies and national programmes (Hewison 1995).

Since 1991 there have been 10 Regional Arts Boards, which have the responsibility of cultural policy at a local level, consulting with other associations and agencies on local policy and working in partnership with the local authorities to achieve these aims. The Arts Boards are the regional bodies of the national funding system for the arts, including the Arts Council, the British Film Institute and the Craft Council, although the latter and the Arts Council are to amalgamate(Hopkins &Glaister 1998). They rely on a universal policy framework advised by these bodies who represent their core funding to guide funding decisions, although each Board has responsibility over its own budgets and strategy. Additional funding also comes from local authorities and the relationship between RAB's and local authorities (and the Regional Development Agencies currently being established) is increasingly highlighted. *A Creative Future* (1993), the summary of a major strategic review and consultation exercise in 1991, urged statutory rather than discretionary funding of the arts by local authorities, and also encouraged the role of partnership between local authorities and regional arts boards in order to best utilise national and local funding and to avoid duplication of activity.

In 1994 a further structural change occurred, in that the Arts Council split to become separate Arts Councils of Scotland, Wales and England. This offered the opportunity for reorganisation and concentration of resources to each country's needs; however the grant for the Council from central government was reduced over the period 1992-1995 and criticism continued to be levelled at the inefficiency and elitism of the organisation itself (Hewison 1995: 265). The election of the new Labour government in 1997 offered the Council renewed hope of more support from central government; it was the Conservative initiative of the National Lottery however that has made the biggest impact on the operation, effectiveness and perception of the Arts Council of

England.

The National Lottery

The relationship between the Arts Council and popular culture was significantly altered by the launch of the National Lottery in 1995, introducing a radical change to the funding of nation-wide arts schemes and projects. Arts Lottery money, principally distributed by the Arts Council not only provided a new funding source but also an opportunity to change distribution of resources by altering the funding system. This opportunity was well-timed given the building criticism of the Arts Council and the cuts in funding that the Council was having to make, particularly to revenue funding of large companies.

To begin with, however, the National Lottery did not appear to halt the loss of confidence in the Arts Council, as its capital funding was seen to only benefit the larger struggling London-based companies such as the Royal Opera House, without paying attention to either the regions or the revenue needs of arts organisations. The former Chairman Lord Gowrie himself admitted:

> Under the previous administration, I noted here that expanding the plant while the businesses were failing made me feel as if I had strayed into a Mad Hatter's tea party. Lottery feast and revenue famine conducted their loony allegoric dance (The Arts Council of England Annual Report 1997/8).

The perceived bias towards both large projects, high culture and geographic regions led in part to the establishment of the Arts for Everyone scheme in 1997, which allowed small projects to apply for grants of up to £5,000 and £50,000. The scheme was heralded as a resounding success in terms of the number of applications that it attracted, but was still problematical in terms of providing capital grants only and in terms of uneven distribution over the nation. Companies that were successful in attaining Lottery grants for building also found that they were still over budget due to standstill or reduced revenue funding and in some cases increased running costs from the Lottery-funded refurbishment (McCann 1997) The capital-only Lottery scheme was designed so as not to replace Arts Council revenue funding, but was revised by the 1998 Lottery Act which recognises these problems and re-orients the programme to allow for application for revenue funding and also allows the Arts Council of

England to solicit for application, to target resources at particular cultural and geographical sectors[52].

The Arts For Everyone scheme provided a more flexible funding opportunity than ever before in terms of small projects, an opportunity exploited by popular musicians and promoters and which has had particular success in reaching popular music projects. By the summer of 1997 it has been estimated that £21 million was delivered to individual bands and musicians nationally (Laurence 1999), and over £54 million had been granted overall to music and opera (Arts Council of England Annual rEport 1996/7). The scheme also encouraged to the inclusion of popular music in the remit of Contemporary Music Officer, both nationally and at Regional Arts Board level.

Partnership in action: the East Midlands Popular Music Network

In Leicester, the partnership between the Regional Arts Board, East Midlands Arts, and a number of local authorities embodied in the Popular Music Network, was a radical approach to supporting popular music in terms of Arts Council policy. The Arts Council does not have a specific programme for supporting popular music, although it does offer support for New Music, a category which leaves many of those wanting assistance from the Popular Music Officers outside because of its emphasis on new and original works. Delivery of the Arts for Everyone scheme has proved the main form of assistance offered by the Leicester City Popular Music Development Officer. An estimated £12,000 went to Leicester popular musicians through this scheme[53].

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[52] The 1998 Lottery Act also includes the creation of the 'sixth good cause': that of health, education and environment. This is to complement the other five (sport, the arts, heritage, charities and projects) and its emphasis is on social inclusion, quality of life and community involvement (Department of Culture, Media and Sport internet site: http://www.culture.gov.uk/LOTTERY.HTM).

[53] Dawson Smith in interview. However, the region as a whole was found to receive less Arts for Everyone money than any other region and another scheme, Arts for All, was targeted at and piloted in the East Midlands in 1998. This scheme was made national in March 1999 (Hybrid Magazine, April 1999). The impact of the Arts Lottery on arts funding in the East Midlands area can be noted in the following figures: in the year 1996/7 funding from the Arts Council of England made up 91% of EMA's income, and issued £4,341,000 in grants out of the £59, 568,000 in grants to all regional arts boards (Arts Council of England Annual Report 1995/6, East Midlands Arts operational plan 1996/7). In 1996/7 Arts Lottery grants under £100,000 totalled £1,487,694, and £1,492,319 in 1998; and a total of £5,060,969 Arts Lottery grants were given to the region in 1996/7, and £9,742,652 in 1997/8. Comparatively however East Midlands received the lowest amount of Arts Lottery funding in 1996/7,

By operating as an advisory service on a regional basis, the Popular Music Network has offered the opportunity for local popular music practitioners to gain access to Arts Council resources. Dissemination of the potential of Lottery money has been a key part of the Popular Music Development Officers' role, and the shifts in criteria for funding have opened up the definition of 'art' so that applicants for funding gain credit for the results they achieve in arts and cultural *practice* and the impact they have on the wider community. Popular music projects can be shown to meet the criteria of the Arts Lottery awards, for example one of the key criteria is that a project can attract and serve new audiences, another is to get more young people involved in arts and cultural activities[54]. The increase of support to popular music has encouraged further funding through the extension of the small Arts Lottery grants, and has helped change the emphasis of Arts Council funding to greater sympathy towards more popular cultural production and consumption.

> Through the Arts for Everyone (A4E) programme, the department can now support new initiative across the spectrum of music activity; make regular contact with musicians and promoters previously beyond its reach; and attract larger, more diverse audiences than ever before. The scheme has inspired thousands of applicants to make first-time contact with the Arts Council, enabling the department to fund jazz, community music and educational initiatives to an extent previously undreamed of(Arts Council of England Annual Report 1998).

Equal access versus elitism

These changes are a result of a re-orientation towards creating equal access for all to arts and culture whilst promoting the arts and cultural industries as important economic sectors; the Lottery allowed for change to the structure of funding, whilst ideological shifts towards the push for new audiences echoed the cultural policy shifts within New Labour.

> Under New Labour, museums and galleries are required to classify their

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and the second lowest in 1997/8 out of all regions (Arts Council of England Annual Report 1996/7 & 1998).

[54] Arts 4 Everyone promotional document. the Arts Council of England 1997.

visitors by class and ethnicity and then seek to mirror in their attendance the proportion of each of the designated groups within society as a whole (Brighton 1999).

The approach of the new Arts Council chairman, Gerry Robinson, has reiterated these concerns:

> Widening access, Robinson said in his first speech as ACE chairman, "will be right at the core of everything we do at the Arts Council". A charge to be taken seriously, he warned, is that "in parts of the arts establishment, access is still restricted to the elite" (op cit).

The opening up of participation is not without its critics. In response to advocates of attendance quotas to monitor equality of participation policies in 1997, John Tusa, the managing director of the Barbican Theatre commented that arts centres considered guilty of elitism, by virtue of attendance figures, would be unable to justify spending money, relating this to a demise in respect for cultural hierarchies:

> We have lost a vocabulary where values are valued rather than costed; where inspiration is regarded as heaven sent rather than an unacceptable risk. Instead, we have a materialistic debate where the immaterial is dismissed as pretentious (Tusa quoted b y Longrigg 1997) .

This approach is concerned with the threat posed by policies aimed at popular attendance of art facilities and events to high art forms, which are, in this account, characterised by their lack of commercial viability. Such concern implies a duality of art and commerce which is central to definitions of cultural value and integrity: if cultural organisations are funded on the basis of their popularity with the masses, it claims, then they will be prevented from achieving true art, which by definition must be discrete from economic value. It is protectionist, revealing the challenge imposed by a more populist conception of culture to art forms reliant on subsidy and indicating the potential competition between different cultural sectors over both resources and definitions of value; these issues are discussed further in Chapter 7.

This section has examined national cultural policy and indicated some of the ways in which it impacts on arts and cultural practice at a local level. At the same time that national government has turned towards the arts and cultural industries and developed

policy for enhancing greater participation in the arts, more localised forms of cultural policy are emerging which are directed towards popular culture. The following section looks at some examples of more localised policy, by examining the different ways that policy makers approach popular music and popular culture in the civic life of cities and offering some brief case studies which highlight different approaches to urban cultural policy and popular cultural practice.

Urban cultural policy: aims, objectives and strategies

> Finally cities have stepped outside the 'high arts' of museum and galleries by sponsoring festivals of community arts, popular music, circus skills and the like (Griffiths 1993:41)

During the 1980s policy makers and urban planners began to think of the importance of arts and cultural industries to urban economies. Bianchini (1993) suggests this shift towards using cultural policy as an economic strategy came from the development of new advocacy for the arts, following the restrictions on public subsidy by the Conservative government post-1979, and the initiatives and ideologies of the Greater London Council from 1981 to 1986. It was also influenced by the results of studies examining the employment potential and economic impact of arts and cultural activity such as Myerscough (1988). Planners and urban design theorists began to think of ways in which arts and culture activities brought capital to cities, through attraction of spending and investment, and this thinking in turn encouraged local authorities to consider how to enhance economic development through cultural policy.

This involved a move beyond the 'exhibition culture' of museums and art galleries, to develop strategies that utilised culture in new ways. Local authorities, often in partnership with the private sector, examined how cultural activity could be used to animate city centres by promoting venues, re-inventing public space and freeing up the time zones in which cultural consumption occurred. The need to generate economies through means alternative to those of the declining sectors that had for so long offered secure employment and industrial bases for cities encouraged consideration of the cultural sector. As well as enhancement of cultural consumption and the tourist industry, cultural production could be encouraged by supporting creative industries such as printmaking, design, music and broadcast media to create

jobs and enhance the 'soft infrastructures' of cities' cultural lives (Montgomery 1990). The following examples consider some of these approaches[55].

Cultural animation: rejuvenating urban space

The condition of Britain's inner cities as empty, derelict and deprived was described in 1977 by a government White Paper *A Policy for the Inner Cities*, which recognised their decline to be a combination of labour market decline, housing depletion, unemployment, racial discrimination and complex population movement (Atkinson & Moon 1994). City centres have suffered further decline through the free market policies of Conservative government, in particular through the creation of enterprise zones and out of town shopping centres. The 1990s have seen a surge of initiatives to re-animate city centres through arts, leisure and entertainment: the following examples illustrate some of the issues and problems that have emerged from such initiatives.

Spectacle and play in 'Madchester'[56]

'Play and spectacle' has become part of the regeneration of the physical and economic city, and management of city centres by local authorities has aimed to encourage play as well as work to animate areas of cities left barren after dark (Mellor 1997). The physical structure of Manchester city centre has been allowed to open up to display a public arena of promenade and drama by facilitative intervention and a 'hands off' approach towards organic commercial cultural activity on the part of Greater Manchester City Council (Brown 1998a). The cultural life of Manchester, now considered internationally a leading cultural centre, has benefited from progressive policy which takes notice of the cultural rhythms and themes already extant in the city, and has in turn used this vitality as a selling point.

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[55]This section owes much to the work of the project team working on the ESRC project 'Local music policy, the music industry and local economic development'. The team comprised of Dr. Sara Cohen, Dr. Adam Brown, Dr. Justin O'Connor and myself and the project was based at the Institute of Popular Music, University of Liverpool and the Manchester Institute of Popular Culture, Manchester Metropolitan University. For a fuller outline of the project see Appendix I.

[56] The term 'Madchester' was coined in the late 1980s along with other slogans (such as 'On the sixth day God created Manchester') which self-consciously described the 'hype' or 'buzz' that was evident around music in and from the city at the time. The link between the new dance music of Acid House and the city was developed and promoted world-wide in the media and by indie bands such as the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays, who used the phrase on their 1989 EP 'Rave On' (Brown 1998c). Subsequently however in the popular press and in particular relation to activities in Moss Side, the city was more 'darkly' dubbed 'Gunchester' and 'Drugchester'.

This 're-imaging' set out to highlight the strengths of the city, rather than its declining industrial base. It came out of a shift in local authority focus towards positive partnerships in the late 1980s, including the formation of city centre development corporation (Central Manchester Development Corporation in 1987) and a cultural review of Greater Manchester commissioned by the City Council and the regional arts association and conducted by the Manchester Institute of Popular Culture (MIPC) at the Manchester Metropolitan University ('The economic importance of the arts and cultural industries in Greater Manchester', resulting in Wynne 1990). There was a move to showcase Manchester's potential on the global stage, in sports, arts and as a host for such activities – the city bid for the 1996 and 2000 Olympics and built the G-Mex and the Nynex exhibition and concert arenas (Brown 1998a). There was also move towards popular culture away from high culture after perceived failure in drawing in audience:

> It was then doubtful whether the promotion of the cultural industries would favour upper-income cultural aspirations. Perhaps the weakness of the Hallé Orchestra, once the city's declaration of worth to a national audience, symbolised the shift to a pluralistic urban culture (Mellor 1997:59)

Popular music was one theme chosen to represent the city's lively cultural profile, alongside drama and the city's expanding gay scene, and the emerging underground music scenes in the late 1980s were used in advertising campaigns. Manchester City Council offered a 'hands-off' approach coupled with selective support and physical regeneration investment in terms of popular music: whilst some support was given to events, such as festivals and the 'In The City' music industry convention, the indigenous industry was considered healthy enough to survive without hefty state subsidy. Regeneration schemes such as the Castlefield area have helped sustain small businesses such as record labels and music promoters and the zoning of licensing of venues and premises assisted the nightclubs which were crucial to the development of the world famous 'Madchester' scene. The concept of the 24 hour city was introduced and promoted by the city authorities to maximise yield from expensive land through multiple functions (for example residential, business, service and leisure sectors all sharing the same space but operating at different times), and the city has earned a reputation as a European clubbing capital and the site for innovative music scenes,

based around venues such as the (now defunct) Hacienda club.

Arts festivals and carnivals representing different communities (for example gay, Chinese and Irish) are given high profile and priority in the city's streets: it is however popular music and sport that are known as Manchester's biggest assets outside of the city. How much these successes are down to the handling by the local authorities, in the case of popular music in particular, remains a subject of much research and debate however. The strong relationship between local cultural policy, organic cultural activity and the city's Universities (both in terms of the large student population and the research carried out into city activity by, for example, the MIPC) would indicate the benefits of communication between different city agencies involved in both cultural policy and practice.

