‘Corkonian exceptionalism’: Identity, authenticity and the emotional politics of place in a small city’s popular music scene

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Abstract
Drawing from ethnographic research on Cork city’s popular music scene, this article explores meanings of ‘authenticity’ as constructed through geographical, social, and ideological referents. It unpacks local music producers’ position-takings within the local field of cultural production, and locates their narrative claims to authenticity with respect to the city’s strong sense of cultural identity. Their authenticating discourses are revealed as complex, often produced through building imagined communities of ‘us’ (in Cork) versus ‘them’ (in Dublin). The analysis indicates local actors’ deep sense of emotional attachment to place and to others within the music-making community, which impacts on their self-conception as creative labourers, sustains DIY, collaborative practices, and promotes a solidaristic ethos within the local music scene.

Keywords: popular music, authenticity, cultural identity, Cork, Dublin, music scene

Introduction

Although the ‘social spaces of music’ – variously referred to as ‘scenes’, ‘worlds’, ‘networks’ and ‘fields’ – are central concerns within the sociology of music (Crossley and Bottero 2015), there has been a tendency within popular music studies to insufficiently consider the significance of music producers’ *emotional* connectivity to place. Based on ethnographic research with Cork-based music producers (2010-2013), this analysis aims to elucidate the emotional politics of place in Ireland’s ‘second city’. In focusing on Cork as a small city (and I comment further on this designation in the next section), this study also redresses an imbalance within empirical studies on the relationship between music-making and/in the city, which have to date primarily focused on large urban contexts.[1] Some rare exceptions include Finnegan’s (2007, originally 1989) research on Milton Keynes (which at the time of publication had a population of 122,000) and, more recently, Prior’s (2015) research on Reykjavík (with 120,000 inhabitants), both of which studies resonate with the findings of my research.

Alongside the quantitatively-oriented ‘sizism’ common to research on urban music scenes, a qualitative bias is also evident in music scenes research. Studies on ‘exceptional’ geographic sites that have produced ‘spectacular’ music scenes are keenly attentive to place, but as such, they tend to also spectacularise these places in the process of linking them with specific sounds, styles, musical approaches or artists. But what of ‘ordinary’ cities, which – even if they are not linked with exceptional styles or artists – are nonetheless often felt and produced as extraordinary by their inhabitants? What of towns and cities that are not associated with spectacular musics, but are – in the absence of distinctive sounds – shaped by ‘musical

pathways' (Finnegan 2007) that are followed and created by 'ordinary' music producers? This analysis considers one such ordinary city, looking at how a sense of place is narratively produced by its music-making inhabitants, and how it impacts on their musical and social practices. The study forefronts discourses of identity, authenticity and belonging, and explains music producers' social and emotional construction of (their) place as 'unique' and 'extraordinary' as an important expression of these discourses. In so doing, it evidences that music producers' identity-making, their sense of authenticity, and by extension their well-being, are strongly *emplaced*, which has particular implications for understanding the logics underpinning music-making practices in the local music scene. The ethnographic enquiry is centrally concerned with unpacking local music producers' processes of 'identity work' and 'authenticity work' (Peterson 2005), focusing on music-as-process rather than music-as-product. It is important to note, then, that I do not engage as a music critic in my analysis; rather, music-makers' production of their local music scene as 'extraordinary' is treated here as a *sociological* concern. In many respects, whether or not (or how) their claim to authenticity and exceptionalism can be critically upheld is a diversionary one (also see Prior 2015).

As Smyth notes in his foreword to the first ever interdisciplinary volume on music and identity in Ireland (Fitzgerald and O'Flynn 2014), although people have been studying Irish music and music in Ireland for some time, this is "an expanding field that is still finding its way in the modern academy" (Smyth 2014: xii). The small number of popular music scholars in Ireland has been slowly growing in recent years, but it remains the case that research is sparse on contemporary, everyday popular music-making as process and practice in Ireland, and on the social relations through which these practices are constituted and reconstituted. This research, then, also aims to contribute to the field of popular music studies in and about Irish popular music scenes.

Cork as a small city: Cultural identity and the local music scene

Cork is the largest city in the south of Ireland, but it is a small city. As of Census 2011, the Cork metropolitan area population stood at 119,230 (Central Statistics Office 2011). My definition of Cork as a 'small city' is determined by qualitative judgement as much as quantitative measurement. Statistical definitions of size are problematic given national and regional variations; for example, Bell and Jayne (2007: 4) found that a 'small city' in the US is defined as having fewer than 50,000 inhabitants, whereas other schema classify a small (or 'provincial') city as having a population of 100,000 to 250,000. Moving away from attempts to define size through quantitative measures, Bell and Jayne emphasise instead the qualitative dimensions of size, arguing that "smallness is in the urban habitus; it's about ways of acting, self-image, the sedimented structures of feeling, sense of place and aspiration" (Bell and Jayne

2007: 5). This research follows their lead, exploring these ideas through the prism of the local music scene, and reflects on how Cork as a small city is concerned with gaining reputational capital in a global and national hierarchy, how it connects with other cities, and the qualities of these connections (Bell and Jayne 2009: 689), as represented by local music producers.

The social construction of Cork as Ireland's 'Rebel City' has been framed through a long historic tradition, and its inhabitants' purported tendency towards subversion remains rooted in contemporary discursive manifestations of 'Corkonian exceptionalism'. The city's relationship to Ireland's capital city is important in shaping Cork's self-image; Cork's sense of distinctiveness and intra-national disconnection is epitomised in its disavowal of a Dublin-centric social imaginary. As McCarthy describes it (2007: 232), Cork's determinedly fractured relationship with Dublin allows it to construct itself as an 'other' place through which Corkonians can "participate in the discourses of a state and its capital with the authority of an elsewhere". This deliberate parochialism maintains the particularity and authenticity of the second city identity.

Figure 1 – 'Real Map of Ireland'

These place-oriented biases have been imaginatively captured by Sarah Kandrot, a postgraduate geography student in University College Cork (see figure 1), in an image that serves as a useful entry point into the research findings outlined below. Kandrot's 'Real Map of

Ireland' depicts how Corkonians imagine Ireland and Cork's place within it. The map, which presents a manipulated image of the Republic of Ireland, shows Cork's county line extending well beyond its true borders, while Dublin city and county simply cease to exist. In Corkonian slang, Dublin is sometimes referred to as 'The Pale'.[2] This is meant to imply that those who live 'within the pale' – who are perceived to pander to the same bourgeois norms as were celebrated by the preceding Briton establishment – are not quite as Irish as those who live 'beyond the pale'.[3] The term is also commonly used to criticise government leaders whose decision-making seemingly privileges the interests of the capital, in terms of infrastructural and economic development, to the expense of the rest of the country. In Kandrot's depiction, it is interesting that Dublin is disappeared, swallowed by the sea for being – in Corkonians' judgement – not Irish enough. This represents the maintenance of a long-standing criticism of Dubliners' alleged inauthenticity.

