From:

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Creative Networks and the City

Towards a Cultural Political Economy of Aesthetic Production

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This book offers a fundamental contribution to the literature on the creative industries and the knowledge-based economy by focusing on three aspects: urban spaces as key sites of capitalist restructuring, creative industries' policies as state technologies aimed at economic exploitation, and the role of networks of aesthetic production in inflecting these tendencies. It simultaneously goes beyond these debates by integrating a concern with the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of the creative industries. As such, the book is relevant to researchers interested in the transdisciplinary project of a cultural political economy of creativity and urban change.

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

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

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

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

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

1. Introduction

1.1 Theme and Relevance

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

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

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

state and the emergence of new forms of capitalist accumulation and state regulation.[3]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2 Research Questions and Focus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.3 Thesis Statement and Research Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.4 Case Selection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.5 Chapter Organization

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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