Culture-based development in Dublin: 'Temple Bar and Restaurants'[57]

The development of Temple Bar in Dublin in the first half of the 1990s has been held up as a key example of the cultural planning of a specific area deemed as the quarter for creative arts and entertainment. Although difficult to quantify, the cultural quarter is undoubtedly a success in terms of international reputation and a trigger for urban renewal of the area, which was to become a bus station before the cultural planners moved in[58]. The cultural quarter mixes small-scale cultural businesses and retail with hotels, venues, bars and restaurants and has now become a major destination for groups of tourists on weekend breaks, such as stag parties. The network of narrow streets were developed to retain or impose 'original qualities' such as cobbles and painted plaster as well as incorporate larger areas for public performance planning and more modern design elements. Cultural activity is seen as integral to the area and to the attraction of its many visitors (Montgomery 1995), although more recent criticism has pointed to the abuse of hotel licensing to create as many pubs and bars as possible to the detriment of other forms of more creative activity (Smith & Convery 1996).

The quarter has the music venues *Eamonn Doran's* and the Temple Bar Music Centre, which also features recording studios and rehearsal rooms, but more internationally known venues The Point and the Mean Fiddler lie outside of its boundaries. Many of

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[57] This phrase – 'temple bars and restaurants' – is used cynically by locals when referring to the area, thus highlighting their perception of the nature of the cultural regeneration of Temple Bar.
[58] 'Dublin clean and hip for international business', *Irish Times* November 8 1997

the licensed premises also feature regular Irish music events such as traditional music sessions to attract tourists, and the area has been host to the Temple Bar Blues Festival, one of five annual Blues festivals in Ireland, since 1992 (Quinn 1996). Less formally, Temple Bar is also known for the businesses owned by U2 - the Clarence Hotel and its nightclub The Kitchen – and visitors hope to catch a glimpse of Bono's motorbike parked in a specially roped-off space on Wellington Quay. In the last two years Dublin's musical tourism has become progressively more developed, along with the city's emerging reputation as a cultural tourist destination, and projects such as the Irish Music Hall of Fame and the Irish Traditional Music Centre, both opening in 1999, stand testament to the investment into this sector.

Liverpool's Ropeworks

In many ways following this model, the Liverpool Ropeworks regeneration project hopes to rejuvenate a densely packed zone of old warehouses and building stock in the city centre, utilising the organic activity of clubs, bars, venues and small businesses already occupying the area. Although beset with problems (the regeneration of the area has been planned for 15 years and is now on its fifth project name), the scheme has been awarded over £17m European funding and recognises the capital importance of the high volume of current visitors to the area. The night-time economy of the area is already thriving, with around 30 clubs and venues, including the 'superclub' Cream which alone can draw in 2,000 people at the weekend. Many of those who come to the area at night also know the area by day for its estimated 400 hundred businesses, many of which are music-related - in 1998 there were 7 record shops, 3 instrument shops, 5 recording studios, 8 record labels and around 10 management companies based in the area, as well rehearsal rooms and performance spaces (Gilmore 1998a).

The area is also home to a community of fine artists who have also taken advantage of the cheap rents on building stock, such as large warehouse premises. This organic activity offers policy makers the opportunity to adapt and regenerate the area with respect to its arts and cultural industries, which constituted a major role in the application for European money. The scheme hopes to capitalise on the cultural feel of the area and extend its potential, for example, by increasing the age range of visitors by offering different sorts of cultural pursuits and managing street cleaning and policing schemes (Lovatt 1998). Although the project is still under

implementation, there have been concerns that rents will rise if the area becomes gentrified, running smaller and more fragile cultural businesses that flavour the area out of the quarter. Such a result would have major impact in particular on studio space for artists who have been one of the more vocal cultural sectors within the consultation process; the music sector has curiously remained relatively silent, despite its significant purchase on the area.[59]

These three examples emphasise localities as sites of cultural activity which aim to capitalise on public display, creativity and entertainment. Popular music as a less visible activity than other cultural sectors may seem a strange focus for an examination of the animation of public space; however these examples show its importance. They reveal that intervention needs to be sensitive to activity already taking place in these spaces, and that different cultural sectors have different needs and different outcomes in terms of cultural animation. For example, the original emphasis on cultural production in the Temple Bar scheme has in some ways been superseded by the creation of spaces for leisure, since bars and restaurants maximise profits, particularly for larger companies which can afford to invest in the area. Popular music has in some ways benefited from this development through a renewed emphasis on venues and performance particularly for tourism. Conversely in Liverpool popular music activity is already prolific in the area but may suffer from the results of gentrification. In Manchester, where several cultural quarters have been officially designated (perhaps rather than created) the combination of re-imaging of the city, a hands off approach to some aspects of culturally based urban re-animation and the economic and international success of the Manchester music industry appears to have benefited popular music activity.

As yet Leicester does not have a designated cultural quarter, although there are plans to incorporate the development of Phoenix Arts Centre, the newly built Phoenix Yard and the nearby buildings of De Montfort University into an arts quarter and to

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[59] Op cit.: apart from the noticeable and commanding presence of representatives from Cream, who have a history of relations with Liverpool City Council and the Chamber of Commerce, the music sector was largely absent at public meetings and forums. Initial research into music businesses and their reactions to the scheme revealed a mixture of lack of interest, the impression that they had nothing to gain and hence nothing to fear from the initiative, lack of time and a lack of will to be involved collectively with other music businesses. These opinions were overlaid with an overwhelming distrust of the City Council and public sector in general, originating from the residual disappointments by previous failed regeneration schemes (see Cohen 1991, 1995).

designate and mark, by flow-trafficking of pedestrians and signposts, a heritage quarter around the city's most valued historical sites near the city centre.

Marketing through music: musical heritage and tourism

Other less grounded attempts to generate capital from culture will market visitor attractions according to their (often mythologised) cultural heritage. Musical connections, styles and stars are used to promote places as tourist attractions, often emphasising the uniqueness of the sounds coming from these places and thus suggesting that locality has a direct impact on musical structure or rather that the music is a *result* of the 'natural' qualities of locality. The examples offered here are the Cavern Quarter in Liverpool and the marketing of Ireland as a holiday location.

The Cavern Quarter

This area is another 'quarterised' zone in Liverpool city centre, but in contrast to the Liverpool Ropeworks, the Cavern Quarter rests more firmly on the famed attendance of the Beatles to the area and less on current cultural activity. Instead of small cultural businesses, the quarter hosts large-scale retailers (some of which are party to the private partnership which has led this initiative since 1993), bars and architectural features such as a Wall of Bands, Beatles chairs and various statues and reliefs of the Fab Four. Although bands and acts play in the quarter's venues, there is less an atmosphere of organic music-making than sanitised tourist glaze, particularly if the current quarter is compared to its status as original site of the Cavern Club and in the 1970s of Eric's, a seminal punk venue.

The result is a network of streets containing a caricatured history of Liverpool's musical legacy combined with an overwhelming push for consumption which is startlingly not geared towards music but towards consumption of the place through one's own presence. To go to the Cavern Quarter is to be a witness to its musical history, perhaps without even hearing any music. The sponsorship of the area by the retailers within it has led to the design of the quarter which encourages the consumption of more mundane commodities, such as sportswear, on sale there. It is thus hoped that a by-product of a visit to the Cavern Quarter will be shopping, so that the Beatles could be considered to be actually marketing trainers and sweatshirts,

rather than Liverpool the city[60].

Ireland and its identification with music

Another example is the marketing of Ireland through the country's traditional music and more latterly its rising popular music industry. Tourism in Ireland has long been associated with music, alongside other key signifiers such as rural quiet, a friendly welcome and a sense of fun or 'craic'. In a recent survey Quinn (1998) found that there was a very high awareness of Irish music, both rock and traditional, amongst tourists to the country and concludes that

> Much scope remains for tourism oriented businesses to create representations of Irishness through Irish popular music landscapes...In projecting images of Ireland founded on music, the tourist industry is connecting with deeply embedded notions of Irish identity apparently widely held among overseas tourist markets (Quinn 1998: 27-8).

As discussed in Chapter 4, music is used to encourage leisure consumption in Irish cultural spaces outside of the country itself. The recent flush of advertisements marketing 'Irish' alcoholic products such as Guinness, Harp and Caffreys is testament also to the use of this association by the private sector, using Irish melodies to underline their themes of warmth, remembrance, home and friendliness (see Gilmore 1998b, Corcoran 1984). The Irish theme pub combines all of these factors to create a virtual tourism, a tourism which allows the tourist to stay at home. Leicester, along with possibly every city and town in England, hosts this opportunity in its three Irish theme pubs.

The industrial approach: cultural policy and economic revival in Sheffield and Liverpool

The following two examples highlight policy which has been intended to target the employment potential of the developing cultural sector.

Sheffield's integrated plan and the Cultural Industries Quarter

Sheffield's cultural policy has been used as an example of cultural policy geared

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[60] From 'Music policy in Liverpool' seminar, IPM, University of Liverpool 1998

towards economic development, with the result that Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) has been visited by many representatives from local authorities and municipal economic development units, including those of Liverpool and Leicester. The creation and support of this initiative, based in part around the Red Tape recording studio and launched in 1986, is part of a four stage strategy to develop the city's cultural industries, incorporating support for production and consumption on a regional, national and international basis. Belonging to the last stage of this plan geared toward 'global' recognition of Sheffield as a cultural centre, the National Centre for Popular Music (opened March 1999), aims to draw visitors from all over the world to learn about popular music via exhibitions, workshops and performances.

The Centre presents educational resources in the history and technicalities of popular music and initial feedback suggests it is successful in these aims, at least to the level of school-aged children. It works in partnership with local training establishments but sits rather awkwardly amongst the new rash of music industry training organisations, and has been criticised for its lack of involvement with local businesses. This return to the exhibition approach represents an attempt to reach a global market, to attract a projected 400,000-500,000 visitors annually and impact on the wider area of the CIQ by providing live performance space and encouraging further services such as food outlets by re-populating the area (Brown 1998b).

The CIQ itself is a 30 hectare site on the edge of the city centre which hosts over a hundred cultural businesses, encouraged to start up or move there to benefit from subsidised workspace and organised business support as well as the close proximity of similar businesses. The initiative came out of the development of a number of facilities supported by the City Council in the mid-1980s, although the quarter wasn't officially as such named until 1988. There are now around 150 cultural businesses in the area, providing an estimated 1,300 jobs (EDAW 16.36 in Brown 1998b). The industrial approach to culture was seen as a response to the rapid and devastating decline of the steel industry; whilst jobs created in the cultural sector could never hope to replace those in the steel industry, the initiative presented the opportunity for the development of local creative expression as well as small scale economy (Brown 1998b).

Cultural Industries Development Agencies on Merseyside

Another example of cultural policy aiming to increase the economic potential of local cultural industries is that of support for particular agencies and organisations which in turn champion the cultural sectors of a city. In Liverpool, such agencies have been developed to look after the city's film and music industry (the Moving Image Development Agency and the Merseyside Music Development Agency respectively). and support of arts and culture overall in the area is under the remit of Arts Culture and Media Enterprise (ACME). Merseyside as a region was classified as Objective One in 1993 by the European Commission, meaning that it requires economic specific assistance in order to be found equable with the rest of Europe, and a funding programme with a potential of £630m from the EC has been in place since 1994 (Cohen 1998).

The opportunities presented by this programme, the lack of indigenous industry after the decline of the city's status as a port, its history of both poverty and pop music and, crucially, the presence of a group of arts consultants in the city have led to the development of a particular form of sectoral support. This last element – a group of people who worked together in Merseyside Arts, the local arts board abolished in 1990 – has been very influential on arts and cultural policy in the region, in particular through their economic approach to the arts. Members of the group developed and promoted an emphasis on the importance of understanding and support of cultural production to the economic impact of arts and culture. The first implementation of this approach was the Moving Image Development Agency for the promotion of the TV and film sector in Liverpool, particularly to provide locations for filming and in terms of using local labour. The consultants behind this initiatives were also commissioned to explore the potentials of the music sector and joined forces with the local music trade organisation, the Merseyside Music Industry Association in 1994 to develop a bid for Objective One money. This bid initially aimed to secure £1.3m to fund a development agency aimed at building on the local music industry infrastructure to encourage investment from outside the region into production of popular music by local music services, utilising a mechanism which draws down funding according to the amount of investment generated (Gilmore 1998c).

The bid for the Merseyside Music Development Agency was eventually successful (in

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1997), although for a lesser amount of money and after difficult and protracted relations with both the consultants and central government agency on Merseyside. The agency builds on other initiatives centring on provision of advice and training in popular music, which had previously been developed with local authority involvement, but the model of the development agency, particularly the draw-down mechanism, and the use of European funding are unique (Gilmore 1998c). The project is meant to supplement the training element of the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts, established 1995, by providing jobs for LIPA graduates in the local infrastructure. Critics of LIPA have pointed out however that the majority of students attracted to and graduating from the Institute have little connection to the local area before, during or after their studies, and hence the original justifications for European funding for the institute – to benefit the local community – have not been borne out (see Cohen 1991 and forthcoming). Other problems that the MMDA has faced are connected to the difficulties of developing performance indicators to measure the impact of such a project in an industry which is secretive about its own investments (for example when signing bands) and which employs a high proportion of casual and part-time labour. As such local music services benefit from their classification alongside more traditional industries (cf. the lobbying for the music industry as comparable to the steel and chemical industries recently emphasised by reports such as the Value of Music Report (National Music Council 1997), but not without a struggle.

These strategies fit with the changing political and economic structures in cities – they are post-Fordist, service-class friendly and favour flexible specialised employment (Griffiths 1993). They have emerged in line with the growth of new technologies of production and consumption and emphasis on lifestyle identities. They reflect changes to global capitalism, as capital has become more mobile, national boundaries have receded and regions and locales are pitted against each other in competition to attract investment. In terms of comprising industrial rather than cultural policy *per se*, aimed at combating the recent industrial declines in cities, there is an awareness that such policy exacerbate 'dual cities', where an underclass of low-skilled, low paid workers casualised workforce fulfil the needs of a professional service class which can afford such lifestyle and cultural commodities and services (Griffiths 1993).

Although the potential for jobs and income in the music industry has been highlighted in the history of Leicester's public provision for popular music (in particular in the early literature from Multiplex[61]), the potential to generate economies through cultural activity has always taken second place to more social issues. The following approach to cultural policy in the city best typifies the kinds of initiatives and strategies which Leicester city has undertaken.

Cultural strategies for social inclusion and the promotion of equal opportunities

Many local state policies use cultural activities as means to enhance the social inclusion of cities. These policy approaches place an emphasis on participation and equal opportunities in their arts and cultural programmes, rather than on urban animation and regeneration, production of commodities and generation of economies. This emphasis on inclusion of the different social groups often results in facilities and resources that stress education and attendance rather than profit and competition, examples of which including festivals, family events and community workshops.

Bianchini (1993) indicates how the approach to cultural policy thinking in the 1970s was characterised by these notions of 'cultural democracy' and using cultural policy as a political strategy. Using the arts for social inclusion and integration was proposed as a way to combat the high/low cultural divide in the arts, and to open up a space for debate and critique of gender, class and ethnic barriers to participation in civic and social life (Bianchini 1993:2). As an earlier approach to cultural policy, it has informed many towns and cities' authorities since the 1970s, including those discussed above: it is placed last in this framework to emphasise how it continues to be the primary focus for cultural strategy in the city I turn to now, that of Leicester.

Equal opportunities in popular music: the city of Leicester and popular music

With the case of popular music, the community studio at Fosse Arts in Leicester offers an example of such an approach. By subsidising the rates artists pay per hour for studio time, the City Council aims to increase the numbers of people recording at the studio and increase access to facilities which are too expensive in the commercial

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[61] see Chapter 5.

sector for many to afford. It was part of the first wave of new art schemes in Leicester after the 1980s riots throughout Britain, which put emphasis upon equal opportunities and on facility arts and recreation facilities for the youth of Leicester. The approach is currently embodied by the International Youth House Project, opened in 1999, which emphasises its role in introducing new music technologies to the city's youth as well attracting visitors from further afield:

> We have a responsibility granted by Leicester City Council for youth provision in the local area...the type of facilities we have here, which have been based on what young people want, mean we have an attraction for people from all over Leicester and Leicestershire (Mike Farrant, IYHP Manager, in *Leicester Mercury* January 22 1999).