In the discussion that follows, I consider how these politics of place shape Cork's music scene and its construction by local music producers. The remainder of the article comprises four sections. The following section explains the methods used in the study, and describes the research participants and the data analysis approach. The section thereafter presents the research findings in relation to Cork's music scene with respect to local cultural identity, the 'two capitals' of Cork and Dublin, and the music industries. In the next and penultimate section, I reflect on these findings using concepts of authenticity, identity, and the emotional community. The concluding section draws together and reflects on the research findings and analysis.

Methods

The arguments set forth in this article are informed by extensive ethnographic research conducted in Cork city on the local music scene. As Prior (2015: 90) defines it, a music scene comprises "interacting agents who form clusters oriented to music-making activities [and] is predicated on the collective activities of multiple actors who belong to and participate in the scene through always emergent social networks". This research explores the narrative position-taking of such 'interacting agents' and, in this endeavour, ethnography was chosen as an appropriate methodology, since it enables a focus on social relationships, emphasises music-making as social practice and process, and is holistic, dialogic and reflexive (Cohen 1993: 123).[4] Immersion in the local music scene demanded attendance at a range of events, including 'showcase' events, 'open mic' nights, 'battle of the band' competitions, EP and album launches by Cork-based musicians, regular gigs, music industries' events, and related initiatives that were aimed at supporting local music and musicians. This was complemented by online engagement through social media networking, using Facebook and MySpace.

The research participants

The research included in-depth interviews with fifty-three research participants. These were chosen (either by me or through self-selection) as 'ordinary' music producers whose activities represent different types or aspects of music-making in the local music scene. In this respect, they have various levels of skills and experiences and have experienced various levels of commercial/critical success, which is related to their location on an amateur/professional continuum. The sampling process engaged two often overlapping categories of music producers: (1) musicians and (2) local music industries' actors (e.g. promoters, venue owners, journalists, bloggers, producers, and independent record store employees). The sample, then, includes musicians, who are a mixed constituency in relation to genre, gender, experience, and age, and other actors located within the scene's/local music industries' shifting spaces and infrastructures. Socially, this is a mixed group that includes large sections of the middle class, as well as some members of working class and diasporic communities (Frith 1996: 34-5). The research sample includes many more males (n=40) than females (n=13), which appears to be roughly representative of the community, though a more empirically exact census is necessary to corroborate this claim.

Interviews took place through bursts of sporadic but intensive activity over a long period (2010-2013), which allowed for observations to be gathered through longitudinal research as a type of small-scale, cross-sectional study. Interviews ranged from about thirty minutes to three hours, with the majority lasting between one and one-and-a-half hours. These were loosely structured, using a biographical/narrative approach. Participants thus directed the interview on their terms, orienting the story-telling of their musical activities from their own perspectives, providing an insight into music-making as a "technology of the self" (DeNora 1999), and locating their identities with reference to their social position within the city's music scene.

Data analysis

Data analysis required an examination of each narrative, through which emergent themes were gradually developed through an inductive process of progressively-focused coding, with the aid of NVivo data analysis software. In extrapolating the major themes from the data, the ways in which music producers sought to account for their position-takings, and to explain their struggles for recognition through their narratives, prompted me to draw on Bourdieu's conceptual framework, which was valuable for offering an anti-dualistic, 'constructivist structuralist' approach (Wacquant 1998: 264). As Crang and Cook (1995: 14) observe, ethnographers are bound up in the process of producing inter-subjective truths, of

understanding how people interpret social context, of exploring how authenticities are constructed, and of examining how our lives are intertwined with broader social, cultural, economic and political processes. Therefore, "stories told in the research encounter are not simply to be regarded as means of mirroring the world, but as the means through which it is constructed, understood and acted upon" (Crang and Cooke 1995: 14). The analysis follows Yuval-Davis's understanding of identity "as a specific kind of narrative in which people tell themselves and others who they are, who they are not and who/how they would like to/should be" (2010: 279). The research, then, is situated within a constructivist paradigm; that is, its ontological assumption is that reality is socially constructed.

Popular music-making, authenticity and the local

This section explores how ideas of 'authenticity' are contested through localising subjectivities/identities in Cork's music scene. In the following analysis, I pick apart the interrelationship of identity, authenticity and the emotional politics of place with respect to three themes, each of which is concerned with the research participants' conflicting and sometimes contradictory expressions of authenticity. First, I examine the significance of local cultural identity in emplacing authenticity. Second, I examine some tensions in the perceived relationship between the 'two capitals' – Dublin and Cork – and examine how Cork's 'second city' status impacts on the research participants' perceptions of their and others' authenticities. Third, I examine the implications of local music producers' processes of authentication for how they choose to locate themselves with respect to the national and globalised music industries.

Local cultural identity

Cork's distinctive identity – its sense of 'otherness' and the perceived uniqueness of the local culture – is a thematic through-line within the ethnographic data; whether participants accept or resist Cork's purported exceptionalism, this narrative is a constant. Cork's 'special' qualities are perceived to manifest through its inhabitants' creative capacities, which were explained in both 'natural' and social terms. Cork's natural landscape was perceived to shape its social feel, as argued by Chris Ahern (Head of the Performing Arts Department in Coláiste Stiofáin Naofa):

> I've always had a theory about the [geography of Cork]… because the shape of Cork, you know… that we live in valley, I've always felt that the people are kind of warm and there's always been a sense of community… Everybody seems to know each other. And if they don't know each other they'll know somebody who knows somebody. That has great advantages because there is a warmth that spills into the music. But also I suppose we run the risk of being insular… You've everything in

> equal measure in Cork. You've snobbery and you have great camaraderie. You have competiveness and you've great co-operation where people just help each other out and pass work on (Ahern 2012).

