Research Area 1 – Organisation

Key words: cultural entrepreneurship, creative industries, digitalisation.

Cultural entrepreneurship in the post-digital music industries.

The rise of social media and streaming services has changed not only the way audiences consume music (Arditi, 2018), but also the way musicians make progress towards financial solvency through accessing and creating audiences for their art (Hesmondhalgh, 2020). Since the early-2000s, the music industries underwent a defining upheaval; a disruptive restructuring (Kask & Öberg, 2019) resulting in a blurring of institutional boundaries (Zhang & Negus, 2021) and the rise of hybrid organisational forms (Järvekülg & Wikström, 2021), presenting fresh challenges and novel organisational response. Such developments obscure and prorogue efforts towards understanding organisation across the music industries in the age of platforms (Srnicek, 2017), digital media (Beverungen, et al., 2019) and algorithmic curation (Werner, 2020).

The primary concern of this paper is understanding the organisational implications (both practical and theoretical) of digital disruption by asking: *how has music changed as a result of digitalisation?*

The musician is perhaps unique in organisational capacity; acting in a multiplicity of organisational settings and codes (Negus, 2013) performing, in simultaneity, the roles of producer, retailer and embodied product (Morris, 2015); experiencing varying degrees of autonomy at different times and across multiple (media) contexts (Jones, 2021). Navigating this complex, changeable web of interdependency, the artist exhibits entrepreneurship not only in commerce (Scott, 2012; *cf.* Haynes & Marshall, 2018) but equally through creative practice (Toynbee, 2016).

Nevertheless, there exists a schism within organisation studies regarding theories of cultural entrepreneurship (Gehman & Soublière, 2017). There is a tradition of cultural entrepreneurship theory which focuses on entrepreneurship within the cultural domain – a sector/set of industries – (DiMaggio, 1982; Peterson & Berger, 1971). Later theories of cultural entrepreneurship draw upon a broader understanding of culture:

recognising the presence and consequence of culture in any entrepreneurial domain. This tradition studies the cultural resources deployed by entrepreneurs in the process of legitimation (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017). In drawing upon both traditions (Giorgi, Lockwood, & Glynn, 2015) this study contributes to a body of knowledge which seeks to understand how entrepreneurial action can create *value* across multiple- and hybrid institutional contexts (Dalpiaz, Rindova, & Ravasi, 2016; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012) Nevertheless, institutional logics remain divorced from their political-economic context (Munir, 2020); naïve to the structural power imbalances which affect the nature and availability of affordance and opportunity for entrepreneurial actors (Pignot, 2021). This paper therefore proposes to *recontextualise* entrepreneurship with a view to exposing the hidden politics of digitalising cultural production (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017)

This research pursues a critical grounded theory (CGT) approach (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017) to the study of popular music production in a post-digital context (Mazierska, Gillon, & Rigg, 2018). With CGT*, it is the critique that is grounded, not the theory*. CGT performs the necessary work of conceptual refinement in efforts towards co-constructive theory building (*cf.* Suddaby, 2006). CGT proceeds *retroductively* in approaching theory building; combining the horizontal logic of classical grounded theory with an added vertical logic which follows the Marxian method of comparative analysis, moving from the abstract-simple to the concrete-complex and back again in the production of *critical grounded theory*. Through seeking refutations, CGT can inspire us to deepen and elaborate extant knowledge.

Data for this research was collected using a hybrid-ethnographic methodology. As a practicing musician and consistent bandmember for over a decade, my research can draw upon a wealth of experience as the development of my musical career traces the recent history of the digitalisation of music. In responding to the demands of pandemic research, the planned (traditional) ethnography was substituted with a pragmatic fusion of netnography (Kozinets, 2019) and analytic autoethnography (Anderson, 2006) supplemented with interview data from 20 musicians and music professionals representing a diversity of views and experience. Data was analysed using the lens of cultural political economy (Sum & Jessop, 2013) which is adept in capturing the interplay of structure, discourse and practice across societies, institutions and actors. In using political-economy to locate the object of study in its socio-historical context,

discourse analysis enables analytic focus on processes of institutional stability, crisis and change through structure *and* semiosis (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017).

Drawing upon preliminary findings, this paper proposes *post-digitality* (Cramer, 2015) as a useful analytical tool for organisational studies of digital capitalism. The post-digital should not be conceived as a time after digitalisation (Archey & Peckham, 2014). It is neither event nor condition. Rather, a critical philosophy (Peters & Besley, 2019) which assumes an emergent cultural logic impacting the organisation of today's hybrid-capitalisms (Hodgson, 1996). Post digitality is characterised by a blurring of distinctions; between the physical and the virtual (Berry & Dieter, 2015); old and new media (Hracs & Jansson, 2020); service and surveillance (Zuboff, 2018), work and leisure (Fuchs, 2014); finding analytic potential in this complex hybridity. The data however, pertains to a scholarly *overconcern* with the perils of digital capitalism, finding the fears and concerns held in academia are not shared amongst musicians who demonstrate apathetic acceptance of the growing incursion of inhuman intermediation and legitimation (Dyer-Witheford, Kjøsen, & Steinhoff, 2019). Nevertheless, findings evidence a profusion of black-box thinking (Pasquale, 2015) , i.e., a digital rationality which informs commercial and creative practices.

Of significance for organisation studies is the existence of digital reason as an organising force: a new form of *governmentality*. The ethical and practical concerns surrounding behavioural nudging highlight the need for organisation studies to explore radical philosophies which promote necessary critiques of power imbalance and diminishing agency within the context of post-digital organisation (Munir, 2020). Furthermore, the diffusion of digital apathy is matched with a surge in the discursive prominence of space and place (i.e., *spatiality*). Cultural fragmentation manifests in musicians' experience of the city; lacking central *hubs* around which local scenes have traditionally been organised (Cnossen & Bencherki, 2019). The data further shows an acceleration in the financialisation of music and the growing appropriation (exploitation) of music as a developmental or, *gentrifying* force (Zukin, 1989). Combined, these findings compound the need for a *topographical imagination* (Beyes & Holt, 2020) in organisational research.

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