As with the shift to 'equal access' in national cultural policy, this approach aims to represent a population in terms of proportionate social groups in society, and hence targets and monitors the inclusion of different social divisions. In the field of popular music provision, it emphasises the need to create a level playing field for all participants *across* genre and style. It appeals to the social rather than musical characteristics of the producers and consumers, so that communities of age, sex, race and ethnicity and ability are examined. Methods usually involve a combination of positive action or discrimination on behalf of the social groups that are perceived to be discriminated against or excluded, and representation of these groups as role models.

This approach quite clearly advises the work of the Network Rock and Pop Officers in Leicester:

> This is a rough guess, and I haven't actually made a graph or a pie chart - but I'd day about 60-70% white male, which is interesting. the market is dominated in that respect anyway, but I think I have had 2 Black artists total, 2 Asian artists total, probably only about 15-20% females, come to talk to me. Particularly in the younger section. If we are talking about teenagers it is even more prevalent. It's quite disturbing really (Jon Knight, former Leicestershire Popular Music Development Officer, in interview).

The use of workers as role models who 'represent' underrepresented sections of the target audience is also part of this and other Equal Opportunities practice:

Well, I suppose out of all the workers - you know Norman in Derbyshire is black, and obviously I am 'the women' - and we take the piss out of it, like - 'we've got one queer, one women and one black guy - we'll do it all for you' [laughs]. So I sort of feel that maybe we have got more of an understanding of what actually Equal Opportunities might mean in practice, and what a long and painful process it is going to be to actually start in ten years in having a different demographic profile of musicians, if you see what I mean. My understanding of it is that just because there aren't loads of girls playing guitar and just because there aren't millions of black rock musicians doesn't mean that they can't do it and that they aren't interested... when you put musicians in school I want there to be some women, I want there to be some black people (Alison Bowen, former Network Popular Music Development Officer, in interview).

This method has been taken up by Popular Music Development workers offering the opportunity to see practitioners in action who have the same demographic qualities as those targeted. These opportunities are aimed at combating the lack of representation in wider society:

In the Youth Centre there was like a music collective group and all of them were boys. So we set up some workshops for girls led by women musicians. They were quite well attended, because boys have the whole mentality of 'we are in a gang, we are musicians, we going to go out and be rock stars', they are really self-motivated, but because girls haven't got that, they'll come to a project and they'll take part in it, but then afterwards they'll just not carry it through. You can't take on everything in your projects - so I suppose I learnt quite a lot from that, which is if you are going to do something like that then you need it to be coming from everywhere all the time. It is a real chicken and egg situation - if they haven't got role models on the telly and they don't want to be like them then there is not going to be the motivation (Alison Bowen)

Similarly, recent success of Cornershop, an indie band heralded as leaders of the 'New Asian Scene' who first 'broke' onto the international stage whilst based in Leicester, is frequently upheld as being a major influence on the increased interest of and collaboration with Asian communities and youth in the Leicester Music Network.

Until this point there had been a push for incorporating Bhangra into the Network's activities, coming in part from East Midlands Arts, who had previously successfully funded a number of visiting Indian traditional music artists to the region and viewed a commitment to Bhangra as one to the younger members of the city's Asian communities. This approach was criticised by a former Popular Music Development officer, who felt frustrated by what he saw as a blinkered approach which equated 'Asian' with 'Bhangra'.

> If you asked any of the funders, from Leicestershire in particular, why the Network was set up and why they need a Rock and Pop Officer, they wouldn't be able to give you a proper answer. That is the difference, they didn't know why and they still don't know why. I used to get things from the city council, they used to say things like "can we make sure we don't give grants to thrash-based white rock bands, we ought to be concentrating on some Asian music or black music", forgetting how the industry works, but also forgetting the fact that in a lot of cases, the music is blind to race and ethnicity. So one of the biggest challenges is to get like an Asian rock band recognised, not to concentrate on Bhangra, but to see where there are Asian and black music actually making mainstream music and giving them the chance to become visible. There were three Asian bands from Birmingham that were on telly recently, trying to get a record deal, and the music had no Asian influence at all, it was Western rock music, but they couldn't get any coverage because they were Asian bands and nobody wanted to touch them. That is the challenge: not to make sure Bhangra funded and Calypso gets funded. There is just no recognition of where the needs are and all the whys and wherefores behind it (Dave Howard, former Leicester Popular Music Development Officer, in interview).

This oversimplification is also recognised by Huq (1996), who talks of the mainstream music industry's branding of Asians as 'uncool' until a new form of exoticism was needed, whereupon Asian-ness was instantly confused with Bhangra. Huq asks for a more detailed examination of Bhangra and other Asian-origin new musics, in order to complete a submerged history, so that all forms of Asian youth creativity can be taken into account:

It is a mistake automatically to assume that all Asian youth will somehow be adherents of Bhangra, be it of Punjabi folk-dance tunes or their nineties legacy...The new wave of clubs including Outcaste [a London-based club opening in the 1995 and pioneering in playing hybrid music, with Asian, Hip Hop and Jungle elements], can be described as 'conscious kool', established to destroy old stereotypes of Asians shipwrecked on 'uncool island'. Such negative stereotypes will not evaporate overnight, but 'Asian Kool' should go some way to erode them as long as the new groups' readiness to distance themselves from Bhangra does not blind them to their audiences and to their own stated intentions. It must be borne in mind that Bhangra takes on a number of forms – un-kool Bhangra being just one of those (Huq 1995:77).

Cornershop are indeed one band who distance themselves actively and politically from Bhangra, although they will admit to using and liking Punjabi folk elements which brought them international acclaim as a 'crossover' band in 1997. They are also the type of band Dave Howard hoped for as a role model for young Leicester Asians, coming from style of music outside of the problematic Bhangra and achieving major success in the national music industry. The irony here is that although the band have given one interview for the Leicester Asian Network radio station, they make little or no allusion to their time in the city in press releases or interviews.

The 'equality of opportunity' approach mirrors the ethos of Leicester City Council more generally, and has been one arm of local authority culture, if not cultural policy, that has been consistently prioritised. In Leicester, where 28% of the city's population is classed as being of an ethnic minority (OPCS 1991), the City Council places much emphasis on the inclusion of all ethnic and social groups in the targeting of arts and cultural resources. The festival programme of the city includes events to celebrate the Asian communities' religious festivals such as Eid, Diwali and Ramadan and supports the Caribbean Carnival, the largest of its sort outside of Notting Hill, as discussed in Chapter 5. The City Council also employs a full-time Asian Dance Officer and has been developing Asian dance training and performance since 1985.

In this next section I examine the city of Leicester's cultural policy in more detail to examine how these priorities have emerged.

The city of Leicester and cultural policy

Leicester's approach to cultural policy over the years has been described one respondent in this research as 'spasmodic'[62] and typified by another as having 'aspirations to modesty'[63]. City Council cultural policy has been documented in various documents (by the Leisure Services Committee before unification, and by Franco Bianchini, a De Montfort University lecturer and expert in cultural policy who was asked on three separate occasions to write a cultural plan for the city) but these briefs have not yet been formalised into strategy[64]. It is admitted that Leicester 'lags' behind other cities and towns in this respect, with the proviso that the reorganisation of the local authority to unitary status in 1997 led to a more focussed approach in terms of examining and understanding the different industrial sectors, in the context of emerging practices of culturally-led regeneration and development:

> One thing that came out of unitary status was the vision and opportunity to look at these developments in more detail. Whether or not we have missed the tide of investment into these activities remains to be seen (Mike Candler in interview).

The local authority is in the process of reviewing its cultural sectors, and it is suggested that the City Council has made inroads into exploring the potential of the arts and cultural sector in a broader context than in previous years. Previous policy documents stress the promotion of equal opportunities within the arts services and participation in arts in the city, with emphasis on art's role in creating civic pride and being conducive for 'healthy cities' (Arts Policy and Strategy, Leicester Leisure Services Committee, Leicester City Council 1994). In 1997, Leicester City Council and Leicester Promotions conducted research into attitudes towards Leicester, surveying Leicester inhabitants and people from other comparative cities on their perceptions of the city. The results of this research, called the Leicester City Barometer, showed a need for more cohesive strategy for the arts and cultural sector. The research found that in comparison to the other cities (Glasgow, Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester) Leicester as a city showed significantly low esteem in

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[62] Mike Candler in interview
[63] Franco Bianchini in interview
[64] Op cit.

terms of its' arts, leisure and entertainment amenities and facilities. Although cultural diversity in Leicester was seen by survey respondents to be an asset, the research concluded that

> Without a more positive mental attitude, widespread pride and faith in the city will remain an elusive ambition...The ingrained negative attitudes of Leicester folk impact significantly on many [attendance] ratings – in stark contrast to other Midlands cities (Bonnar Keenlyside 'Leicester City Council Capital Strategy for the Arts' March 1999).

This negative comparison with other cities, particular Nottingham, in the eyes of Leicester people was also raised as an issue in further research commissioned by the City Council. In 1999 a capital arts strategy review and consultation exercise by an external consultant produced an advisory document: *Leicester City Council Capital Strategy for the Arts*. This document discusses arts and cultural provision in the city based on the results of survey and consultation with key members of the city's different cultural sectors. It examines existing facilities and comparing them to those of other 'comparator' cities, neighbouring Midlands cities with similar sized surrounding populations based on a thirty minute drive time form the cities' centres. This exercise, the report suggests, highlights the lack of arts provision the city has in comparison to these cities, in particular Nottingham, and the report goes on to suggest strategies by which to fill these gaps.

In terms of more qualitative issues discussed in the report in relation to arts provision, the Capital Arts Strategy also points to an inherent lack of confidence in the city's extant arts provisions:

> Ambition is currently restricted in Leicester by the pragmatic approach arts organisations feel obliged to follow, because of lack of funding and an arts community which is not particularly buoyant or confident (op cit).

The review indicates to a number of key points that need to be addressed by cultural strategy and more precisely the investment of capital. These include: creating one or more major flagship projects for the city which will draw in visitors and raise the city's profile; the creation of more venues and studio and rehearsal space; the need

for more cinema seats in the city, and the need for a larger contemporary art gallery[65].

This document perhaps indicates a greater will on the part of the city council to address cultural provision in a more global and unified way. Previous to this report it could be said that cultural strategy relied on the internal momentum of particular arts projects and personnel and centred on particular sites of cultural activity. Key sites were considered to be the council assisted venues such as the Haymarket Theatre, the Phoenix Arts Centre, De Montfort Hall, the City Rooms and the Guildhall, and community resource centres, such as Fosse Arts. Soft Touch, the Highfields community centre and the Highfields workshop, and community centres associated with different religious groups in the Asian communities of Leicester. Key organisations were those that had emerged as arts providers in the context of the youth and education service, which (until 1997) was under the directorate of the County Council. Certain sectors were bolstered by the commitment to youth and education within the traditional ethos of the county council, whose strengths have been centred on youth music education and library and museum resources.

On a practical level pre-unification services were hampered by the large geographical area serviced by the County Council, which had the responsibility for museums and arts and youth education city and county-wide, combined with a relatively small budget:

> In terms of the services - because the county services have been so big, and they've also been single-focused, it means that education is blinkered. Library Services again is within very, very close confines. It's not in a library, it's not connected, it's a service. That's simplistic and it's maybe unfair, but that is the research. And museum services as well have been very, very isolated. We think that by developing all of these services within a unitary authority we can actually gain or work in partnerships so that the community services that we

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[65] Op cit. The key gaps in provision identified feature: a flagship facility; a large scale art gallery for the city; studio space for artists; a large scale theatre and performance space; rehearsal facilities; community arts provision outside of the city centre; culturally specific arts provision for ethnic minorities; a medium scale venue for communities. The document also discusses the redevelopment of the Phoenix arts centre, the development of the cultural quarter around this geographical site, repairs to the Haymarket Theatre and investment into De Montfort Hall. The document calls for a number of feasability studies to explore short-term and long-term possibilities for project scoping and partnership funding to fill these gaps. The total cost of the feasability studies alone is estimated at £750,000, with a projected involvement of Leicester City Council of £1.1m into total development costs of £6-9m.

have developed over the last two years are very, very good networks. We are working with, hopefully, working with every single community in Leicester - that's our job, that's what we are paid to do and most of us in fact nearly all of us are deeply committed to that. so if and when museum and library and all the other services come into the city they will be able to become more involved in those community based services and also all of the arts services that we've developed over the years. If you look at the arts provision in the city the value and the cost if you like - the arts provision in least is round about £3 million. By comparison the county's arts provision is round about £280,000. So on a much more localised level it's ten times, not necessarily bigger and better, but it's ten times better endowed, shall I say, ten times better supported. Where you've got one and a half officers working in the county at the moment on arts provision, you've got a team working in the city. (Pete Bryan in interview before unification)

Towards the end of the 1990s the city has begun to adopt the approaches of partnership and linkage between cultural industries and local economic development and urban regeneration found in other cities, partly led by new opportunities for investment and funding. One example of this is the Grand Union project, which combines the development of the new training centre for Access to Music (involving performance space, licensed bar, college facilities and recording studio) with a package of development for the surrounding area. This project has been championed by the head of the Economic Development Unit, and the significance of the popular music-based project to the surrounding area has been highlighted by the suggestion that if the Arts Lottery funding application this project gives access to is not successful the entire development may be threatened[66]. Leicester clearly lacks the flagship projects that have been utilised in other locales[67] to springboard development and investment, however the physical regeneration of parts of Leicester that have stood hitherto neglected, such as Bede Island and the surrounding canal area, is beginning to come into fruition. These developments have come out of Single

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[66] Mike Candler in interview

[67] Flagship projects are not without criticism, however. In interview, Franco Bianchini expressed his concern to me that Leicester should follow such a route, considering investment into infrastructures to support production *and* consumption economies to be more beneficial particularly in the long term.

Regeneration Budget and City Challenge initiatives and physically form links between different parts and different communities in the city. The area around De Montfort University has been particularly improved by this building and may allow cultural and leisure activities to benefit from increased patronage and participation by the large student population of the area.

The culture of policy

In Leicester, the local government's relationship with culture has roots in the city's history, with primary emphasis on the city's changing population over the last forty years, the history of local government, radicalism, democracy and party politics, and the political inclusion of ethnic minorities in the city. The city combines a history of relative economic stability with an ethos of education and self-improvement from political reform and the influence of non-conformist religious movements. Religion and politics were historically strongly linked in the city; the city's Corporation had been exclusively Tory and High Church until radical reform in the 1830s when non-conformist churches gained purchase on the Corporation, reflecting the number of different churches in the city. In 1836 the membership of the Corporation featured Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers, Unitarians and Wesleyans, and it was the Unitarians that amongst others supported the Temperance movement which featured prominently in Leicester during the nineteenth century. The non-conformists were seen as 'prudent, intelligent, utilitarian and frugal'(Ash 1995). There was also a small but influential Jewish community, members of whom engaged in local politics and presented labour opportunities in the late nineteenth century in clothing manufacture and trade (op cit).