Corkonians' strong sense of local cultural identity and the local musical community are co-constitutional – each reifies the other – and the research participants evidenced a deep sense of pride in being 'of' the Cork music scene. The small size of the city was perceived significant, in that a sense of community derives from the feeling that everyone knows everyone else, and the small population size therefore helps to maintain the strong scene identity. This community feel drives collaborative practices, which are shaped by participants' desires to support each other in making music and to collectively overcome limitations imposed by the market. Also, musicians regularly play in a number of different collectives; most working musicians are freelance, that is, they are members of one or two different bands but are also available as session or occasional musicians with other collectives for performance or recording. Because there is a lot of cross-fertilisation between bands, genres, and styles, this maintains the close-knit nature of the scene, and as Ian Whitty – an indie rock singer-songwriter/guitarist who has achieved success and critical acclaim at the local and national level – argued, the common practice of sharing people and sharing information reinforces solidaristic bonds:

> The fact that members from bands are so willing to play with other bands I think is another thing. Generally people are good at sharing information, which is again I guess a communal sort of things that helps a lot. It helps that more experienced bands can kind of share experience and it means that newer bands or artists can save a lot of time and effort and often finance on just making mistakes. So I guess that's where the community is, isn't it? There's an openness and a sense of…There's definitely a sense of belonging, you know? And it's not excessive. It's not like it's a great big love-in or anything daft like that! (Whitty 2010).

Cork was perceived by the majority of participants to have a vibrant music scene, not only in terms of quality, but also in relation to the diversity of scenes within the scene. For Joe O'Leary – singer with local indie-pop band *Fred* – the closeness of players within the local music scene produces this quest for musical originality that is sought out as a method of differentiation from other players in the local field: "In Cork, people are either too stubborn, too proud, too something, too arrogant… whatever the hell it is – to mimic. So I love that, like… you really have to be inventive. You have to have serious originality" (O'Leary 2012). Mike McGrath-Bryan – a local musician, promoter and journalist – also claimed the authenticity of the Cork music scene as rooted in its eschewment of the mainstream, its non-conformity, and the "realness" or

"sincerity" of local music practitioners. For Mike, the scene has "[n]ever been healthier", and he articulates its health with reference to its "authentic", "community" feel:

> People here just give it their all because there are no preconceptions. There's no… pretensions, you know? People just go out there and they say what they have to say and they give what they have to give…and as a result it's a very wide open and accepting scene… There's a very real sense of community here and I think that's the town's main strength… (McGrath-Bryan 2010).

Many argued that the small size of the city and the feeling that everyone knows each other limits inauthentic posturing in the local scene. Indeed, this is considered an important aspect of Cork's specificity by comparison with other scenes. The local 'doxa', which produces the Cork scene as uncommercialised, shapes musicians' deployment of cultural capital such that 'poseurs' are roundly condemned. Artists' embodied cultural capital – their ways of speaking and acting, mannerisms, presentation of skills, and image – is often restrained rather than affectedly ostentatious. As Brian Deady, a local funk singer, put it: "I suppose being a Cork musician, you tend to play yourself down… You don't want people to think you're cocky, so you just stare at your feet a little bit" (Deady 2011). Ian reiterated this view that there is little tolerance of egoistic behaviours amongst local music producers and consumers. As he commented:

> I find that Cork seems very straight. People are straight. People are honest. There's not a lot of bullshit, and people are generally happy to see other people succeed and just get on with what they're at…I think again that's a really healthy thing… [T]his notion that we're all [i.e. musicians] 'blessed' or 'geniuses', it's sort of daft to begin with, and I think in Cork, in particular, if you smack of that of that all it's not a good starting point for Cork. Cork people just tend to react to good music... It's something else I really like about the Cork scene, because regardless of how hyped something is if there's any 'emperor's new clothes' vibe about it, it will be just called out and shown for that straight away… [The] audience [too] has got that 'no shit' kind of approach and just likes to respond to good music that's presented in a fairly honest sort of a way (Whitty 2010).

This emplaced identification is perceived to also shape how 'others' see Cork music producers:

> You know, I do interviews all over the country and it's always like 'there's a great scene…', and some people even use the word 'mafia'; 'There's a real mafia down in Cork,' is what they've said… I don't know where that comes from, but maybe it is

> that pride. It definitely presents itself as unified – and that's not from being in it; that's from what DJs and other journalists have said, that that's the way they perceive it, as being a very much unified scene (Whitty 2010).

Michael Carr – who owns a musicians' PR company, *Blue Monkey*, and DJs on local radio, 96FM – also offered some interesting observations on how 'others' see and 'brand' the Cork music scene, noting that: "I think [Cork music] carries, unfortunately – or did for a long time – the label of 'quirky'. I hate that word… I really hate it, you know?" (Carr 2013). For him, describing an entire music scene using a reductionist term meant that 'quirky' was ultimately utilised as a pejorative label. However, he did contextualise Cork's specificity as stemming from a 'reactionary thing', tied to its truculent past; as he put it; "It's sticking the two fingers up at whatever is cool at the time and being a bit off-beat or off-kilter. So, you know, the outsider's view to that is, 'oh yeah, they're a bit different', you know… But, yeah…Cork is very much recognised as something apart" (Carr 2013).

Musicians therefore lay claim to their authorial status as 'genuine', 'sincere' artists by renouncing the hype machine. This understanding of authenticity relates to Shank's conceptualisation of 'sincerity'; musicians propagate the myth of the romantic artist who is separate from commercial trappings, and as Shank (1994: 147) notes, "like all romanticisms, it derives from a distrust of industrialism, or urbanism, of the contradictions of the marketplace, of all the tenets of modernity". This again constructs Cork's sense of place as somewhat pre-industrial, that is, it is experienced as a city that feels like a town or village which is populated by friendly tribes and supported through networks of kinship and comradeship that sit uneasily with commercialisation and commodification. It maintains that sense of place as oppositional to the dominant culture and power relations that typify the more urbanised settings of Dublin and London, despite the reality that Cork is a highly neo-liberalised and globalised city.[5] I do not mean to suggest that participants are duplicitous in simultaneously rejecting and benefitting from new forms of capitalism, nor indeed that all participants *do* benefit, but the art/commerce nexus associated with the perceived sincerity/insincerity of emplaced music-making practices is particularly interesting for considering how the conceptualisation of 'authentic' music-making (in *our* community) versus the 'inauthentic' hype (in *other* places) operates in multiple directions.

Two capitals

While the local Cork scene was cherished in its own right by the research participants, oftentimes it was constructed against 'other' scenes and 'other' places. Although participants' narratives also referred to international music scenes (e.g. London, New York) as a point of comparison or contrast, predominantly the Cork scene (the 'real' capital of Ireland, as locals

imagine it) was constituted in opposition to Dublin (the official capital). Dublin was presented as "the biggest place to go in terms of the music… where the big players are, where people get noticed more, and where they get to play bigger venues and get paid more money and that sort of thing", as described by Aoife Barry, a Cork-born/Dublin-based journalist and DJ (Barry, 2011). While the participants recognised these as inevitable benefits of being/working in a capital, they also criticised what they perceived as a prevalent Dublin-centrism within the Irish music industries, which disadvantaged music producers living elsewhere. Marlene Enright – a music student and singer in local folk-rock band, *Berries Blue* – argued that "in the last thirty years there's been an explosion of really good musicians in Cork and to have that pool of talent and then not be able to kind of make the step up? There has to be kind of some sort of blind spot. There has to be something missing there" (Enright 2010). As she put it, "There's so many musicians in Ireland – and good musicians – and it is so focused on Dublin… It would be nice to know that they're making strides towards including the rest of Ireland in it as well a little bit." (Enright 2010). Although local media actors wer generally lauded as highly supportive of the local scene, expanding to national level and beyond was considered challenging for Cork-based musicians. Echoing Michael Carr's observations on its 'quirky' musical reputation, some participants felt that the national (Dublin-centred) attitude to the Cork music scene is patronising. As one interviewee observed:

> I think Dublin thinks that we're kind of a little jokey. And I hate that, like... *Hot Press* [a Dublin-based music magazine] gives us their kind of yearly shout for when they're doing the kind of 'best support compilations' or whatever. I'm just thinking: 'Sure, we had an EP out there two months ago. Could you not have reviewed it?' (Anonymised).

Generally, participants compared the Cork scene (supportive, solidaristic) favourably with their experiences of Dublin's music scene (self-serving, individualistic), and their arguments were largely premised on an assumed antithetical relationship between camaraderie and competitivism, which parallels the art-versus-commerce binary. Participants believed that the Dublin music scene is far more industry-oriented, which has positive and negative impacts on music-making in the capital. Many participants claimed that the Dublin scene's lesser authenticity imbues how people experience music in everyday life:

> [In Dublin] it's much more a 'lifestyle' than it is here. It's not that kind of commodity here... I see, like, all these people [in Cork] who love music [and] have much more investment in it than all these people who seem to be the tastemakers in Dublin, which doesn't really sit well with me… I don't think there's the ego [in

> Cork], you know… So someone's going to play stuff just because it's fun. [In Dublin], there's not that kind of willingness to get involved in music, I find, there's not that willingness to actually commit yourself... (Local producer and electronic music performer, Anonymised).

> In Dublin I think the nature of things, because it's a capital city, it's a bit more cosmopolitan; a lot more scenes there [and] a lot more people who want to be *seen* in different scenes. So even though there's a really, really genuine love for music and a genuine love for live music, there's always that element of trying to get your name mentioned by the right people because you're up against so many other bands. (Barry, 2011).

Because the Dublin scene is perceived as more visible to 'the industry', some participants suggested that this imposes restrictions on Dublin musicians' creative autonomy; it was argued by some that musicians will tone down their originality in the interests of being recruited. As Barry English (a local grindcore/metal drummer) observed:

> Like, I've played up there an awful lot [and] even the heavy bands are a bit samey… 'Better play it safe', kind of thing. But because nobody ever pays any attention to anything down here, then you can kind of get away with a lot more. [Bands can] just do completely what they want without any fear or without any kind of worry of people thinking it's not 'suitable' for a certain market or something. There's none of that down here. *It's kind of liberating but depressing at the same time.* (English 2010, my emphasis).

There is a palpable tension here between the constructed authenticity of the local as a space of creative freedom and a simultaneous dissatisfaction with a commonly-perceived, national-level misrecognition. However, many participants were also critical of what was occasionally described as the 'Second City Syndrome'. Even if Cork was experienced as a supportive environment in which to develop as a musician, local musicians' attentiveness to the attainment of localised cultural capital was perceived to promulgate Cork's sense of exclusivity and remoteness from the mainstream. The supportive nature of the local scene was conceived a double-edged sword; on the one hand, it maintains positive social relations within the scene, but on the other, it may be problematic in cushioning local artists, thereby refocusing their attention to the local in a way that restricts their creative and career development. Aoife Barry, for example, argued that local musicians are more concerned with their reputation at a local rather than national level:

> People don't care about whether or not they're necessarily featured on a blog, because it's happening 'up there', in Dublin. They care more about what the individuals in the scene think of them. Maybe they might get played on 96 FM on the Green Room or something like that, or Red FM [both local stations]. Whether or not people turn up to their gigs I think is a bit more important to them. It's not necessarily important to them to be always emailing people up in Dublin about their music... So I just think they operate differently. There's not that kind of 'scenester' kind of thing that there might be up in Dublin. (Barry 2011).

Although this protects music producers' sense of authenticity, this attitude was problematised for reifying self-separation from the Dublin scene, and was considered by some to inhibit a sense of *national* inclusion, which is crucial to securing broader performance/labour opportunities. If the local scene is too isolationist as an outcome of its strong identity, then this was perceived to impact negatively on music producers' creative labour- and market-oriented ambitions. Indeed, many of the more 'seasoned' and experienced musicians were critical of this position-taking:

> I think this 'People's Republic of Cork' thing is fabulous in a way, but also it can generate an awful lot of negative feeling towards Cork, meaning that when Cork bands do travel it's hard to get a crowd, it's harder to keep moving or get into different scenes. (Aisling Fitzpatrick, cellist with various local bands)(Fitzpatrick, 2011).

> There can be a persecution complex to the Cork scene and I think it's a load of shit. I've been in Dublin three times in the last week. It's two and a half hours away! It's not like you've got to cross America like Woody Guthrie or Bob Dylan. It's there and it's just a matter of doing it. (Whitty, 2010).

> I think a lot of bands are scared to go to Dublin. I always have a great time when I play in Dublin, but for a lot of bands it's difficult to get gigs up there and then when they go up they're like: 'It's full of shite, man. I just fucking hate Dublin.' Most of the time it's just because their friends aren't there, you know? So I think Cork people can be a bit… They're afraid to go beyond that, you know, and when they do, if it's not a warm reception like they would have at home, they kind of coming running back and say: 'Yeah, that was shite. Dublin's shite.' But I actually don't think that's the case, you know? I think Dublin's just fine, like, you know? But I suppose it's just breaking out of your comfort zone. That's hard. (Local female singer-songwriter, Anonymised).

In summary, then, perception of a 'difficult' relationship between 'the two capitals' strongly imbued participants' narratives and developing connections between the Cork and Dublin music scenes was represented as complex. In a small country, the distance between Cork and Dublin (approximately 250 kilometres) is certainly more ideological than geographical, and this carries implications for both music scenes in terms of extending their imagined communities to include 'the other'. As Aoife observed:

> Scenes are very insular and not always in an intentional way. There's so much happening [in Dublin that they] don't always know what's happening outside it. [But] I think that things are slowly starting to change. I think the more articles that are written [about the Cork music scene], the more we promote ourselves and get in contact with people, the better it will be in ensuring that we have a *national* music scene and not just 'Dublin… and then everyone else', you know? (Barry, 2011).