Until then Leicester's main industry had been the hosiery trade since introduction of the stocking frame in the seventeenth century. Shoemaking also joined the industries that formed the city's industrial base, as did engineering and knitwear. Leicester has not suffered the major economic decline of other cities due to the decline of heavy industry, and the strength, scale and variety of its indigenous industries continued this relative prosperity until the mid 1970s, when unemployment rose above 3% for the first time since the second world war (Nash & Reeder 1993: 75). This stability also served to attract what constitutes the most radical change in the history of Leicester's population: that of the influx of New Commonwealth immigrants. Leicester has been

a major destination for migrants from the 1950s and has one of the highest percentage Asian populations in Britain, as well as substantial numbers from the Caribbean and Europe. An estimated equal number of Asians from the Indian subcontinent and from East Africa settled in the city between the 1950s and 1980s, migrating due to 'push' factors, such as the political expulsions from East Africa in the late 1960s and early 1970s and 'pull' factors, such as recruitment by the British Government after the war and, in particular in Leicester, the attraction of stable employment, a range of industry, including factory work suitable for women and cheap housing (Narain 1995).

The migrant communities were not however instantly welcomed or assimilated into city life: in the early 1970s there was a high level of National Front activism in and surrounding the city. In 1972 there were riots as a result of National Front demonstrations, the same year that the Labour council took the unprecedented move to put an advert in East Africa newspapers warning migrants not to come to the city, and in 1974 the party polled the highest number of votes in Leicester in the general election (Nash & Reeder 1993; Jewson 1995). However, as Jewson (1995) states there existed certain social factors which allowed this situation to be at least partially redressed. He describes twentieth century Leicester as a relatively open city, in that

> 'it has a diverse local economy which includes manufacturing and services...[and] a number of industries in which it is possible to launch an entrepreneurial career (Jewson 1995: 113).

These factors, coupled with diverse housing sources and good transport links to the region and the nation, have allowed for economic, social and geographical mobility within immigrant groups. Perhaps most importantly to this examination was the relative permeability of the local council by some minority ethnic groups due to number of factors such as the geographical concentration of ethnic minority groups in key wards and the long term success of the Labour party in Leicester[68]. Asian immigration in the 1970s reconstructed the already dominant Labour party in Leicester and altered the boundaries of party affiliation within the city from class and

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[68] See Nash & Reeder, 1993; Jewson, 1995. There is a noticeable lack of corresponding representation of the African Caribbean community. This community is much smaller in size than the Asian population of Leicester (e.g. 2.5 % 'Black ethnic group' of the population compared with 22.3 % 'Indian ethnic group' - 1991 Census); however further research may reveal other factors in the disparity between political inclusion of different ethnicities in the city.

religion, to class and race, introducing equal opportunities as a defining factor in local Labour party politics (Nash & Reeder 1993: 92). There is a strong representation of Asian communities on Leicester City Council and the local authority also has a long record of race relations initiatives. These factors go a long way in explaining the profiling of Leicester's cultural diversity in tourism strategies and the priorities placed on social and ethnic inclusion in cultural activities, despite and in the face of the city and the county's antipathy to immigration in the 1970s.

Cultural programming such as the Abbey Park Festival, the Caribbean Carnival, the Leicester Mela and the Diwali lights on Melton Road thus typify Leicester's political approach to culture. Public representation of the diverse communities and equality of access to cultural participation form the key mechanisms for social inclusion and equal opportunities *through* arts and cultural activity and in turn constitute the most visible expressions of the city's cultural policy. The foregrounding of such methods suggests that cultural policy approaches stem from particular conceptions of culture which are rooted in historical, social and economic background and conditions of the locality. In Leicester's case this conception of culture leans heavily on culture 'as way of life', involving tradition as well as heritage and particularly with respect to the diverse cultural communities inhabiting the city, the traditions of different cultures. It also places emphasis on support for surrounding conditions of these traditions and values, so that policy directed towards the environment, education, the family, youth, disability also reflects these considerations[69].

Summary

This chapter has been concerned with cultural policy in Britain. Firstly, it has examined the background and development of cultural policy at a national level and considered, through the case of the East Midlands Rock and Pop Network how this intercedes at a local level. It has then considered different localised examples of cultural policy in the urban context particularly in relation to popular music and popular culture more generally. These examples must be seen in relation to the findings of this research into cultural policy and popular music in Leicester; I have

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[69] Again further research would develop this argument in a way that this thesis does not have the space to accommodate.

argued that more recent developments in local authority cultural policy and strategy can be seen as serving a different remit to other approaches of urban (popular) cultural policy. Leicester's approach to culture and to cultural policy, influenced by its political and social history, strongly features multiculturalist and equal opportunities priorities and strategies: in terms of popular music these priorities are reflected in the work of the popular music development officers and in public events sponsored by the local authorities. Leicester's cultural policy, like the lack of the confidence in local amenities and arts organisations reflected in the recent strategy review, is weak in comparison to other urban centres, particularly if viewed in terms of approaches which aim to develop local cultural industries, culturally-led urban regeneration and tourism. These policy areas are under review however, and it remains to be seen how emerging policies may influence and effect popular cultural practice and local identity in the city of Leicester.

Chapter 7

Conclusions: revisiting practice, policy and provision

This project has been concerned with the relationship between local popular music practice in the city of Leicester and its surrounding social conditions. It has focused on public sector provision and local cultural policy as the source and mediator of some of these conditions and explored what effects they may have on music activities in the city. The examination has raised issues about the relationships between cultural policy, practice and cultural values, and has introduced conceptual themes – such as music scene, community and homology - in order to consider these issues. It has also presented a framework of different types of urban cultural policy with which to consider the examples provided by Leicester, in the context of wider shifts and changes to cultural policy and cultural value.

In Section I, Chapter 2, I introduced the subject of popular music and reviewed some of work that makes up the growing area of popular music studies. This area involves many disciplines, which address the different characteristics, problems and issues involved in looking at popular music. In this context of this project, I have focused on theoretical and empirical studies which consider the relationship between popular music and society, particularly in terms of the aesthetic and political relations of different social groups, identities and localities. In Chapter 3, I discussed the methods that I have used in this research.

In Section II (Chapter 4) I described the local popular music infrastructure in the city of Leicester and considered key sites where music practice takes place. These were found to facilities and services that provided for music distribution and consumption, such as local venues and local media, along with the other production-related facilities such as recording and rehearsing studios. The case studies in this section described the use of such resources by local communities (both musical and otherwise) and considered how these practices created, interacted with and drew upon music scenes, and how they represented cultural identities as well as subcultural activity.

Section III considered the schemes and initiatives provided and sponsored by the local authorities in Leicester, sometimes in partnership with the regional arts board. In the

chapter on public provision for popular music I outlined a history of such provision and turned to the most recent development, the creation of a regional music network and the role of popular music development officers. I suggested that the officers mirrored 'organic' individuals in cultural practice in that they took on the role of cultural intermediaries, but that due to their position in between the public and private sector they also had to act as political intermediaries, defining and championing popular music in a number of spheres.

In Chapter 6, recent British cultural policy was examined, followed by some brief descriptions of examples of recent urban initiatives to illustrate different forms of cultural policy in the city. These examples showed how cultural policy, and popular music policy more specifically, has emerged to encompass diverse aims and approaches, including regeneration, animation and rejuvenation of space; economic development and attraction of investment into local economies, and social inclusion and cohesion. Finally the approach of Leicester City Council was examined and some tentative arguments as to the influence of historical, social and economic conditions on cultural meaning and cultural policy in the city were made.

I now want to revisit some of the issues raised by this research and consider them in relation to the theoretical and policy implications they may prompt.

Music in place: musical practice and social location

Scenes and subcultural capital

The concept of scene is at once useful and problematical when looking at local popular music practice. The term 'scene' is used widely in discussion about popular music, particularly in the music press and by audiences and musicians. Often in popular use its reference is related to a mark of success for the music or musicians discussed, and it is also often related to place, as in the Liverpool Sound or the 'Madchester' scene. The term is also used by academics in a number of ways, and often in relation to the terms 'subculture' and 'community' (Cohen 1998). As suggested by the music scenes explored, described and merely touched upon by this research, 'scene' as used here applies to the alliances, networks and situated activities organised around particular sorts of music and the meanings and values attributed to them by the people who participate. The number of different scenes identified in

Leicester over this relatively short period of research, suggests that 'scene' as defined here does not necessarily imply economic or mainstream success in the music industry. Rather they are the culmination of cultural practice organised around particular sorts of music and taking place in particular sites. Thus, this conception of 'scenes' implies some relationship with the locality in which they are based.

It is this situated-ness that marks 'scene' off from 'subculture' – whether located in relation to physical space or in terms of its relationship to musical genres or styles (often scenes are situated according to both places of origin and musical form). Scenes also have longevity, hence they can also be located historically; whereas subcultures imply something living, and hence located in the present when described. Subcultures by definition are involved in hierarchical relationships with other concurrent cultural activities, and are defined against them; whereas scenes have more rooted, internal logics which define them. Despite these differences, the concept of subcultural capital (Thornton 1994, 1995) is related here to my use of 'scene', since it is suggestive of the knowledge resources that constitute and are drawn upon in scene activity.

Subcultural capital refers to the distinctions of taste that mark out cultural actors from one another. As with Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984), social status is conferred according to the cultural knowledge learnt, and access to this knowledge is proscribed by social position. However, the key differences of subcultural capital are its premise in youth, its relative freedom from class and its strong links to the media. (Thornton 1995: 12-13). For Thornton, youth cultural activity and cultural hierarchies are defined by (and help create) a diversity of media (Thornton 1994:176), and media discourses and distinctions are used actively and continually in advising youth in what to buy, wear, listen to and say.

As Thornton points out subcultural capital has its own lifespan – like scenes, it is also temporally based and Thornton argues has a built-in obsolescence (Thornton 1994: 178). It is accumulated from knowledge, consumption and possession of cultural items and discourses that are intimately tied to cultural economies, with their own rhythms, trends and fashions. Broadcasting and print media are used by social actors to advise their own everyday activities and appearances and to build allegiances with like-minded, similarly dressed people.

These distinctions, and the institutions on which they are based, are clearly part of scene activity. Popular musical activity relies constantly on the media for dissemination and information and the scenes that I have discussed here reveal distinctions of taste by which they define and value themselves, that rest on local and trans-local media. For example, musicians that play on the Irish theme pub circuit advertise their gigs on the local Celtic music programme on BBC *Radio Leicester*, learn tunes down-loaded from the internet and read *Folk Roots* to find out about the releases and histories of the acoustic artists they emulate. Although predicated upon the notions of tradition, heritage and memory, the practice of the Irish theme pub musicians is advised by contemporary local and trans-local media. Participants in the local music scene, based around pirate radio and the venues and clubs where its DJs play, accumulate subcultural capital from the pirate station, in the form of trans-local music: Hip Hop, Garage, House and Reggae, much of which comes from across the Atlantic and signifies the tastes, distinctions and values of, *pace* Gilroy (1995), the black diaspora. Pirate radio clearly acts as a resource for subcultural capital, but locates itself in relation to other media forms, in particular mainstream radio, by emulating, innovating and rejecting programme formats and presenting styles.

The point where I diverge from Thornton however is in her emphasis on subcultural capital as 'hipness'. In her research into clubbing and its relationship with the media, moral panics and the 'mainstream', this allusion to 'hipness' is borne out by clubbers' aspirations to the cutting edge, to the most underground white label 12 inch and the latest clubwear. The temporal logic of dance music is however, as Straw (1991) notes quite different from other music scenes, dictated by its technologies of production which are organised around singles, remixes and clubs, rather than albums and live performances. The music scenes I have examined each have different value-systems and different temporal logics, whilst remaining reliant on the same processes which are described by subcultural capital and which distinguish them from less youthful and more class-bound cultural capital. Dance music scenes in Leicester, may aspire to 'hipness', whereas those based around other music, such as the indie scene based around the Princess Charlotte, or the tribute band scene at the Half-Time Orange strive for other schema with which to authenticate themselves.

Thus I would like to retain the term but broaden the concept to suggest that

subcultural capital can be defined and constructed on more localised distinctions, such as allegiance to local venues, aspirations to local heroes as role models and commitment to local territorialisations, as well operating to different logics drawing on trans-local media for as a symbolic resource. Knowledge of what to listen to, what to buy, what to wear and what to aspire to is intrinsic to belonging to a scene, and in local music practice is advised by local conditions, characteristics and personalities as well as trans-local symbolic distinctions.

Communities and structural homology

The relationship between music and society suggested by the theory of structural homology suggests that we should find a fit between the position within a social structure of certain groups and the music that they make. By extension, it also suggests that musical communities are established, based not only on the musical tastes and values members share, but also on the members' common ideological, economic and social positions in social life. The music communities examined in this research back up this claim to some extent (although it must be remembered that this is not a musicological examination and hence the music has not been explicitly analysed). The Irish (and otherwise) musicians populating the theme pubs were part of a music scene (albeit not on the cutting edge of popular music), which was drawn from an established community of acoustic musicians, who used existing or purposively learnt knowledge about Irish music to somewhat cynically find employment and enjoyment in the circuit of Irish pubs. The women in Women In Music came together initially as a music community, testing out and teaching their skills as performers based around rock and acoustic guitar based music. This community was however fragmented by the dominant ideological position of the pre-existing social community as separatism interfered with the collective will to further the cause of women musicians. The women also faced challenges from the funders of their community business, who were unfamiliar with cultural projects of this nature and who, it was felt, didn't adequately attempt to address the needs of project itself.

In the case study which examined pirate radio in Leicester a number of different examples of the intersection between music and social communities were offered. The radio station itself claimed to be a 'street community' station, appealing to a somewhat flexible notion of 'street' similar to that described by Yasuda (1998) in his

work on Japanese and French Hip Hop. 'Street' alludes to the subcultural capital involved in being part of these musical relations, of having knowledge of the practices and products that define this particular music scene. Thus it involves knowing about the dance music or Reggae, Dub and Hip Hop played on the station, the places in which to find it away from the station (clubs, raves, records shops and blues parties) and the cultural codes, styles and mannerisms that advise and surround it. 'Street' has parallels to terms such as 'underground' and 'alternative'. Like 'hood' in the Hip Hop lexicon, 'street' has connotations of territory and common ground; it acts also as a metaphor for where to find this music, since if the music is perceived to be excluded from mainstream institutions the street is where it both comes from and ends up.

The notion of 'community' here is also loosely defined, in that it refers to a number of different communities. Firstly it signifies ethnicity, or perhaps more correctly ethnicities. Although the music played and the DJs who played it were mainly African Caribbean in origin, there was also a sizeable Asian stake in the radio station, both economically in terms of the station as a business and politically, in terms of its potential for alliance between and representation of ethnic minorities in the city and in its challenge to the mainstream[70]. It also suggests those who are aligned to the music, as a community of interest perhaps best represented as the whole of the station's audience; those who formed a network of the excluded and who are engaged in the practice of pirate radio – the DJs, the promoters, shop workers, station managers, their friends and allies; and those who belong by virtue of their allegiance to the local, who are defined by their presence in their city and their membership of the 'Braunstone Massives' and the 'Highfields Crew'.

These differing definitions of the communities aligned to these music scenes recall the three definitions outlined by Jewson (1995) as the dominant meanings for the term 'community'. These are community as a network of localised social support relationships, including those of family, kinship, neighbourhood and in employment; as a set of beliefs, values, symbols and rituals providing a focus for identity and behaviour, and as a local geographical residential unity, territory or area (Jewson

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[70] Interestingly, after my initial period of fieldwork on pirate radio had ended a rival station called GCR, standing for Genetic Community Radio. The station played similar styles of music but was reputedly established to represent the growing number of Asian DJs and listeners in the city

1995: 115). The different conceptualisations of community can operate together in relation to music practice, but begin to conflict when there is competition over resources, whether territorial and economic, in the case of African-Caribbean and Asian rivalry in pirate radio, or ideological, as in the case of the lesbian separatist community and the musicians in general in Women In Music. Music communities, by virtue of the structural homologies they suggest, thus incorporate spatial, institutional and cultural elements (Jewson op cit), because of the complex interrelations of beliefs, representations of identity, place and space, economic potential and ontological empowerment that musical practices combine.

Music communities and ethnic communities

A further example of the complexities of the relationship between music communities and ethnic communities can be found in the problems of the Popular Music network in representing Asian members in their practice. As noted in Chapters 6 & 7 , there was an emphasis on Bhangra bands, suggesting that they represented the only avenue for success for Asian musicians and that other music practices amongst Asian youth in Leicester were excluded or negated.

Bhangra is a relatively new music style, incorporating Punjabi folk music with dance beats, which has been heralded as creating a space for young Asian women and men to meet without parental monitoring in daytime Bhangra discos and revealing cultural production and consumption previously deemed domestic and privatised (Banerji & Baumann 1990). Despite these successes, and the hailing of a post-Bhangra movement as more fusions between Bhangra and other styles have emerged (for example, between Bhangra and Jungle), the equation of Bhangra with 'Asian-ness' has been critiqued within this research and by Sharma (1996), who argues that even attempts to document the relationship of Bhangra with other styles and practices such as sound system culture, have essentialised Asian culture. Sharma finds that (white) ethnographies which attempt to unravel the complex relations between ethnicity and music constituted in Bhangra have gone too far in celebrating its 'Asian' origins, unifying all practices under a unitary and simplified ethnic banner and negating

the other narratives of syncretic Asian youth identity formations negotiated and made actively with modes of black cultural expression...The Otherness of

Bhangra as perceived by both Baumann and Back and its attendant 'cultural inaccessibility' for (white) ethnographers locates their reading of this expressive culture squarely within an authenticity problematic that sustains a neo-Orientalist understanding of anterior Asian youth cultural formations . There is a danger of temporally equating Bhangra with an Asian cultural essentialism (Sharma 1996: 35-6).

Leicester has a particular history of Asian immigration, however, that has lead to different cultural practices than the Asian communities of other cities, such as Birmingham and south London. There have been waves of immigration from different countries over the last forty years, in particular the immigration East African Asians in the 1970s, bringing different styles, genres and approaches. Visible Asian culture in Leicester thus has its own localised configurations:

> I think it is less visible in Leicester. I mean it is there, but it's much more in Birmingham for example where you have Bhangra culture, because we are a Gujarati city in a sense, we are Gujarati dominated and so the Asian culture here is different from Nottingham and Birmingham' (Interviewee in Parampara, the Living History Unit, Leicester City Council 1996: 40)

There are Bhangra bands in Leicester, originating from a domestic music scene which caters for private parties and weddings and becoming more established as Indian music lessons began in schools and as second generation Asians gained more access to the studio and performance technology required (also found in schools and colleges in the city). Cultural events in the early days of immigration, in the 1950s, included dancing and performances by visiting Indian musicians, were mainly based around the home, at the time of religious festivals, and were paid for by the community. Public cultural life revolved on the cinema, as cultural differences of immigrants such as vegetarianism and tee-totalism ruled out the use of other existing leisure pursuits in Leicester. Public cultural provision for Leicester Asians began in the 1970s after consultation with community representatives, and the city now has a thriving Asian traditional dance scene, coordinated by the City Council Asian Dance Officer.

When undertaking the fieldwork for this thesis I found immense difficulties in accessing Asian music making and music scenes, and was repeatedly told that Asian

music is mainly domestic or privatised. It was clear however from my ethnography of bars and clubs, pirate radio and music technology training courses that musical practice (both in consumption and production) by Asian people in Leicester (who make up over a quarter of the city's population) constitutes far more than private weddings and parties. Bhangra raves and events featuring visiting Asian DJs and bands are frequently advertised via fly-posting, particularly in the west end of the city, although little attention is given to these events in other local media. Further research into Asian music, in particular Asian popular music, is needed in Leicester to assess its particular local characteristics and influences. More importantly in the context of this research and in order for local authority cultural policy to progress, further examination is needed of Asian participation into all types of popular music practice. This research would explore the notion that it is not so much the ethnic *content* as the ethnic *participation* in popular music that opens up equality of opportunities.

Asian participation in popular music is currently gaining visibility in the media, as a resurgence of attention towards the 'New Asian Underground' or 'Asian Kool' appears to be occurring. The success of musicians like Cornershop, Asian Dub Foundation, Talvin Singh and Nitin Sawhney have encouraged media commentatory, already sharpened by the influence of Asian writers on British literature (Smith 1999). Interestingly, as Talvin Singh accepted the Mercury Music Award (for which Cornershop and Asian Dub Foundation were shortlisted in 1998, and Black Star Liner in 1999) he called for cultural policy to support a genre of music rather than community participation:

> The last three years the revenue of the entertainment industry has been drum'n'bass or dance music, it needs to be put back into education, put back into schools – samplers, computers. I need to see that happening, and as far as the Arts Council is concerned that is going out to you (Talvin Singh, The Mercury Music Prize, BBC 2, 7th September 1999)

Arguably it is the digital technological basis for creating music that has bridged Bhangra and the new fusions of music labelled the Asian Underground, and it would be fascinating to examine the influence of the growing provision for music technology in the schools and colleges in combination with these new Asian role models on local music practice in Leicester.

I concentrate on Asian participation here for three reasons: firstly because of the large proportion of Asian people in the city's population, secondly, because of the high level of perceived inclusion of Asian communities via representation in local politics, and thirdly because of the prevalent perceptions of Asians as popular music makers as private, domestic, insular and 'uncool' (Huq 1996). This is not to say that the relationship between other ethnicities in the city and popular music need not be explored. My fieldwork on African Caribbean and Irish communities revealed more popular stereotypes about ethnicity than it dispelled. The relationship between the Irish community and music as described in Case Study 1 was seen as hearty, natural and inevitable, despite the relative lack of Irish musicians in the city in comparison to other cities with more established traditional music scenes, such as Manchester, London and Leeds. The Irish community was perceived to be catered for by the commercialised music of the theme pubs, by traditional music lessons at Soar Valley College and by the occasional visit by bands such as the Dubliners to De Montfort Hall. The Leicester Feile in 1997 took place almost exclusively in Molly O'Grady's pub, and other City Council-sponsored events also featured commercialised 'Irish' bands of the 'Whiskey in the Jar' variety[71].

The rhetoric surrounding African-Caribbean popular music practice also mirrors popular stereotypes. I was told of a history of paucity of 'black' venues in the city centre, as black faces were turned away from pubs and clubs in the 1980s because of fears of drug-taking and because black attendance wasn't considered to offer enough bar-takings. Community music initiatives such as the Highfields Workshop and Spectrum are also surrounded by stories of embezzlement, mismanagement and a general anti-authoritarianism, which prohibited a working relationship with the local authorities. A recent talent contest in the city centre backed by Mark Morrison was extremely well-attended by the city's black youth, revealing his popularity despite his 'bad boy' reputation and recent court appearances. The event was disrupted however when a fire alarm went off, the police were called to clear the area and mayhem ensued[72].

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[71] I write here from personal experience: as a member of an Irish 'covers' band (of the 'Whiskey in the Jar' variety) I have performed in both the Town Hall Square and at Abbey Park in City Council sponsored events and as a 'representative' of the Irish community in the city.
[72] *Leicester Mercury* April 17th 1999

City-based 'Black music' (as defined by genre) has clearly made a profound impact, however, as can be witnessed in the popularity of the Caribbean Carnival and in the number of artists from the city who have built reputations in the music industry, whether in mainstream charts, in the case of Mark Morrison or in less commercial spheres, such as ska, (e.g. Laurel Aitken), reggae sound systems (Aba-Shanti), and nu-jazz (Cameron Hines). These artists constitute some of the recent 'names' to have come out of Leicester; however the city's abiding musical profile in national media continues to be defined the white-boy rock of Crazyhead and Diesel Park West, and by Showaddywaddy and Englebert Humperdink (Nevin 1997).

This research has not focused on ethnic minority music use *per se* and can only serve as an initial foray into a complex area. Further research is needed to explore the issues identified here, such as the relationships between different ethnic communities and perceptions of cultural practice, relations with and in local governance of different ethnic groups, and the potentials of role models and the possibilities of routes to success in the (inter)national music industry from local scenes, communities and practices.

Popular music and policy: cultural industry or institutionalised Pop?

There has been a broad shift in British arts and cultural policy over the last fifteen years as state intervention has moved from supporting participation in the arts through subsidy to addressing the many different ways in which cultural production and consumption impact on social life. Culture is now significant to a number of diverse areas of local and national policy, from social integration to tourism, urban regeneration and local economic development. Bianchini (1993) argues that rather than new policy replacing old, it is the expansion of its remit, particularly in cities, which marks the difference between cultural policy in the 1970s and today. He identifies reluctance on the behalf of the English and English speaking to use 'culture' when discussing related issues to policy-making. 'The arts' has been the preferred term, separated from economic activity chiefly by the Romantic movement of nineteenth century, which idealised artistic endeavour and felt materialistic intentions and commerciality to threaten art's spiritual purity. Using the word 'culture' also

implied by connotation the other meanings for the word in the English language which possessed too much association with class-based notions of civilisation and refinement (Bianchini 1993:1). The language of cultural policy has changed in recognition of these shifts, from emphasis on 'arts' and 'heritage' in national policy discourse to one on 'culture' and 'cultural industries'.

These changes are perhaps best symbolised by the creation of a government ministry responsible for culture in 1992, which also marked the shift in language when its name was changed from the Department of National Heritage to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, under the new Labour government in 1997. One of the most important ideological shifts these developments recognise has been the emergence of the economic significance of cultural production and consumption. Whilst policy was geared towards 'arts' and national heritage, with the connotations of patriotism, skill and traditions that accompany these categories amongst English language speakers, there was a gap between the consideration of cultural and economic sphere. Following the funding crisis for public arts institutions in the early Thatcher years, the comparatively small but significant success of initiatives such as the employment-based cultural policies of the Greater London Council in the first half of the 1980s and studies such as Myerscough (1988), the economic impact of the arts in Britain has been increasingly foregrounded (Hewison 1995; Bianchini 1993:1-3).

Developments in urban regeneration have also highlighted the importance of culturally led economies. De-industrialisation, the growth of the service class and technological advances have accompanied spatial shifts in cities, and encouraged policies which seek to regenerate their physical and economic fabric. The success and popularity of strategies such as 'downtown revitalisation' and the development of 'cultural quarters' in the United States and in cities in Europe have encouraged British local authorities to devise similar schemes, in partnership with other public agencies, the private and voluntary sectors. Projects such as city arts and media centres and museums are no longer seen in isolation as the remit of arts and leisure departments, but are championed by economic development units and regional development agencies as methods of making cities more attractive and competitive.

Cultural value, quality and popular culture

As discussed in Chapter 6, the culture-as-economy approach highlights the problems of defining culture in relation to economic value. Policy which favours commercially viable art forms has awoken concerns over placing popular culture above high culture, prioritising mass culture over high art, in order to satisfy box office quotas. Competition over public provision for different cultural sectors invokes debates over cultural value and public worth. Popular music sits at the heart of such debates and arguments over the relative value of pop and classical music - Blur versus Brahms - appear at regular intervals. Such debates attempt to distinguish between different levels of culture and their corresponding genres of music, suggesting that they have different values, and hence are appreciated or valued in different ways and according to different criteria. The distinction is often oriented around the use or functional value of popular culture – the value of 'what it does' - versus the autonomy or intrinsic aesthetic value of high art – the value 'of itself'. Thus popular culture, hence popular music, is not depreciated by consideration of its economic potential, since consumption is based on the explicit knowledge of its value being in its use. Classical music and other, for want of a better term, non-popular cultural forms merit, according to this approach, less mercenary (or mercantile) consideration, so that they can be judged on a less material basis.

Frith (1995, 1996) explicitly disagrees with this distinction and argues that cultural judgement operates in similar ways and around similar axes (aesthetic/functional) for *all* art forms and cultural activities. Pop music is aesthetically judged, as classical music is used for escapism. What makes judgements of cultural forms different are the historical and material frameworks in which they are situated:

> What I'm suggesting here is that people bring similar questions to high and low art, that their pleasures and satisfactions are rooted in similar analytic issues, similar ways of relating what they see or hear to how they think and feel. The differences between high and low emerge because these questions are embedded in different historical and material circumstances, and are therefore framed differently, and because the answers are related to different social situations, different patterns of sociability, different social needs (Frith 1996: 19).

This view is supported by Street (1997) as he contends that all cultural judgements are political, and based upon sets of political values. Discussing the politics of popular culture he points to sets of approaches which aim to explain cultural choice and preference - populism, absolutism and relativism – but which are flawed since they each assume a position that avoids consideration of judgement. Populists, according to Street, avoid consideration of judgement by assuming cultural value to be predicated on consumption, relativists consider all judgements to be individual responses and absolutists reify the notion of objective standards by which cultural preferences are governed. By critiquing these approaches Street emphasises the contingency of judgement in its social and political context:

> Just because no value judgement can acquire the status of objective judgement, it does not follow that all are equally valid. All that is implied is that notions of an objective standard do not exist and cannot supply the means of discrimination. What it does mean, though, is that judgements and values must be understood in the context in which they operate, in terms of the systems of validation to which they appeal. The focus shifts, therefore, onto attempts to *claim* objectivity, which are viewed as part of a process involving a set of institutions and interests. The business of judging popular culture is part of a political process, one involving the exercise of power and the attempt to legitimate that power (Street 1997: 176)

In the context of cultural policy which ascribes to culture-as-industry, judgements over differing cultural forms are different to those made in other contexts. The emphasis on the economic value of culture challenges the arguments made in, for example, the Blur versus Brahms debate, since in the context of the music industry, judgements are made on the basis of commercial value, or in music industry terminology 'shifting units'. Music is valued not by alignment to an (absolutist) objective standard but by unit sales. In the culture-as-industry approach, which is accompanied by New Labour policy which aims to increase and monitor audiences to the arts (or, cynically, to widen the market), the distinctions between art forms and the premises upon which art forms are supported are made according to different criteria to those of incumbent in the division between 'low' and 'high art'. The prioritising of one value-judgement framework over the other opens up the space for popular culture,

and hence popular music, to be valued and treated as more than merely the occupation of youth or an opportunity for social inclusion.

Problems arise when two conflicting contexts overlap, for example, in the case of the Arts Council and National Lottery funding. Throughout its history, the Arts Council has been accused of being the worst offender for propagating and prolonging the 'high' and 'popular' culture divide and of favouring larger 'high arts' institutions and art forms such as opera and theatre. Since it distinguishes between art forms by categories in order to implement funding, the Arts Council is also considered to impose particular value distinctions which are carried through by the distribution of subsidy. The organisation is quick to point out that having criteria for funding raises the issue of what is considered to be 'quality' work, an argument it hopes will banish any accusation of introducing a 'hierarchy of the arts'.

> However one defines artistic quality, it is over-restrictive to suggest that it is found only in particular forms of art, or that there is something superior about a particular form (as if a symphony were by definition better than a folk song). One of the key responsibilities of the funding system is to make judgements about the allocation of scarce resources. The criterion of quality should be central to these judgements; but the concept is not associated solely with particular art forms, and the idea should be repudiated that some forms are of themselves superior or inferior to others (A Creative Future 1993:50).

This idea of 'quality' highlights the contradictions when considering the value of art and culture. It suggests that funding for cultural production by the Arts Council relies on some objective standard, but subsidy must also take into account economic or commercial value. Art forms which are not self-financing are more likely to receive funding, so long as they can fulfil the criteria on which 'quality' is judged. Unlike economic value, 'quality' alludes to social and cultural capital, rooted in the ideological frameworks of those who make the judgements. The history, ethos and composition of the Arts Council are reflected in the framework used in decision making. However consideration of economic value and appeal to particular audiences are also part of the decision-making process, particularly since funded projects must be shown to be viable and sustainable.