This acknowledges the necessity for *both* music scenes to assume responsibility for developing connections with the other, i.e., that Cork music producers need to move beyond their localist orientations, but that the Dublin-based media and music industries' actors should also better recognise scenes outside the capital.

The music industries

In the local example of Cork, the research participants discursively produced a 'structural affinity towards autonomy' (Prior 2008: 309), which was most often articulated though place-making narratives in describing the local field of cultural production. As mentioned previously, research participants were generally reluctant to label their music scene in 'industrial' terms, preferring to emphasise its 'community' feel:

> 'Industry' implies that there's a sort of a moneymaking side to it or a structure to it. I think there certainly is a Cork music machine, as such. I don't know if 'industry' is the way I would describe as, but there is certainly a process. And to get into it – this sense of community or the scene side of it – if you kind of pass the hurdles of getting to know people and people are getting to know you and making a reputation for yourself, then you're in the scene. It's definitely a process and it's definitely a community, but in terms of 'industry'… I just don't think it generates much money (Fitzpatrick 2011).

Similarly, Hank Wedel – an American-born rock/blues musician who made his home in the city thirty years ago – argues that the local scene is healthy because, "Cork takes its music very

seriously. So, despite the fact that there's no real sort of like worldwide management vision, it takes it music very seriously and there's always something happening in the city" (Wedel 2010). Hank, then, oriented his understanding of 'the music industry' in relation to its globalised form; 'the music industry' is presented as something 'out there', far removed from Cork – 'the music industry' is in Dublin, London and New York, etc.

In this understanding, 'the music industry' is constructed as manifesting only in larger urban areas, whose music scenes are discursively produced as inherently hyper-capitalist and hyper-commercialised. These large metropolitan areas are therefore presented as antithetical to the more 'tribal', autonomous, and parochial spheres of smaller urban contexts, wherein music-making practices are perceived to be driven less by economic interests and more by music-making's autotelic and social values (music-for-music's-sake, music-for-the-community, music-for-the-city). Social relations within the Cork music scene were presented as being shaped by a DIY ethos, by 'disinterested interests' (emphasising altruism, solidarity and post-capitalist collaborative production), and by transactional, pre-economic forms of exchange. Throughout the ethnographic data, the majority of participants reiterate this notion of 'the music industry' as *apart* from their praxis, rather than seeing this as an 'industry' in which they are already embedded as practitioners, albeit more typically at a local level and through engagement in more DIY-oriented activities and practices. This self-positioning outside 'the industry' can be interpreted in a number of ways. On the one hand, it evidences some of the problems associated with the singular term 'the music industry' itself. On the other hand, it dislocates music producers' from their situatedness within the music industries, which has numerous implications for how the processes and practices of music-making and their social meanings are conceptualised.

With reference to the singular term, 'the music industry', theorists have problematised its capacity to represent a complex range of activities, practices and fields of production/consumption as analytically reductionist (Leyshon 2001; Strachan and Leonard 2002). In 'Rethinking the Music Industry', Williamson and Cloonan (2007) also urge a review of what they consider to be an out-dated, inaccurate and simplistic frame of reference and argue in favour of the use of 'the music industries' (plural). They identify two key problems with 'the music industry': firstly, it fails to capture the diverse reality of the industry's heterogeneity, and secondly, it is often used as a synonym for 'the recording industry'. Exploring its application in four locations – namely, representative and umbrella organisation, media reports, official reports and policies, and in academic research – Williamson and Cloonan contend that this analytical confusion tends to privilege certain vested interests. In assuming this position, organisations perpetuate the myth of *a* music industry (singular) and appoint themselves as *the* voice of *the* 'music industry', thereby achieving considerable influence in music policy-making

decisions and simultaneously silencing, or at least muffling, dissenting voices. The media has further contributed to this synonymising effect, presenting 'the music industry' as a collective mass that, in fact, predominantly represents the interests of recording companies. As Williamson and Cloonan point out, this is significant because the media "can be seen here as the conduit of music industries' information to the general public" (2007: 309), yet this simplistic media representation discourages the public's 'critical awareness' of the industries involved in the production of popular music, its complexity, and its policing. Official policy reports further contribute to confusion about what constitutes 'the music industry'. Though many, explicitly and implicitly, recognise the plurality of the music industries and the lack of consensus on their constitutive elements, and the existence of a "covert recognition within government" of their diversity, attempts to define them remain unresolved and contested (Williamson and Cloonan 2007: 310-311). Furthermore, the authors castigate academics for continuing to privilege the recording industry as a synonym for 'the music industry'. Drawing on a range of studies, research articles, and book chapters, they conclude that the foremost message is that there is one 'music industry' that is, essentially, the recording industry; "In sum, in these accounts, conflation and partiality are present when broader, more complex analyses are needed" (Williamson and Cloonan 2007: 312). This common practice misrepresents, blurs understanding, and misleads with regard to the reality of the disparate nature of the music industries.

I argue that this misrepresentation of the multiplicity of the music industries has particular ramifications for place-oriented understandings of local music scenes since it dislocates music producers' self-recognition; some research participants did not see themselves as already bound up within the music industries by virtue of their participation. Interestingly, this contributes to participants' understandings of their own social location and the value and meaning of their music-making practices in contradictory ways. On one hand, it exacerbates their sense of frustration and feelings of disempowerment and invisibility as music practitioners, and therefore impacts on their well-being in negative ways. On the other hand, their distanciation from 'the industry' (externally-imposed and/or self-imposed) reinforces their sense of 'otherness', uniqueness and authenticity. As promoter/music blogger Mike McGrath-Bryan put it:

> That's the strength that we have… Cork […] is a really less music industry-centred town and as a result I guess people don't have the pressure of A&R guys, they don't have the pressure of label heads coming around and seeing what's happening. I guess bands really don't feel under any pressure to conform to what might get them signed properly because it's all for its own sake. *The music is its own end* (McGrath-Bryan 2010, my emphasis).