Popular culture is at odds with the dominant framework of judgement of the Arts council. This framework appears to correspond to first two of the three discourses which Frith (1997) suggests govern cultural judgement: 'art', 'folk' and 'pop discourse'. Art discourse indicates that cultural experience is about transcending the ordinary and appealing to higher distinctions than those of time or place. Folk discourse alludes to integration, where producing and consuming culture is about being placed and sharing experiences communally. Pop discourse is concerned with routinised pleasure, with having fun which is firmly grounded within the bounds of everyday life (Frith 1995, 1997). Popular culture is often outside the responsibility of the Arts Council not only because it is seen to be commercially driven, but also because it is judged to satisfy the mundane and to appeal to individual desire, not communal need.

The Arts Lottery, originating under Conservative government but now very much a New Labour policy, provides a huge potential increase in funding for cultural projects in the arts and cultural industries context. Some of the problems and criticisms it has encountered since its inception are emblematic of the conflict between competing frameworks for value-judgement, for example, in the case of high levels of subsidy for opera over less esoteric concerns. The Arts for Everyone scheme aimed at redressing criticism over such cases has opened up funding opportunities for smaller scale popular culture projects. As can be seen in the case of the Leicester Popular Music Network, Arts Council funding has found its way to popular musicians, partly because of the help of an intermediary – the Popular Music Development Officer – but mainly because the funding mechanism supports a shift in the framework employed in funding decisions.

Popular music as a commercial animal sits uneasily with the traditional value framework for cultural policy, but has profited from cultural policy shifts in Britain. Rutten (1993) reports an example of how, rather than altering the context of value judgement, an organisation changed the way rock and pop practitioners were represented in order to gain access to public sector funding. In Holland in the 1970s the Stichting Popmuziek Nederland (the Dutch Rock Foundation) was formed to lobby on the part of popular music. This national organisation aimed to elevate popular music to the position of high art in order to compete with other art forms for

arts budgets. By operating outside of the commercial arena, it aimed to diversify popular music and was successful in gaining funding. It had the problem of continually falling between the two stools of commercialism and the public sector, however, and was criticised for being inefficient and unprofessional by the music industry. Rutten concludes from this that a rigid framework of cultural value governs the legitimacy and economic position of different cultural activities:

> Cultural policy, therefore, should be conceived of as a politics of economic intervention which leads to financial support for, or government regulations concerning, certain sectors in society whose activities, from a specific ideological position, are valued highly and thereby set apart from others which are deemed to lack cultural value. Thus cultural politics can be conceived of as a struggle for inclusion versus exclusion. (Rutten 1993:49)

The developments in British cultural policy described here have not only eroded the traditional split between arts and commerce but have also served to alter popular conceptions of which 'arts' or, more latterly, 'cultural sectors' merit public support. Although popular music has long been identified as a means of attraction and social appeasement of youth it is only more recently that it has been taken more seriously in terms of educational and economic potential. There are arguments however which further problematise the relationship between pop music and public policy.

Popular music and policy: institutionalisation and industrialisation

Reviewing the newly opened National Centre for Popular Music in Sheffield, a journalist offered the following comment:

> Institutionalise pop and it dies the death of OBEs, knighthoods and those embarrassing moments sharing jokes with prime ministers. Harold Wilson and the Fab Four. Tony Blair and Oasis. Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Elton John, Sir Cliff Richard today: Lord Jagger of Wembley, Lord Collins of Middle England, M'ladies Spice tomorrow? This is the stuff that stops 45s in their tracks. Even those of you who've given up live gigs for CDs and a cosy night slumped in front of the Bang & Olufsen must admit that rock'n'roll is, at heart and groin, the stuff of sex, drugs, sweat and rebellion. Not necessarily political rebellion. Just kicking against the system – any system, even the hi-fi system –

for the sake of it....This doesn't happen in any way, shape or form at Sheffield, or at least not yet. It's a shame. But how could it, really?...And what would the Government have to say? It has after all had its Arts Council Lottery Fund direct several millions this way. For them, the National Centre [of Popular Music] is a sure-footed example of a "democratic" and "accessible" new arts institution. To continue being so it must surely be as squeaky clean as Olivia Newton John or Sir Cliff himself. Above all in New Labour terms pop music is one of the most profitable sectors of Britain's much-vaunted "creative industries". Its value lies in the very ways in which it can be contained against its nature, packaged, costed and sold abroad (Glancey, J 'Rock without a role' *The Guardian* 12 February 1999).

Glancey's comment highlights two problem areas when considering cultural policy and popular music: firstly, the problem of reconciling pop's rebellious image with its support by 'the establishment' and secondly, the commercial nature of the cultural form on which this support is based, as discussed in part above.

The first point – popular music as rebellious, autonomous, radical and uncontainable – relates to previous arguments about subcultural capital and the logics of music scenes and practice. The discourses surrounding success stories in rock and pop suggest the conditions for creativity and innovation in popular music to be based on tension, conflict, accident and resistance in the face of adversity. New music is seen to come from transgressing previous conventions or accidentally arriving at new combinations of sound through the meeting of different musical styles or through technological experimentation. This is not to say that formulaic response, dedication and artistry are not rife amongst the practitioners in the industry, but rather that the dominant ideologies of popular music purvey the opposite discourses to those associated with cultural policy. The teenage angst, political struggles, rags-to-riches tales, anarchic lifestyles and sheer sonic rebellion of bands such as the Smiths, Bob Marley and the Wailers, Oasis and the Sex Pistols do not suggest the conformity, stability or bureaucracy associated with public sector institutions[73]. Simply put, local councils and

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[73] This is obviously an extremely broad generalisation of the meanings, values and characteristics ascribed to the wide spectrum of popular music, and is intended as an indication of the disparity between the social worlds of popular music and the public sector which is assumed in their relationship. The work of popular music academics, biographers, journalists and critics offer many examples of the

the Arts Council are not usually considered 'rock'n'roll'. As such, it is the disparity between the subcultural practices of music makers and the political culture of the public sector which presents potential problems.

The concern of critics such as Glancey revolves around the sanitisation of popular music by its association with public sector funding structures and the morals and values they represent. To conform to these values or even be aligned with them is to reject the defining stereotypes of rock'n'roll as well to compromise the much vaunted artistic control supposedly embodied by the private sector. This preoccupation with youth and rebellion is somewhat deflated by pop music's growing purchase on older audiences. As well being of major benefit to the industry as its market grows inevitably with time, and an important factor in the increasingly complex dynamics of the music rights market through the potential of back catalogues, the fact that rock'n'roll has impacted on three generations also helps dispel some of its myths. As Glancey's comments highlight, from the point of view of its economic value, who cares how 'squeaky clean' popular music is, when its institutionalisation further promotes its economic viability, not just in the private sector but in the public sector? The decision by Sheffield City Council to support the creation of a museum for popular music as part of local cultural policy perhaps best illustrates the paradox popular music policy embraces. The exotic attraction of rock'n'roll is at once dissipated when co-opted by the public sector, whilst at the same time the basis for this cooption – popular music's economic value rests less on its exoticism and more on its appeal to wider (older and more geographically distant) audiences.

Discourses of 'sex, drugs and rock'n'roll' apart, the subcultural resources and time-scales of popular music practitioners and those of the public sector are unlikely to be the same; neither are their perspectives and priorities. Cohen (1991) discusses the conflicts between the local music industry and the public sector in Liverpool in her account of popular music and urban regeneration on Merseyside. She describes the hostility between industry members and public sector representatives at public meetings to discuss joint initiatives in the city, as the former became defensive and the

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broad range of meanings associated with different popular music genres and styles. To subscribe to the popular stereotype of rock and pop as the rebellious preserve of teenagers is to follow the path of cultural absolutism and to deny the work of these cultural commentators, as well as overlook the economic strength of the music industry and the pervasiveness of popular music in everyday life

latter irritable over competing perspectives and priorities. This work reveals that underneath the stereotypes of leather, youth and rebellion versus grey-suited bureaucracy more concrete economic and political battles were being fought.

Contrary to the image of popular music as excluded and marginalised, the city of Liverpool has in some ways embraced rock and pop as its own, through the strong sense of pride and connection with the success of the Beatles and other Merseybeat musicians. Despite being globally known as a 'music city' and the city's continuing success as the birthplace of many well-known contemporary bands, there have been tensions and conflicts between the local music industry and city authorities over the inclusion of popular music and the support and provision for the local industry. These conflicts were played out over initiatives such as the setting up of a council-ran marketing and promotions agency, the establishment of a now globally recognised performing arts institute and the funding of music development agency for the region. They raised issues such as the lack of prescient knowledge local authorities have of the music industry, the need to channel music-related revenue back into the local economic infrastructure and the use of the popular music industry as a attraction for investment and tourism without due consideration of local, 'grass roots' needs (Cohen 1991, 1998).

These issues must be viewed in the context of the social, economic and political conditions of Merseyside - the region has history of deprivation and poverty, high levels of unemployment and a lack of indigenous industry, recognised by its status as Objective One category for European funding. The public sector has experienced high-profile, large-scale economic and political problems resulting in tensions between the private and public sector in the city and a general distrust in local government. At the same time Liverpool is renowned for arts and culture (particularly music, comedy, theatre and literature) and recent policy has attempted to regenerate the local economy and the physical infrastructure through the arts, cultural and media industries as a potential service sector that will also encourage tourism. Discourses based on the economic value of popular music, how to measure it and how to keep it in the region, have thus prevailed.

Following the 'economic turn' of cultural policy, the success of local music industries is often framed by economic terms. Assessing the economic impact of local music

sectors has proved a difficult task, however, due to the nature of financial operations, the covert bias of transactions and the rapidity of business. Music business can range from small-scale cash transactions, unrecorded and verging on a black economy, to large advances from a record label that are channelled through various bank accounts before reaching the artist in the form of cash handout from their manager. Profits that are accumulated from sales of product units or from rights can be relatively easily assessed, but obtaining the value of the whole sector is complicated by the variety of activities it involves. As noted in consideration of music industry infrastructures, activity is based in a wide range of sites. The economic impact of popular music production, distribution and consumption includes earnings and revenue from recordings, performances, merchandise and hardware. Its influence creates secondary economic effects in areas such as night clubs, tourism and associated 'lifestyle' industries such as design, clothes retail and print media. A recent attempt to evaluate the economic impact of the nation's music industry by the National Music Council, 'The Value of Music' (1998) found problems in accessing information and in categorising different parts of industry activity on a national level[74].

At a local level these difficulties are compounded by separating local from national impacts and by tracking rapid flows of capital in and out of localities as bands are signed to non-local record companies, and spend their advances locally, or when outside promoters put on local events. These problems were witnessed first-hand, in the research into the Merseyside Development Agency, as part of the ESRC project in Liverpool. One of the most enduring issues for the organisation as it set up was forecasting and then proving the flows of capital in and out of the city (from record companies to managers to musicians to the local economy) to the Government Office of Merseyside, who insisted on such criteria being satisfied before releasing European funding[75].

The city of Leicester and music policy

My fieldwork in Leicester revealed neither a traditional stand-off between rebel rock and the establishment nor a picture of heated public meetings and pitched battles

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[74] From personal communication with Dave Laing.
[75] See Appendix I

between suits and studded jackets. In contrast to my own expectations, Popular Music Network meetings and interviews with key members of both the public sector and local music communities suggested a cosy, if not dynamic, relationship exhibiting a profound lack of antipathy from one side or the other. Although my research was focused on public sector representation and cannot claim to represent all music styles, genres, industry members or opinions, this absence is worth noting, since it suggests particular characteristics of the relationship between Leicester music communities and the public sector.

● *Provincial consensus*

The relationship between the Leicester music industry and the public sector as represented on a public level, at meetings and in the local media, is longstanding and involves a small number of key personnel or 'allies', who are involved in activities such as the Abbey Park Festival, the Caribbean Carnival and the management of local venues. These individuals have built up contact with the City Council, East Midlands Arts and local magistrates which allow such activities to continue with relative harmony; some have been involved in their roles for over 15 years, having been involved in or trained by the activities of Multiplex in the 1980s, and are trusted by the authority to organise music activities and represent the city's music sector. They are characterised by their close proximity to the authorities: for example, the organiser of Abbey Park Festival has gained office space in Arts and Leisure Department, opposite the Festival and Events office, without official employment from the council. Their contacts in the authorities act as 'product champions' (Street 1997:109), discussed below, representing the interests of the music sector as voiced by key personnel within the political culture of the local authorities.

● *Public sector music scenes*

The relationship between music-makers and policy-makers in the city is far from all-inclusive however. The music scenes that have grown up around or benefit from public sector support – which includes the Popular Music Network, the local bands' competitions supported by the Leicester Mercury, and City Council sponsored events – tend to revolve around the small number of people described above and are characterised by certain sorts of music associated with the preferences and

experiences of these individuals. For example, guitar-based indie and rock and acoustic English folk dominate the public face of popular music in Leicester as portrayed by the City Network, since these are the styles most associated with members' satellite concerns, such as Stayfree studios and Rideout Records. A musical distinction operates between those who get involved with the public sector and those who don't, albeit unintentionally, so that the 'institutionalised' popular music in the city tends to feature certain styles over others.

Those who operate outside of this sphere tend to remain outside, for example dance music, involved in the private sector activity and resistant, uninterested or unaware of the potentials of music activities supported by the public sector. They may come into contact with local authorities on particular occasions, such as the Abbey Park Festival and other municipal events or when licensing and regulation are required at which point the intermediaries may act as gatekeepers for resources, for example when a bid is made to supply the PA for a Bonfire night concert or when support is needed to open a new club in the city. Attempts to bring the private sector into public consultation, for example in Network meetings, have often been met with apparent disinterest, encouraging claims of apathy on the part of the intermediaries and accusations of a 'closed shop' on the part of the private sector. As such the 'logics' of these scenes and the networks they rely on are separate and distinct from those associated with the public sector.

- *Lack of industrial precedent*

In contrast to cities like Liverpool and Manchester, Leicester lacks the precedent of a high profile, economically strong music scene which might alter its relationship with local authorities. Although there is a wide range of musical activity in the city and accompanying technical and promotional services, the local industry is not considered large, profitable or collective enough to merit a trade association or lobbying body independent of the partnership with the public sector. The relations surrounding music policy in the city originate from the premise of social inclusion, youth work and equal opportunities and emphasis is placed on primary production (demo-tape recording), education and performance rather than economic development or attraction of capital. These twin factors – the size of the local industry and the bias towards social rather

than economic development – concentrate resources on particular sets of activity, individuals and organisations. Perversely this leads to a chicken-and-egg situation where a industrial approach is less likely to be adopted until there is commercial success in the city, as respondents have noted:

> Everything is there for people now, more rehearsal rooms and studios, but I don't know if it makes the difference for people making it. It is something I am ambivalent about. In terms of Leicester, it needs a band to make it, to go Top Ten...for example, somewhere like Liverpool and Manchester, with all these bands that are signed and successful they have al got friends and people who work for them who they tend to befriend. And then they have got friends, so it spreads, and it creates work for studios, People would rather do demos in their own town with people they know, than some poxy place in London. So I think that does create an industry, and you also get, say in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, there is management, there are crews, there is transport, there are all the back up services, and that has all come from successful bands (Dave Davies, local musician and music journalist, in interview)

For music activity in Leicester to be developed as an industry this potential needs to be supported:

> Leicester falls short of recognising it as a potential business export. Not forgetting its potential of developing artists and their own potential, of improving the quality of life of people who are involved in it and people who participate in it and the people who come along to enjoy it. I think there is probably more appreciation of those latter two than of the first one. And it is not just seen as, popular music is not an industry, it is not seen as a business in the city and until it is seen as a business in the city, until it is seen that it can attract huge tourism, it won't get the support and understanding it needs (Teri Wyncoll in interview).