A further dimension to this position-taking can be teased out using Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', which orients social action based on a dispositional, prereflective, sense of (in this case, limited) possibilities, and this prompts agents to "refuse what they are refused in reality anyway" (Atkinson 2010: 4). This narrative, then, provides a sort of 'alibi' for failure; if music producers fail to succeed – in terms of market success (economic capital) or critical acclaim (symbolic capital) – then localised social capital can be harnessed as a defence. That is, it can be claimed that 'the industry' – the market and the (corrupted) media 'hype' that purportedly slavishly serves it – has failed to recognise their inherent authenticity and, more importantly, it provides the rationale for strategic action through which agents can maximise their symbolic profits as *authentic* creative labourers. As Mike commented, "I suppose if I'm going to glib about it, the fat cats simply don't care about anything unless it's presented to them on a silver platter" (McGrath-Bryan 2010). In this way, 'the market'/'the industry' is constructed as failing as a result of its own bloated consumerism and local (parochial/anti-commercial/tribal) musicians' activities, products and interests can be narratively produced as being at a remove from – and *above* – the vulgar imperatives of the mass market. It is possible, then, that some research participants are being deliberately (or at least unreflexively) obtuse, since this self-positioning buttresses their idealisation of the 'local' musical community as autonomous, as unfettered by 'the industry', and as morally/aesthetically superior, which enhances their identification with place (their *emplaced* authenticities) and their emotional well-being in positive ways.

The research participants also articulated their desires for access to 'industry' supports *at* the local level. This reiterates a more parochial orientation, but also evidences a higher level of trust in local-level cultural intermediaries, who understand the local scene, its identity and its doxa. For example, Ian commented that:

> I think traditionally there has been a lack of a framework for the bands from Cork to move [things] on, but I think that's now developing. Cork PR companies are evolving and there are Cork agencies and a few more people involved in that stuff. I'd love to see that side of it develop over the next four or five years, because I think if that side of it does develop the talent is here in spades, you know? It will be nothing but positive if that can occur… And I don't know as a scene is [Cork] there yet in terms of presenting itself as a scene, but it's certainly primed, yeah. So it'll be really interesting (Whitty 2010).

In summary, the participants' common tendency to discount *national*-level supports as ineffective, unsupportive, biased, and inauthentic is set against recognition of the limited possibilities of self-sufficiency in a small city. There remains some perhaps naïve reluctance –

for some though not all local music producers – about being positioned as part of the national music scene. Yet, despite commonly articulated claims of aesthetic/moral independence, there is evidence of a simultaneous yearning to be seen and to be recognised, a desire for validation. As a small city, Cork is unlikely to achieve the sort of media attention that is necessary for marking out scenes at the global level, meaning that local music producers may need to reflect further on their parochialist leanings. On the other hand, not all are driven towards self-commodification beyond the local, and producers' affinity towards autonomy shapes grassroots efforts and solidaristic practices in very positive ways. A key question for the future may be how to retain the 'community' feel and its associative values in the face of potential commercial expansion since, as Prior (2015: 95) argues, "[w]ithout the scene's lived practices, there is nothing to commodify". If the Cork scene is indeed 'primed' for commercial development, as Ian above suggests, then its future 'authenticity' will depend on how it manages the tension between "the undiscovered and the commercial" (Prior 2015: 95) on which the reputation of musical places depends. Of course, this is a 'problem' that would be broadly welcomed; if the local scene is forced to confront these challenges, it means that it has achieved the sort of success, reputational capital and recognition that it currently, if sometimes covertly, seeks.

Reflections on 'authenticity', identity, and community

As Theodossopoulos (2013: 341) argues, authenticity's polysemy as a conceptual device is useful for inviting researchers to understand what 'authentic' means in the socio-cultural contexts of its production and is an incentive to explore some of its paradoxes. As Theodossopolous puts it, "the analytic potential of the concept [authenticity] relies on the recognition of its context-specific signification – which might be defined by essentialist criteria, but encodes complicated meanings and intentions" (2013: 343). He highlights one of the key dilemmas for ethnographers as the "trap of authenticity", which derives from "the contradiction emerging from deconstructing (analytically) the authenticity/inauthenticity opposition, while at the same time having to (ethnographically) engage with its meaningfulness on the local level" (2013: 338). The lure of authenticity as an object of study is that researchers may end up restating the very authenticity/inauthenticity binaries that they first sought to unpack. This is perhaps an even greater threat for the ethnographer-at-home, hence I have found myself often entangled in these seductions of Cork's strong cultural identity, to which I am not immune, and from which extricating myself is an unceasing effort. Yet, in order to unpack the socially prescribed meanings of authenticity, Theodossopoulos (2013: 346) also claims that it may be necessary "to fall into the trap – willingly, consciously, and reflexively – first comparing the authentic with the inauthentic in locally meaningful terms (however essentialist those may be), in order to understand the evaluative potential (judgments or tactics) inherent in the resulting

contradictions". If the pursuit of authenticity is a red herring, its value nonetheless persists for revealing authenticity's local meaningfulness and its application as a tactical rhetoric in everyday life; "thus, the ethnographer often has to get her/his hands dirty by engaging in the dichotomous evaluations that express the meaningfulness and purpose of local authenticators and their (in)authenticities" (Theodossopoulos 2013: 347).

With respect to the field of cultural production, the above-outlined narratives underscore the importance of recognising the uses of authenticity in constituting people's identities, including their emotional identification with place, and their self-conception and social location as music producers. Given that the concept of identity simultaneously refers to both 'sameness' (belonging to a group) and 'difference' (from others/other groups), this analysis reveals how local music producers discursively construct patterns of interpretation that are premised on the imagined community of 'us' and purported differences between 'us' and 'them'. Importantly, then, the findings demonstrate how authenticity is a concept that is perhaps best understood negatively (Potter 2010: 6); in the data, the authenticity of the Cork music scene (and its members) is emphasised through pointing to what it is not. The specificity of Cork's music scene as produced by the research participants is, and *has* to be, constructed against 'other' people in 'other' places, since 'uniqueness' (like 'sameness' and 'difference') is a relational term (Wodak et al 2009: 27). Its 'difference' is most obviously represented by research participants' perceptions of the Dublin music scene, but it is also produced through their self-positioning in relation to 'the music industry'. This collective identity work creates the uniqueness of the local, it presents particularistic place-based loyalties, and it constitutes the symbolic community. This corroborates Trilling's observation that authenticity is "implicitly a polemical concept" (1972: 94 cited in Peterson 2005: 1083), which is called forth as a legitimating idea. It is not an "immanent energy", nor is it conceived in a solipsistic manner (Varga 2012: 134), rather, authenticity is actively, reflexively sought out and constantly reinscribed.

Recognition in these terms of the 'inventiveness' of authenticity is helpful in challenging Bourdieu's insistence on doxa as a conditioning that prescribes unreflexive social practices. Bourdieu's reluctance to recognise social actors' agency and reflexivity circumscribes their depiction as socio-cultural dupes, whereas my use of the term recognises actors' adaptations of authenticity as rhetorical, strategic position-taking (Varga 2012). This restores an understanding of authenticity as an actively engaged-in process of meaning-making. Banks (2013) develops this idea with reference to the concept of 'instrumental authenticity' as a context-dependent process that characterises and shapes social action. This maintains focus on the inventiveness of authenticity but recognises that "the vocal and self-conscious assertion of identity claims by those seeking to gain some moral, political, or other advantage through

making such claims gives the instrumental appeal to authentic subject positions a sociological reality that permits its use as an anthropological category" (Banks 2013: 487).

'Rooted' authenticities and identities in flux

In the research data, aesthetic preferences and moral values are enmeshed with place attachments and cultural identity, producing a 'rooted' sense of personal and collective authenticity. In sustaining a dissonant relationship with Dublin through the 'second city' cultural identity, the invocation of place-oriented attachments, and the mobilisation of 'Corkonian exceptionalism', local music producers enable their self-construction as ideologically/morally/aesthetically 'alternative', 'authentic', and superior. With respect to Cork's cultural identity, others have argued that Corkonian claims to being 'the real republic' connote a sense of anxiety about the city's own identity – that its inhabitants' stereotypical cocksureness belies a deep sense of inferiority. Keohane (2006), for example, argues that the city's 'neurosis' is evidenced amongst its 'local elites'; their "cultural capital is achieved at the cost of great effort, it is historically recent, it is thin, and the standard from which it takes its measure is spurious and ideologically tainted, making it deeply insecure and anxious" (Keohane 2006: 131). With reference to the city's designation as European Capital of Culture in 2005, Keohane continues that this "seems to confirm a pervasive provincial conceit: that Cork is 'a great city'… But at the same time the designation is a source of anxiety, as the showcasing of Cork's culture on a European stage risks exposing the conceit" (2006: 132). O'Callaghan (2012) also identifies an anxiety about Cork's partisan, 'red republic' identity amongst the organisers of 'Cork 2005'. However, if there is anxiety amongst local 'elites', I argue that it is important to mark this as different from the 'grassroots' level, wherein there seems to be a growing sense of assuredness.

At this point then, I wish to mark a caveat about how the data should be read, which flags the constantly shifting and fluid nature of local cultural identities and energies. There was certainly evidence within the fieldwork data of disaffection with Dublin, but this was more focused on Dublin-*centrism*, that is, the perceived constant privileging of Dublin's and Dubliners' interests in the media and in the music industries. In the earlier phases of the fieldwork, this hostility was more palpable. However, in later phases, this seemed to wane. From early 2011 onwards, a number of influential cultural figures returned to live and work in the city, bringing with them fresh enthusiasm and dynamic approaches. This has shaped a more active music and cultural scene, and an associative sense of increased self-confidence in doing things and getting things done. In the contemporary scene, there is evidence of a deepening self-confidence amongst DIY music producers. Even in the relatively short period of the ethnographic fieldwork, social networks in the local scene pulsed with energy (and it is important to note that

both negative and positive changes impacted on the local scene). Given that the fieldwork coincided with the economic crisis, this metamorphosis is perhaps unsurprising, but it is interesting how the mood of the city altered quite rapidly.

This flux impacted on both data collection and data analysis. I completed a bulk of fieldwork in 2010 and early 2011, intending to exit the field at that point. I also left the city (and Ireland) for six months, but maintained 'virtual' contact through social media networks, and observed from afar a renewed energy within the local cultural scene. On my return, I re-entered the field and conducted a new phase of fieldwork, driven by a desire to document this new and more positive spirit. Later interviews (conducted in 2012 and 2013) contained fewer, if any, mentions of an antagonistic relationship between the Cork and Dublin music scenes and evidenced a more reflexive understanding of local music producers' positioning as creative labourers in the music industries. On reviewing their transcripts (in 2014), a number of participants whom I had interviewed in 2010 also noted an emergent sense of self-possession in the local scene by comparison with their earlier reflections. A recent newspaper article also attests to an artistic 'renaissance' in Cork, made possible through the development of a progressive and dynamic DIY approach to cultural production (Murphy 2015).

Therefore, it is easy to caricature and thus overstate local hostilities to Dublin, but the point is that Corkonians themselves caricature this antagonism. While intermittent reminders that 'Cork is not (like) Dublin' offer a useful shorthand method for reasserting the authenticity of the local, and while there is a serious undertone to some of the above-outlined criticisms, there is also a playfulness to how Cork-versus-Dublin antipathies are described, represented and embodied. This position-taking produces and is produced through a (mostly) good-humoured belligerence towards Dublin and Dubliners. The phenomenon of 'Cork pride' is therefore somewhat wryly expressed, and there is a degree of ironic reflexivity in local inhabitants' defiant postures. If a thorny relationship with the official capital persists, it is partly because it is fun to maintain.

The emotional community

In many respects, the participants' construction of place and its authenticity echoes Maffesoli's (1996) depiction of "the emotional community". Reflecting on proxemics (how social interactions are spatially mediated), Maffesoli argues that in our social relations, "we are indignant together" (1996: 12). Therefore, he suggests that "it is within this framework that passion is expressed, common beliefs are developed and the search for "those who feel and think as we do' takes place" (1996: 12). In the local context of Cork, music producers' shared indignation – their dissatisfaction with other people's misrecognition of their creative labour or with the Dublin-centric media's inattentiveness to the Cork scene – is "the matrix from which all

representations are crystallized" (Maffesoli 1996: 13). In the local music scene, the exchange of feelings, popular beliefs, the localist worldview, and conversations and everyday chitchat in the pub or in the record store or on the street, together "constitute the solidarity of the community's existence" (Maffesoli 1996: 12).

Similar to Prior's (2015: 90) observations on Reykjavík, Cork is "more than an inert backdrop" with regard to the local music field. This is a compact music scene, swaddled in the close urban fabric of a small city, which enables the generation of socio-musical collectives and a sense of solidarity, while simultaneously intensifying "intersubjective musical affiliations and mutually-supportive clusters" (Prior 2015: 90). The by-product of Cork's cultural identity – which is shaped by its history, its sense of unique authenticity, and the dense social networks that reinforce its emplacement – is that the 'tightness' of friendship networks through music-making bolsters its collectivist base. Furthermore, there are certain normative expectations of its members that their actions should both preserve the community 'feel' and maintain its perceived musical authenticity, originality and diversity. This self-reflexive rootedness in the local is built upon an interrogation of shared values in local communities and institutions.