- *Lacking in a wider economic perspective*

This lack of emphasis on the economic aspects of arts and culture was not confined to the music sector and it was suggested that there was a general lack of awareness of the

capital strengths or needs of any cultural sector in Leicester. There was also concern that talent was not retained in the city, and that was something that local authorities could address by examining the links between training and industry and considering the areas of cultural industries' infrastructures which merited support[76]. Developments are underway however which may focus on building up the infrastructures of arts and cultural industries in the city, in particular in terms of graduate retention and physical regeneration of the city. For example, the partnership between De Montfort University and the public sector is driving the development around the Phoenix Arts Centre and Phoenix Yard, creating a focus on mixed use for commercial arts and cultural activity and possible linked training and support facilities. Students in Leicester make up around 12% of the city's population[77] and present the opportunities bridging education in the cultural sector and sustained growth of related industries, as well in the capital they bring in terms of leisure and entertainment expenditure in the city.

Other influences on policy and practice

This thesis has attempted to explore the relationship between the structural conditions, in particular those represented and imposed by the public sector through music policy, and musical activity in the city. The policies that affect popular music practice and industry in cities are not confined to arts and cultural policy. Other actions by the local state affect local music scenes by allowing or prohibiting, promoting and regulating civic behaviour. Many of these actions are shaped and influenced by the individuals involved.

The influence of individuals: policy makers, local heroes, cultural intermediaries and product champions

Decision-making by local magistrates permits and constrains activity associated with popular music, such as the granting of alcohol and entertainments licenses and the setting of rates and rents for retail units and public buildings. Environmental decisions, such as when to prohibit and prosecute for excessive noise levels, are very important to music venues and promoters, and the approach to the sonic environment and image of cities effect how popular music is promoted and received. For example,

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[76] Franco Bianchini in interview
[77] University of Leicester homepage – http://www.le.ac.uk

Leicester has had an inner city busking policy since 1997. Buskers in Leicester must audition in front of a city council officer and if deemed suitable gain a badge allowing them to play at certain sites in the city centre without prosecution or removal by police. Thus the aesthetic decision over what kinds of music are heard live in the city centre on a day-to-day basis rest on council officials' individual judgements.

Venues need entertainments licensing from the local council and need to comply with fire and safety regulations in order to have live music acts; they also require alcohol licensing for opening hours granted by local magistrates. Licensing effects hours of music consumption (Street 1993:44) and opportunities to see live music. Leicester city has been in conflict over alcohol consumption for over a century. As a stronghold of Methodism and other non-conformist churches the city had a large temperance movement in the nineteenth century, an influence which appeared to dominate the city until recently. This influence was to the extent that some areas did not have the physical facilities for alcohol and night-time entertainment. For example, Clarendon Park, a large area close to the city centre now populated by students and young professionals but previously the stronghold of Quakers and Methodists, had until 1998 only one purpose built pub premises. The number of alcohol licenses for bars, pubs and clubs in Leicester has also increased rapidly since the passing of a local magistrate and the retirement of the Clerk to the courts, both of whom were teetotal. The resulting change in influence allied with a growing awareness of the night-time economy, plus the policy of city centre management for more 'European-style' bars and cafes[78] has led to opportunities for more small-scale venues and performance spaces in the city, along with a more animated atmosphere in the city after traditional working hours.

The influence of individuals within local industries on the relationship between popular music, local music scenes and the public sector has also been noted. Cohen (1991) identifies in her work on local music-making in Liverpool some key individuals that served to champion their local music scenes - for example, the owner of a record shop who enthused over, advised and supported many bands for little or no profit. She also notes the important influence of arts and cultural consultants over the

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[78] Interview with Peter Wilkinson; Leicester City Centre Management Implementation Plan 1997 to 2000

construction and delivery of music policy on Merseyside (Cohen 1991, 1998).

Shank found in his work on the Austin music scene that music scenes have a longevity prescribed by the instability of aesthetic meaning and the actions of their participants. He found that different scenes overlapped each other

> each with its own hierarchy of musicians and fans...a core group [of whom] found they could reproduce the structure of their scene for a year or two simply by participating. (Shank 1994:192)

For Shank individuals were crucial in reproducing signifying practices within the relatively short shelf life of a music scene. He also found that key individuals remained to operate in bridging different eras. Discussing the lobbying for the Texas Music Association, he describes how certain individuals who had figured across local music scenes acted to define and promote of the local music *community* in order to access more material resources.

Localities can be seen as training grounds and knowledge pools, offering the physical proximity and familiarity instrumental to giving musicians and practitioners the training and experience they require to succeed in the music industry (cf. clusters and cultural quarters). Within these environments, role models influence the participants of scenes, via their received, shared and imparted knowledge, experience and charisma, whether as musicians or as industry personnel. In this research the idea of the 'local hero' seemed particularly pertinent, both because of the city's need for successful role models for different social and music communities in the city, and in terms of the influence noted by respondents by a small number of key personnel.

A key strategy in Leicester's music policy has to been to attempt to provide the city with such an individual; by funding the post of Popular Music Development Officer, Leicester City Council could be thought of attempting to create a cultural intermediary. This approach has not been without problems, however. One of the problems with this policy is that the City Council could be accused of putting all their eggs in one basket, and a cheap basket at that. The individual chosen for the job has a multi-layered role to play to a wide range of different parties with different interests. Without other forms of support the role could also be seen as relatively useless: as one former Rock and Pop Officer described

part of my role was finding out about the disparity between what is needed and what is possible. This was a case of seeing that what it appears people want is access to resources, but there was a disparity between this and the budget of £1000 to play with. It was very frustrating. (Dave Howard in interview)

Choosing the right person for the job means relying on particular qualities and traits that are going to be conducive to creating and supporting the conditions for success in local music scene. Resourcing an individual can be risky, controversial and incompatible with public sector accountability, and the music industry might require something completely different to that chosen by the public sector:

> Individuals try to effect change. We tried with the Rock and Pop Officer this time. We effected the department to involve the Leicester industry in the actual working party leading up to what the appointment should be about, what the involvement of the individual should be about and to an extent who that individual should be. I decided I didn't want to be part of the part of the working party, Because I don't see myself as an appropriate person...so I stepped down. And what happened at the end of the day? What happens is that the people that sit on the interview panel had absolutely nothing to do with music in the city. So for all that work all that effort at trying to effect change with that appointment, we ended up having nobody on the appointment board. And although I love Dawson madly, I don't think he is the right person for the job (Teri Wyncoll in interview).

However whilst the rock'n'roll entrepreneur might present a misfit with City Council culture, skilled advocacy that has entry into this culture can be effective. Discussing why there might be political interest in popular music, Street (1997) suggests that one reason may be the individuals involved. Politicians can act as 'product champions' who advocate the resourcing of popular music in part because of their own liking for pop or sympathy with local popular music schemes or venues. Street stresses that individual politicians alone are not the most important element however, and that there must be backing from the political party. Individuals can open up doorways and put items on agendas however, instigating chains of events.

Leicester's music policy has been promoted by the Leicester Arts and Entertainment

Director for the City Council, ensuring that the Popular Music Development Officer became a permanent post because of his own particular interest in the Network. This has in turn strengthened the lobbying power of the regional network with each local authority through precedent. Similarly Liverpool's idiosyncratic council contains a number of champions of popular music, mainly centred on the Beatles and tourism. Also, the fondness of the Chief Executive in the Chamber of Commerce for popular music initiated a goodwill exchange of knowledge between New York and Liverpool based on popular music and discussions of a number of trade initiatives geared to help the local industry[79].

It is clear that certain individuals hold key positions in local music scenes and influence the 'logics' of scenes as well as effecting music policy. Charisma, experience, business sense and political prowess are all called into play by such individuals, constituting the kind of qualities that are difficult to pin down and trickier to resource, or even describe, than other forms of support for popular music, such as purpose-built venues and recording grants. The post of Popular Music Development Officer is an attempt to provide such an individual for the local music industry, and as such has had some success in artificially creating alliances and networks of communication as well as centralising information and access to training and finance. Its true successes can only be seen in the future, however the scepticism of many members of the 'organic' music industry may indicate that as an attempt to create a catalyst for a thriving local music scene, it is doomed to failure. In terms of representing popular music to the local authority and the regional arts board and influencing the culture, ideology and policy of these organisations - of being a 'product champion' - the initiative may show more recognisable results.

Structural conditions and local 'structures of feeling'

During the course of this research I have attempted to consider how popular music has been provided for by the public sector in Leicester – how the political structure in the city has influenced local music scenes and communities, or in simpler terms, what the city has done for popular music. At the same time I have examined how different social groups in the city have used and influenced popular music practice in Leicester

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[79] from research on ESRC project, IPM, University of Liverpool

and how music has been used as representation at a municipal level – in some ways, what music has done for the city. The examination has raised issues about the ways policy for popular music relates to wider social structures and conditions and to the actors and agencies involved, and also how popular music practice might reflect the concerns and positions of those who participate.

I have concentrated on particular sites and case studies in order to explore these issues, and focussed on the relations surrounding and constituting music practice in the public domain, rather than attending to the product of these practices, the sounds and meanings attached to the music itself. This is a sociological examination which has not explored musicological issues or analysed the sounds made in Leicester, although it has alluded to different styles and genres of popular music.

I now want to briefly consider how popular music practice and music policy in Leicester might reflect and have been shaped by the wider structural conditions in terms of 'local structures of feeling' (Taylor, Evans and Fraser 1996). This term relates to the elements of local identity and markers of social formation that represent localities and is an extension of Raymond Williams' 'structure of feeling' applied at a local rather than national level. In their research in Sheffield and Manchester, Taylor, Evans and Fraser examine how different factors such as local consumption patterns, employment structures, historical discourses, constructions of gender and spatial environments are represented in expressions of local character. They find different sets of affective cultural beliefs and assumptions in each city that belie their industrial bases and the recent histories of political approach to inherent problems and needs, as well as their demographic make-up and geographical characteristics.

The local structures of feeling in Leicester are perhaps less oriented towards cultural manifestation than the cities mentioned above; it would be hard to imagine a soap opera or film relying on local narratives, and indeed there are few examples of representations in the (non-local) media which characterise this Midlands city. Similarly, other cities that feature in the canon of popular music studies would appear to offer more substance in their attention to local character than I can offer here. Only further research would elucidate the sketchy and admittedly subjective impression I present.

Leicester is known as an unfriendly city, not so much in its physical character but in its population: as a student moving up to the city from nearby Northamptonshire I was warned that 'Leicester people are not very friendly'. It is however a small city where it is quite easy to make friends and familiarise oneself with the physical structure at least of the city centre. It is a place where students often settle, without quite knowing why: many of my respondents were not indigenous Leicester folk but people who had drifted in for various reasons without ever getting round to drifting out again. In some ways it is a place characterised by a lack of strife but at the same time a lack of pride; unlike the sentimentality of Scouse pride in Liverpool or the raging/raving confidence of Manchester, Leicester does not seem to convey a sense of self, rather a collection of apologies for what it is not.

This absence of adversity is reflected by the city's motto *Semper Eadem* and its current promotional slogan 'a city of surprises', which suggests the capacity for adapting to new circumstances referred to by Simmons (1972):

> There I think lies one of the chief clues to an understanding of Leicester. It is a town of a *long history*, constantly adapting itself to new situations, new demands; but never as a result of violent change, which produces a complete breach with the past (Simmons 1972:88).

Its accommodation of diversity and change is simultaneously the city's selling point and weakness: whilst relative affluence, a commitment to quality of life and the environment and effective multiculturalism are obvious strengths, local character is fragmented and unmarked by particular hopes, struggles, beliefs or events. The city is also without a strong profile nationally within the media, and despite being in the centre of the country (another of the city's promotional factors) is a place that people may have heard of but are not quite sure where it is. Perhaps in the 1990s the tide has turned for Leicester, however, and, following the Sporting Capital title of 1998, the forthcoming National Space Centre and the many other changes to the city from the regeneration schemes and projects generated by City Challenge, Millennium Funds and the National Lottery, the city will have more pillars on which to build a sense of local identity and pride.

How might such observations be linked to local popular music practice, cultural

policy and music industries? Some studies have suggested that local identities are important influences on local music scenes, and have endowed them success through their distinguishing characteristics. CP Lee, for example, wrote of the influence of nearby US army bases on the development of the Manchester music scenes much heralded for the past 15 years (Brown 1998b). Other social and historical factors are noted in the construction of music scenes, such as the mythology of the singing cowboy for local music production in Austin, Texas for Shank (1994) or the influence of dockland ghetto culture in Bristol on the languid Trip Hop scene (Johnson 1996). Cohen (1995b) describes how 'Liverpool-ness' is described through the pleasures and meanings attached to music and how music is used to tell stories about people's identification with place, to define localities.

How then is Leicester-ness, or the local structure of feeling reflected by music practices and policy I have described here? In my research I tried to discover how people perceived Leicester in terms of its music scenes, industry and activity, in the context of general impressions about the city. Comments made about the city's character during the course of research referred the blandness of the Midlands and the 'undistinctiveness' of city culture, usually followed by a reference to the city's diverse communities. With reference to the city's music scenes and potentials, the tone was often apologetic, and respondents complained about the difficulty in getting audiences to see live music, a basic lack of confidence in marketing popular music and amateurism amongst the city's music businesses and services and within those associated with the public sector. As the research progressed it became clear that my respondents were primarily judging Leicester in the framework of success dictated by the national music industry: there was a sense that Leicester is a city full of potential but is waiting for something to happen, for somebody to break through and gain national recognition, in order for local success and pride to be consolidated. Blame was often apportioned to local apathy, particularly in attendance of live performance, and the labelling of the city as 'provincial' or 'hicksville' by the national music press.

The negative tone of these impressions overrides the achievements that local music practices and policy have made, particularly in terms of public display and celebration of the city's ethnic communities and provision for youth through schools and colleges, schemes and workshops. It does however suggest something about the way people

relate to the cultural infrastructure of the city, and was repeated in the recent arts strategy review, which similarly discussed a local lack of confidence[80]. These 'readings' of Leicester through its popular music practice obviously rely on the testimonies of the select few that I interviewed in the context of public provision and local music industries, whose consideration of Leicester was heightened and framed by their connections to its local authorities and agencies. The interesting question in further research which addresses how other music-makers in Leicester described their practice in relation to locality would be whether locality is an issue. Would 'Leicester-ness' be part of their identity in the same way that Liverpool and Manchester bands and musicians relate to their cities? The case studies in this research suggest that other priorities, such ethnicity, community, sexuality and making a living take precedent over representing the city; however the popular music that results from these scenes and communities can be considered representative of local identities and practices.

'For local read crap'[81]: evaluating local cultural policy

In his work on popular music in Austin, Texas, Shank (1994) identifies a shift from a performance-based aesthetic to one where popular music practice is evaluated on the basis of recordings, and a consequent professionalisation of the local music communities and their representation in the local and international music industries. This study of popular music in Leicester shows the former process still at play in the city, where musical activities are predominantly based around performance, and evaluation of the city as a site of popular music is concerned with the scale and scope of its venues. Policy is also overwhelmingly concerned with public performance, although the development of the Network and the Popular Music Development Officers has introduced different types of resources to the city's music-makers.

Frith (1993) suggests that cultural policy is shifting from defining and serving the 'local' according to its own particular merits instead recognising the potential of difference as localities and regions are pitted against each other in a globalised society:

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[80] Bonnar Keenlyside 'Leicester City Council Capital Strategy for the Arts' March 1999
[81] This phrase refers to the assumption that all things local – local news and media, shops and facilities, scenes and trends - are of poor quality in relation to the 'non-local'; for this phrase and for his constructive cynicism I thank Rob Melville.

The local is now equated with the different not by reference to local histories or traditions but in terms of a position in the global market-place. This is to lead policy-makers inevitably to issues of distribution and consumption. To support local venues (whether in Norwich or Nijmegen), local distributors (whether in Scotland or Victoria) and local radio stations (whether in Dominica or Finland) is to support not just one's own local music, but also 'local' music in general, 'different' music wherever it comes from...we no longer live in a world in which the 'local' can stand for community, security and truth. It describes rather the *setting* for out shared experience of rootlessness and migration for the constant movement of capital and labour, of signs and sounds. In technological terms anyway the world is becoming the local and the global: the national level no longer matters when every household has access to the global media flow, when every small producer can, in practice, directly service the global greed for images (Frith 1993: 23)

Certainly cultural policy in Leicester celebrates the idea of local as difference by supporting the festivals and carnivals of the ethnic minorities in the city. Although there is also public support of older traditions and histories within the city (such as the Castle Gardens heritage festival), the recent history of ethnic diversity is far more important in marking out the city as special or different. When discussing culture in the city, the public sector invariably refers to its ethnic make-up and to the colour, vitality and diversity it has brought to everyday life in the city[82]. The desire to incorporate the city's ethnic population into local cultural practice comes not only from the goal of social inclusion, as suggested above in Chapter 6, but also from needing an extra ingredient with which to compete with other cities on a cultural level.

Much evaluation of policy in practice is based on the axis of inclusion of different social groups in the city, as dictated by public service ethos. This study has shown through case studies that this approach may prove somewhat problematical as the homology between being a member of a particular social group and practising a particular style of music is uneasy, for example in the assumption that Asian youth

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[82] See for example the Leicester Promotions website:
http://business.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/leicesterpromotions/

can be incorporated into the city through provision for Bhangra. Representation through music involves the difficult issues of ownership, authenticity, rivalry and conflict, and it seems from this study that the most successful route to encouraging equal participation in popular music activities might be through opening up access to all resources, whether information, education, media or material resources.

In terms of music policy, the marking out of the city's musical difference is somewhat harder. Initiatives such as the Leicester Popular Music Network and the Merseyside Music Development Agency can act as receptionists, A & R, trainers and champions for the local music industries and by their very being provide proof that these local industries exist. What they cannot do is prescribe the music of these industries or guarantee its success globally. Local music agencies are not able to dictate or create the aesthetic values on which local music scenes are based. However their support of local resources make a difference to the sounds, styles and genres available to local audiences (and hence local musicians). The musical paths taken by individuals and groups and the art worlds they constitute are rooted in place and in constant negotiation with non-local cultural commodities and systems of articulation. These do not necessarily constrain local practice, but act as benchmarks for definition and are drawn upon as resources and used in the local context. As Street argues:

> Local initiatives can make little difference to the content of commercial popular culture. What it can do is give access to a larger market...Cultural policy does not create a self-contained community. Instead, it creates the conditions under which the local is linked to the global culture (Street 1995:322)

In the case of Leicester, confidence in the city's cultural life might be encouraged by this dual emphasis on wider markets and global culture. Public sector involvement in popular music practice in the city can attend to these emphases, not least in terms of the potentials for new audiences and in the diverse practices of different cultural communities already extant in the city.

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University of Leicester homepage: http://www.le.ac.uk

ESRC project: 'Music policy, local music industries and local economic development'

The project was run jointly by the Institute of Popular Music, University of Liverpool, and the Manchester Institute of Popular Culture, Manchester Metropolitan University, conducted by Sara Cohen, Justin O'Connor, Adam Brown and myself. Fieldwork took place in Sheffield, Manchester and Liverpool, and the project examined relationships between local music scenes, local, regional and national music industries and policy making and implementation which affected popular music. The results of the research have been disseminated at conference with policy makers and industry members, through academic papers and in a report for the ESRC.

My post involved examining the relationship between local music industry initiatives in the Merseyside region and local economic development, with particular reference to the region's European Community Objective One funding status. This involved a case study based on the establishment of a Merseyside Music Development Agency. which formed a partnership between local industry members, represented by the Merseyside Music Industry Association, local educational establishments, including the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts and the Institute of Popular Music, local arts and culture consultants and the Government Office of Merseyside. I also examined the consultation process for the funding and creation of a Cultural Quarter based around the Duke Street/Bold Street area in the city.

Research involved a number of semi-structured interviews with music industry members, local government representatives and arts consultants. I also attended various seminars, board meetings, conferences and consultation forums in Liverpool, Manchester, at the European Parliament in Brussels and at the 1997 In The City music industry convention in Glasgow. I was also involved in the initial stages of an ADAPT project based at the MIPC which examines cultural industries and cultural quarters. This involved setting up a partnership between the Services Industries Research Centre, University College Dublin and other ADAPT partners and included some initial fieldwork in Dublin.

Appendix II

List of interviewees

Interviewees

Adele McMahon (local musician)

Ali Bowen (Network Rock and Pop Development Officer, Northants County Council; local musician)

Andy Caher (promoter of Turning up the Beat festival; local musician)

Brian Turner (peripatetic teacher with Access to Music)

Bridget McMahon (local musician)

Caroline O'Donnell (local musician)

Chandy (Director and lecturer, The Music Project, International Youth House Project)

Chris Conway (local musician and record label owner - Stormthieves)

Christina Brown (former Chair of Women In Music; now urban regeneration and local economic consultant in North West)

Colin Wilsher (Programme manager, Leicester Sound FM)

Dan (Glen Parva Young Offenders Centre)

Dave Davies (Popular music journalist, the Leicester Mercury; musician and former Multiplex member)

Dave Howard (Sound engineering lecturer, The Music Project, International Youth House Project; former Network Rock and Pop Officer for Leicester City and Leicestershire County Council; recording artist)

Dawson Smith (Rideout Records label owner; Popular Music Development Officer; local musican)

Deryk Roberts (Recording studio engineer, owner and teacher)

DJ Knowledge

DJ Lemmy

DJ T-Baron

Frances O'Rourke (local musician)

Franco Bianchini (lecturer, DeMontfort University)

Gaz Birtles (local manager and musician – member of the Beautiful South horn section; former member of Multiplex and director of Happy House recording studio)

George Johnson (Reggae and dub band member and leader, former Multiplex member)

Harry and Bridget (landlords of the Jolly Miller)

Jan Fraser

John Knight (Network Rock and Pop Development Officer, Leicestershire County Council; local musician)

John Ridgeon (Director of Access to Music; former County Music Officer)

Kam Patel (Sound engineering lecturer and technician; co-director of Diva Music)

Lynn (Co-director of Stayfree records, recording and rehearsal complex)

Marcel Jenkins (Music Officer, East Midlands Arts)

Margaret (Manager of Molly O'Grady's)

Mike Candler (Director of Arts and Entertainment, Leicester City Council)

Nick Murphy (local musician, manager and promoter – SkaBoom; co-director of Diva Music)

Pete Bryant (former Arts advisory Officer, Leicester City Council)

Pete Morton (local musician)

Peter Wilkinson (Leicester City Centre Manager)

Roger Wilson (local musician and fiddle teacher

Ruth Miller (Secretary of Leicester branch of Musicians Union; local musician and former Multiplex member)

Sean (Sound engineer and teacher, Fosse Arts Community Studio)

Siobhan (former manager of Shifty O'Sheas)

Stephen Butt (Programme manager, BBC Radio Leicester)

Steve and Zoe (Editors of Hybrid magazine)

Steve Nutter (Recording studio engineer and owner; peripatetic sound engineering teacher)

Teri Wyncol (Director of Abbey Park Music Festival; former director of Multiplex)

Telephone interviews:
Bob Cartwright (Public relations officer for Bass Worthington)
Dominic (Public relations officer for Everards)
Romi Gohil (Sabras Radio)

Other key contacts:
Dan Britton (local musician)
Dave Frame (former landlord of the Magazine)
Emily Hoare (local promoter)
Jan Ossain (local businessman and restauranteur)
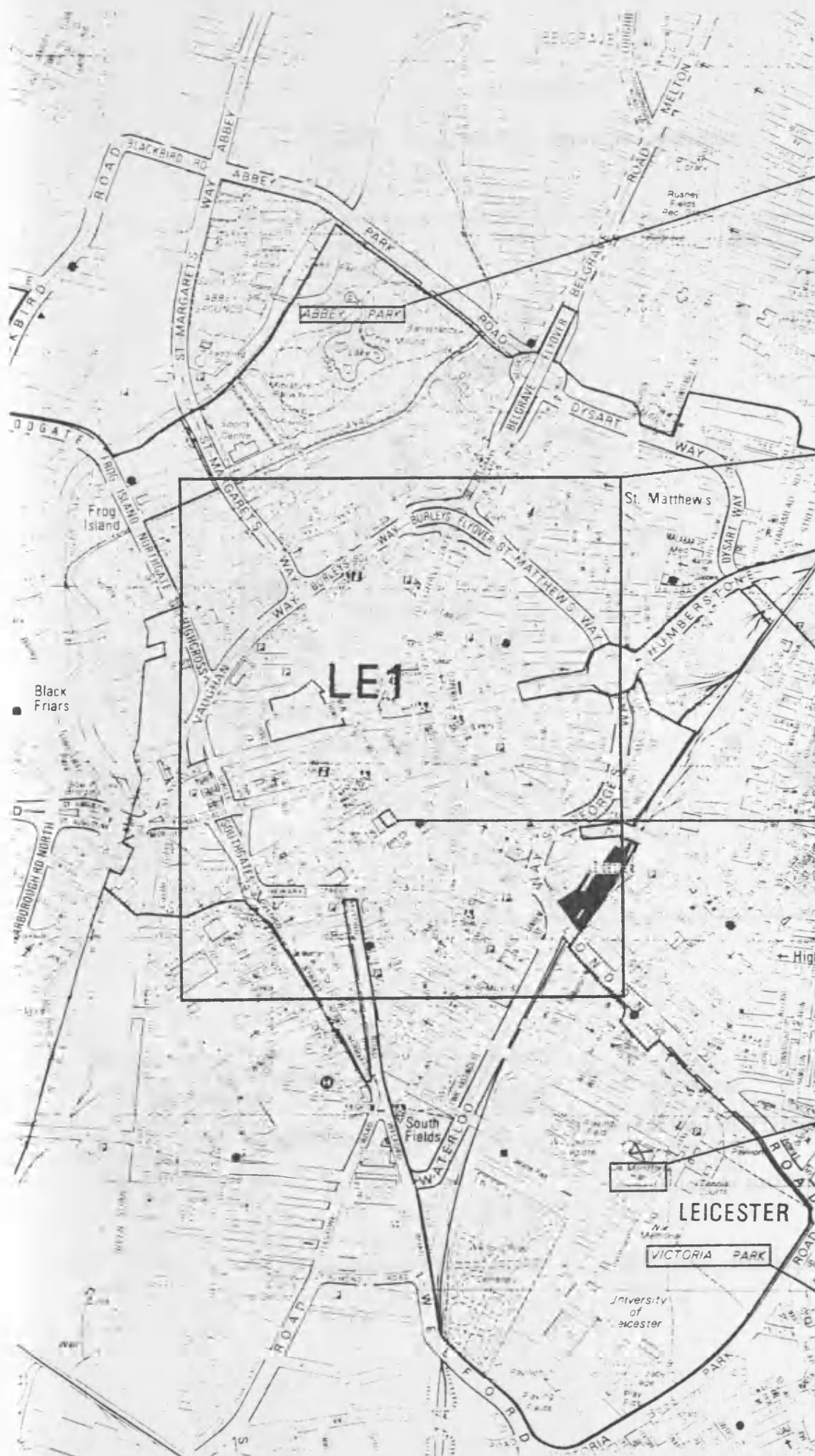Karen Pirie (local promoter and musician)
Rob Melville (local musician and stage technician)
Sade Phillips (former landlord of the Magazine)
Stephen Haswell (former landlord of O'Jays and the Magazine)

Appendix II

Maps

Abbey Park
site of:
Abbey Park
Festival
the Leicester Mela

City Centre
as featured
in Map 2

Town Hall Square:
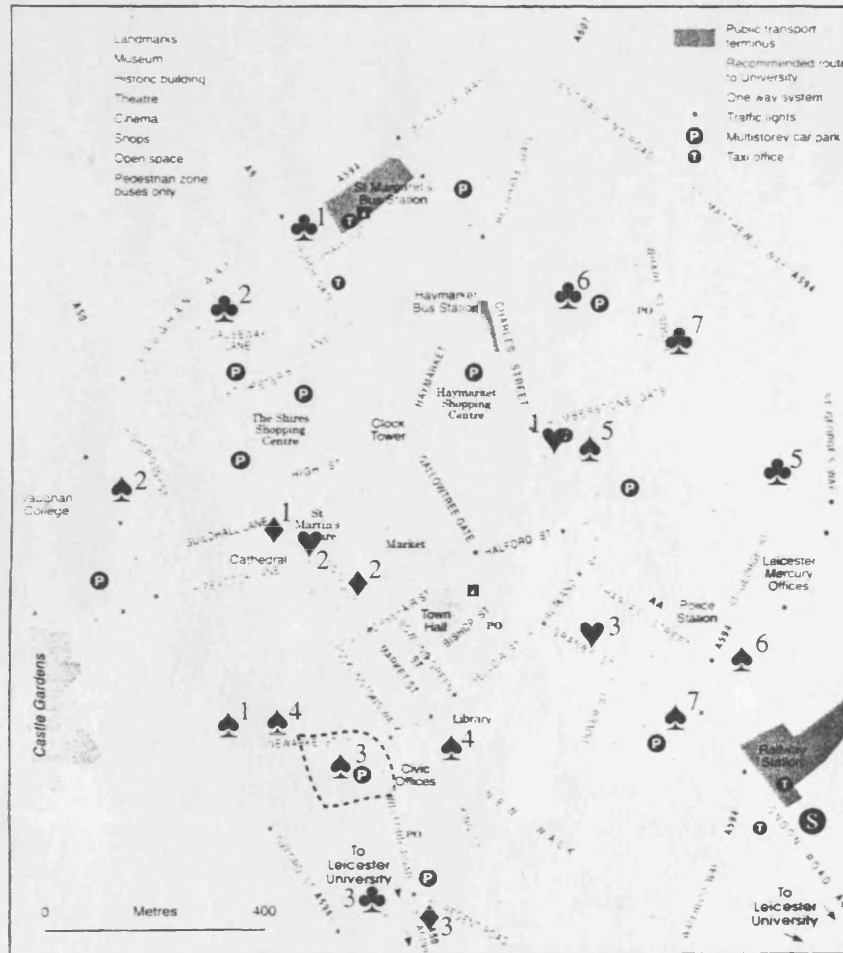site of Summer in
the City events

DeMontfort Hall
venue and gardens:
site of Turning up
the Beat

Victoria Park
site of the
Caribbean Carnival

Appendix 3
Map1 - Festival and Carnival Sites in Leicester

Appendix 3

Map 2 - Leicester city centre: key musicsites

♠ **Music Venues**
1. The Princess Charlotte
2. Mosquito Coast
3. Phoenix Arts
4. The Magazine (formerly)
5. The Shed
6. The Royal Mail
7. The Y Theatre

♦ **Irish Theme Pubs**
1. O'Neills
2. Molly O'Grady's
3. Shifty O'Sheas

♣ **Clubs**
1. Kudos
2. Zanzibar
3. Flaming Colossus
4. The Lizard Lounge
5. Junction 21
6. Club City
7. Starlight 2001

♥ **Record Shops**
1. 5HQ
2. Rockaboom
3. BPM (formerly)

⌐ Area proposed for Arts quarter   **S** Stayfree studio and rehearsal complex