Maffesoli (1996: 15) argues that the emotional community is open but at the same time it demands "a strict conformity of its members". In the Cork music scene, the community purports to be – and is experienced as – open, relaxed, warm, supportive and friendly. Yet, somewhat paradoxically, the community is simultaneously laid-back and highly regulated; the local doxa – which emphasises communal values of the community and music-making as intrinsic goods – governs and structures the community itself. Notably, Maffesoli uses "the Mafia" as an example of "the more paroxysmal elements" (1996: 15) of the emotional community; it is striking, therefore, that the Cork music scene was described above by one participant as a 'mafia' (Whitty 2010), though clearly in a more light-hearted sense. Maffesoli recognises that degrees of belonging and conformity may vary, but nonetheless "it is important, in a non-normative way, to appreciate [conformity's] effects, its richness and perhaps its prospective dimension" (Maffesoli 1996: 15). Moreover, and significant to research on a small urban context, "the communal ethic…is [produced] by force of circumstance; [it is] because of proximity…; because there is a sharing of the same territory (real or symbolic) that the communal idea and its ethical corollary are born" (Maffesoli 1996: 16). Furthermore, this "collective imagination" is not "dispensed with in times of crisis"; rather, and importantly in the context of the post-Celtic Tiger crisis, it continues to provide "deep nourishment" (Maffesoli 1996: 18) to individual and collective well-being.

Conclusion

In summary, then, in the above-outlined narratives, instrumental assertions of authenticity are put forward as a method of emphasising the specificity of the local, of maintaining boundary distinctions between 'us' and 'them', of distinguishing the 'genuineness' of locally-oriented motives from the inauthenticities of market-oriented values (which are put forth in place-based contrastive terms), of constructing the symbolic community, and of reinforcing the community members' solidaristic interests. The local music scene and its authenticities are not pre-existing entities, but are produced and reproduced through practices within the field of cultural production and, discursively, through the meanings and values that the research participants ascribe to these practices. The analysis revealed a range of contradictory tensions in relation to Cork's sense of 'otherness'. On the one hand, local music producers are proud of the specificity of the local music scene and its eclectic musics, which were perceived as untainted by 'industry' and whose social practices are shaped by a collaborative ethos. On the other hand, the participants resented the dearth of 'industry' attention and support, and deplored the scene's construction as 'other' by 'outsiders'. Research participants' narratives simultaneously celebrated the scene's perceived 'rebellious', non-conformist, anti-commercial attitudes, but many also took umbrage at the Dublin-centric music industries' alleged inattentiveness, frustration about which was often expressed through a concurrent construction of Dublin's music scene as less authentic, less special, and less interesting. Dublin-based music industries were also accused of bias and Dublin-based music consumers and producers were charged with superficiality.

Bourdieu's observations on 'distinction' are relevant here, which assert that "[s]ocial identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat" (1986: 479).[6] The research participants' response to perceived Dublin-centric misrecognition of their labour is expressed through judgement of place-oriented tastes and musical practices, incorporating an appeal to moral dimensions, which shaped their own identity and defined their social location. This evidences, fundamentally, a moral/aesthetic, emotional and cultural politics of place. This 'rooted' authenticity is interwoven with well-being since the quest for authenticity is ultimately a search for meaning and personal coherence and is thus, in essence, an emotional and moral one (Bendix 1997: 7). The above analysis has revealed the keen sense of place that emerges through the research data in the participants' narrative construction of the Cork music scene, which has particularistic connotations. However, I suggest that these findings are generalisable beyond the local in supporting a more abstract theory of how people live locally, and in valuing discourses of belonging in the local as significant to understanding identity, authenticity, and the emotional politics of place.

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Carr, Michael (2013)(Owner of music PR company, *Blue Monkey*; DJ with local radio, 96FM) 10 October.

Deady, Brian (2010)(Funk/soul vocalist/songwriter), 28 October.

English, Barry (2010)(Grindcore drummer, formerly *I'll Eat Your Face*), 19 August.

Enright, Marlene (2010)(Vocalist/keyboards with *Hard Ground*, formerly *Berries Blue*), 27 October.

Fitzpatrick, Aisling (2011)(Cellist with various local bands/collectives), 29 April.

McGrath-Bryan, Mike (2010)(Promoter, blogger with http://thethinair.net), 13 October.

O'Leary, Joe (2012)(Singer-songwriter, formerly with pop/rock band, *Fred*), 17 October.

Wedel, Hank (2010)(Folk/rock/blues singer-songwriter), 15 October.

Whitty, Ian (2010)(Indie-rock vocalist/guitarist with *Ian Whitty and the Exchange*), 23 October.

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[1] Broader empirical studies on 'creativity' have also focused largely on major metropolitan centres to the neglect of smaller urban and rural milieu (Harvey et al, 2012). This inattention to small cities is a problem of urban studies more broadly; as Bell and Jayne (2006: 5) observe, small cities – although more typical in a quantitative sense – have been neglected by urban theorists who have been too 'wooed and wowed by spectacular urbanism to notice them'.

[2] 'The Pale' refers to a zone extending outwards from Dublin that was established in 14th century by the English Lordship and demarcated through the construction of wide ditches and hedges. As Emmons (2010: 4) explains, the Pale was a doctrinal boundary between the Protestant imperial class and the Catholic Irish, which "enclosed within it those of pure heart, civilized manners, and steady habits" and protected the British settlers "from the rebellious, or at least always potentially rebellious, native Irish".

[3] Jacobsen (1994) criticises the continuance of the British institutional model and ideology, as maintained by the post-independence, Free State administrators, in what he terms 'the pale replica'. As he puts it,

"Dail Eireann was a hibernicized House of Commons; Seanad Eireann a feebler counter-part to the House of Lords. The flags were Irish, but the flagpoles were manufactured in Britain" (Jacobsen 1994: 51).

[4] Cohen recognises the dilemma of relativism in anthropological research, wherein two 'problems' – "the problem of typicality […] and the problem of incorporating detailed description which may seem banal or tedious" (1993: 125) – emerge because of the limitations of ethnography's small-scale, face-to-face interactions. However, I argue that emotional discourses of belonging are best evinced through ethnography for this very reason; that the proximity engendered through ethnographic fieldwork can elicit the affective meanings of place through attention to micro-level interactions in a small urban setting.

[5] For example, the local economy is supported by a large number of multinational IT and pharmaceutical corporations.

[6] Here, Frith's (1996: 72) observations on popular music consumption can also be applied to the local field of cultural production: "The marking off of some tracks and genres and artists as 'good' and others as 'bad' seems to be a necessary part of popular music pleasure and use; it is a way in which we establish our place in various music worlds and use music as a source of identity. And 'good' and 'bad' are key words because they suggest that aesthetic and ethical judgments are tied together: not to like a record is not just a matter of taste; it is also a matter of morality".